



CLEMSON
EXTENSION

View from the Trenches – South Carolina



An Assessment of Agricultural Marketing
and Issues in South Carolina

By
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Big News in 2002

Drought for most of the year. Rain began at harvest time.

Yields were poor.

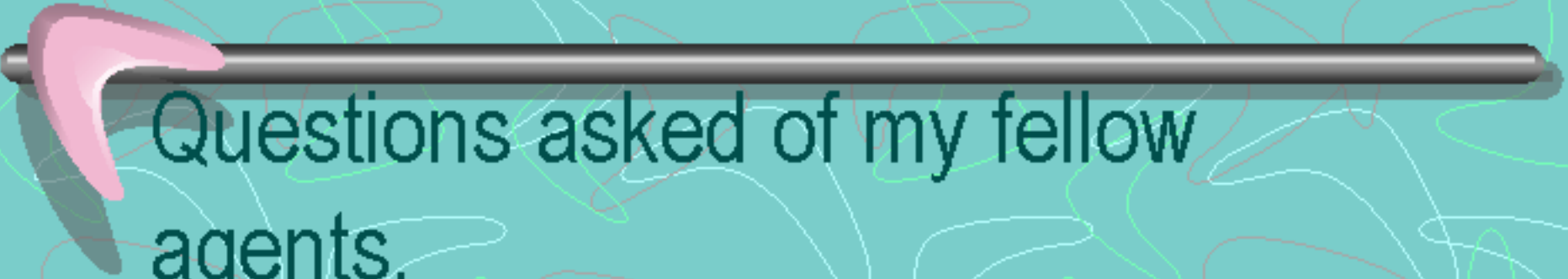
Many filed crop insurance claims.

Rains began in the fall and caused harvesting problems especially in cotton.




Big News for 2003

- Rain, rain, rain.
 - Altered planting plans
 - Prevented proper fertility management
 - Prevented desirable pest management
- Peanuts are a new crop option.



Questions asked of my fellow agents.

- 1. Has the 2002 farm bill made an impact on the marketing of crops, either buying or selling?
- Split opinion. Several say no. One feels that it has made growers more aware of World Market Prices.
- Sets a floor without the need of purchasing a put.



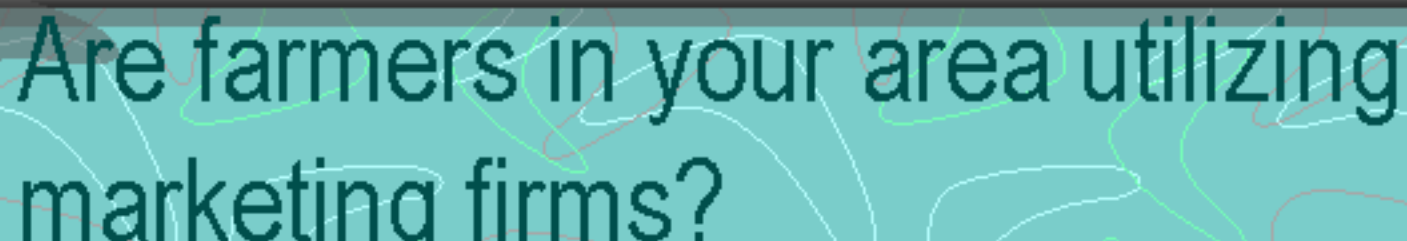
Do the farmers you work with utilize commodity options as a marketing tool?

- We've made inroads here. A great many of our farmers know about options.
- Fewer really understand how they work.
- Some larger farmers use them, but in general most farmers market by other methods.



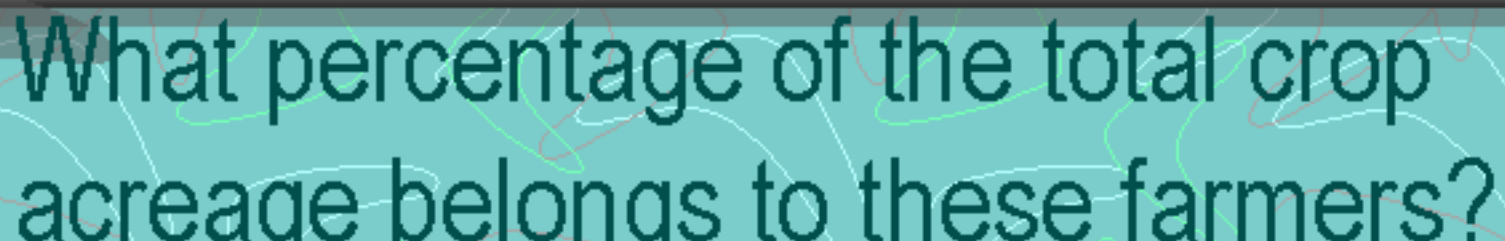
What are the marketing strategies they utilize?

- Forward contract; store on loan; put options a few hog producers use calls; hedging; and hope




Are farmers in your area utilizing marketing firms?

- Yes




What percentage of the total crop acreage belongs to these farmers?

- 40 to 60 percent



What do you anticipate for average yields for these crops in your counties this year?

- Corn – 100 bu.
- Cotton – 500 pounds lint/A
- Soybean – 25 bushels/A
- Peanuts – 2700 pounds



Will the farm situation improve or has the rain we waited for so long just created another set of problems?

- Although it has reduced cotton quality and caused some disease, it is the general consensus that there is improvement.



Do you think there will be any farmers
lost due to financial problems?

- Mostly no.



New Ground

- Niche markets
- Organic production
- Meat and dairy goats
- Fruit and vegetables
- Agritourism