



Developing an Industrial Hemp Outreach Program in Alabama



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Hemp in Alabama

While the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill allowed for industrial hemp (*Cannabis sativa* L) to be commercially grown in Alabama, Extension personnel were lacking any research or experience with this crop to assist the producers. In 2019, Alabama Extension established the Hemp Action Team with personnel across several disciplines in order to begin to fill the research and informational gaps needed to assist growers producing hemp throughout the state.



Hemp production for CBD in Alabama.

During 2019, Hemp Team members spent the growing season establishing working relationships with local producers, scouting fields, attending hemp events in states with established research programs, and working with state officials to understand grower regulations and license requirements. Information gleaned from the growing season was used to develop the workshop series that was conducted in Alabama.



Insect pressure in hemp fields during 2019.



Nitrogen deficiency in hemp plants.



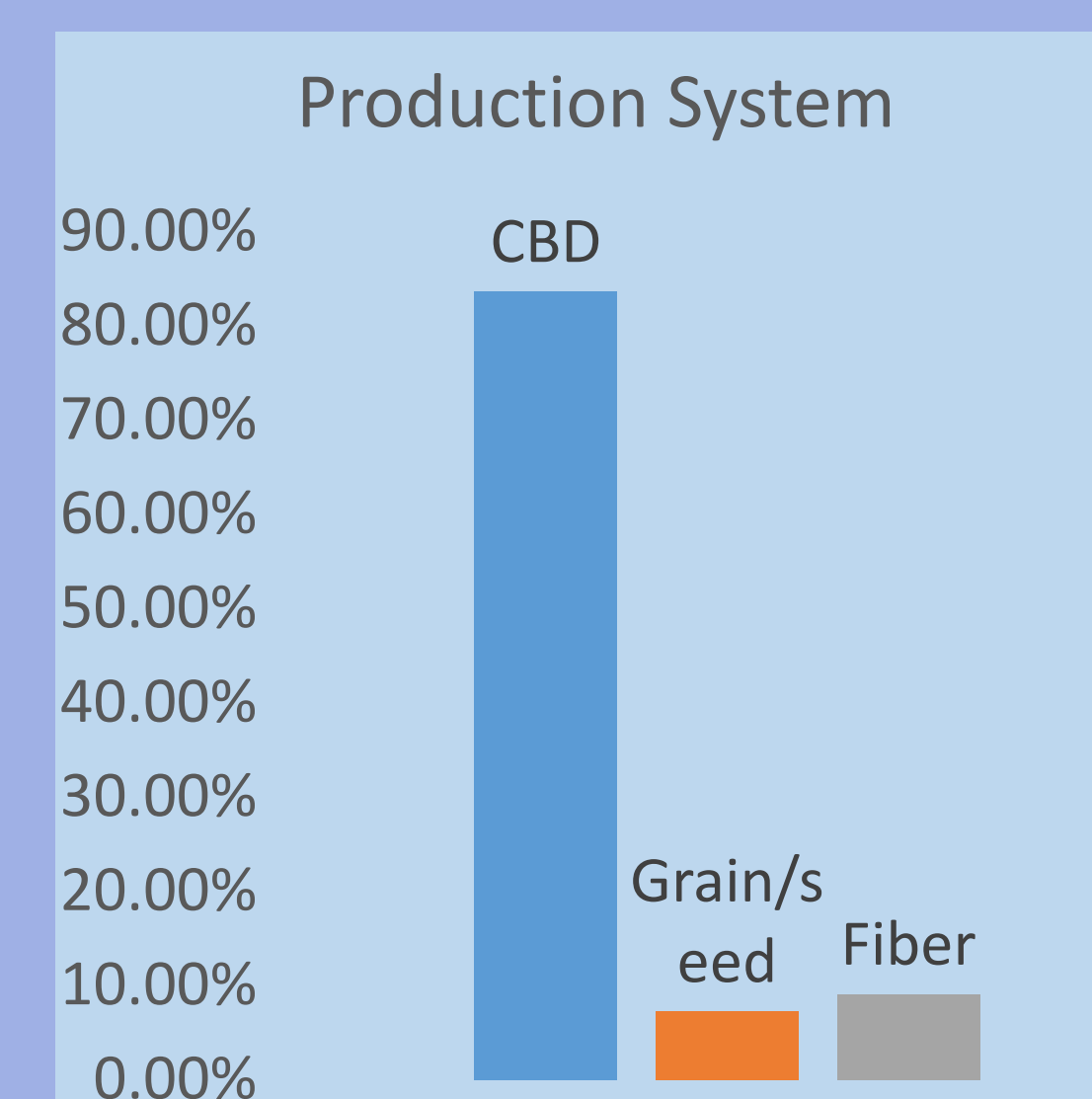
Hemp Educational Workshops collectively reached over 300 participants.

Outreach Events

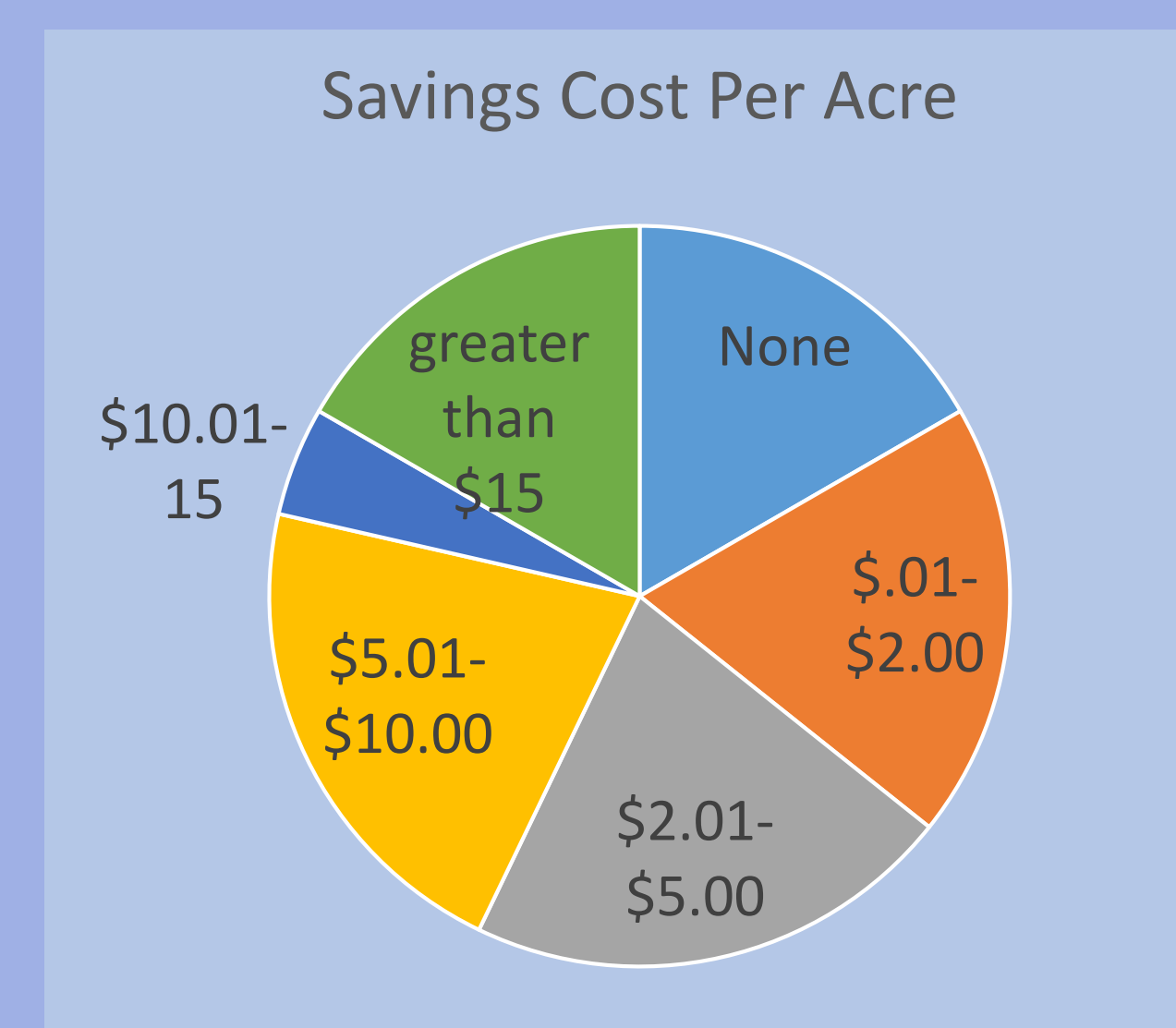
There were 3 educational workshops held across the state in November 2019 to provide growers and attendees considering growing hemp in 2020 with an overview of the information gathered during the 2019 crop season.. This series continued throughout the spring of 2020 and were also recorded for online availability.

Surveys indicated that a significant number of growers were planting hemp for CBD production. A number of these growers also indicated that they had previously not utilized Extension to any degree for information. This can somewhat be explained by a number of hemp producers being first time farmers.

Hemp production systems in Alabama.

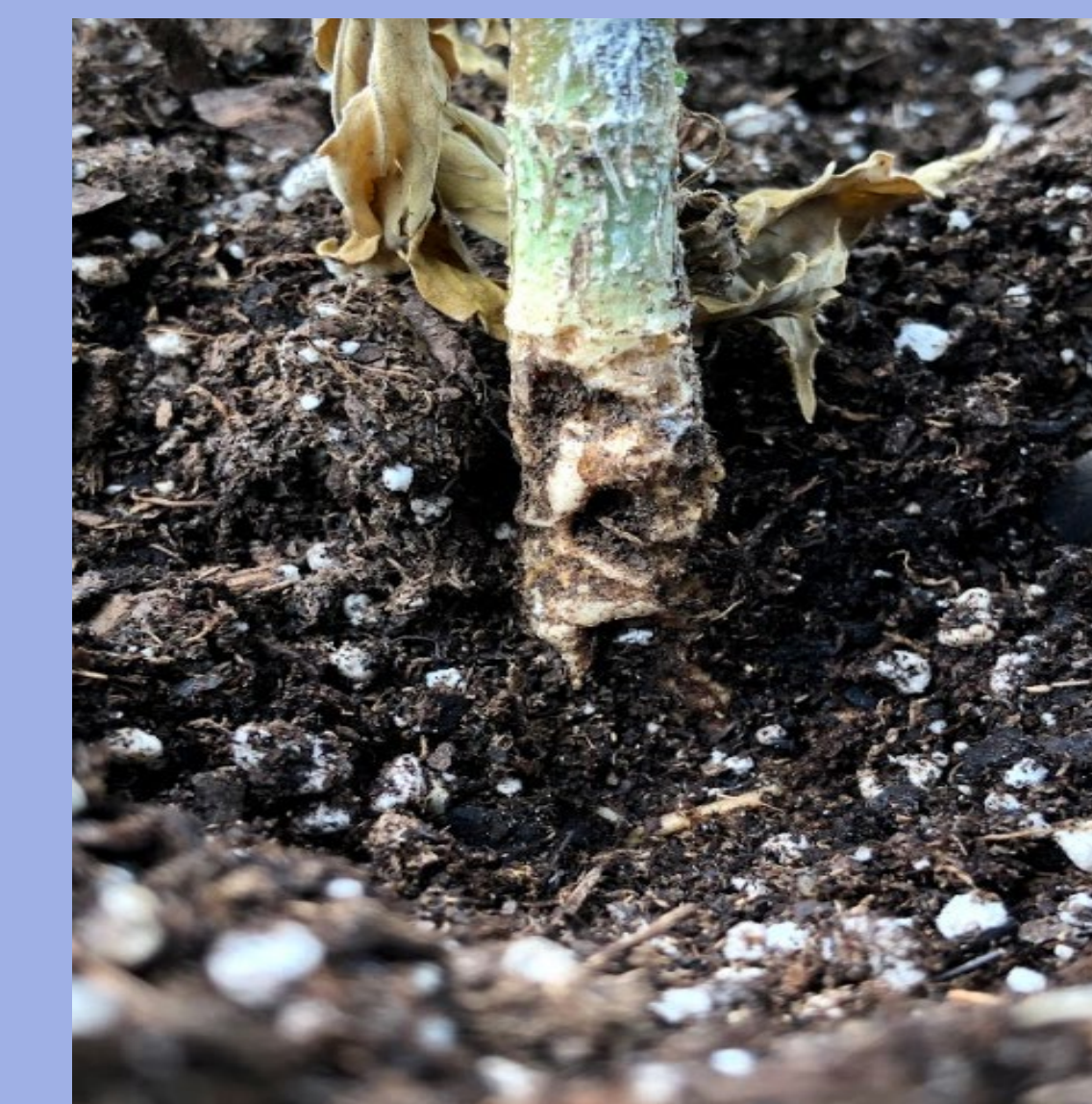


Workshop attendees reported average savings expected from information provided..



Identified Needs

Evaluations from workshops noted that almost 45% of 2019's crop was lost due to insect, weed, and disease pressure. Approximately 48% of respondents reported these losses were due to insect pressure including fire ants, caterpillars, and aphid damage. Weed pressure also reduced yield for a number of attendees. Management options for pests of hemp have become a priority for hemp team members.



Fire ant damage to hemp stem.



Weed pressure in hemp field.

Future Programming and Research

Alabama will begin hemp research for 2020 in an effort to answer both short and long term management needs such as fertility requirements, pest management and varietal differences.

Additionally, a website dedicated to hemp research and resources for Alabama's growers is under development. This website will be used to disseminate timely information and best management practices for hemp production. A state-specific budget for CBD hemp production will also be included.