

Kater Hake's Closing Comments

Let me first thank the presenters who shared their knowledge and insights with us and thank Bob Nichols for having the vision to maintain research investments in FOV4 despite it appearing to impact just a small acres of Upland cotton in the San Joaquin Valley. His and Don's research budgets are not funded by Pima growers, only Upland growers, so it has been a hard sell to the growers on our Board to sustain funding as SJV Upland acres were converted to Pima or FOV4 infested fields were planted to almonds and pistachios.

But no such luxury exists where FOV4 has now become entrenched. Those of you who work in the Southwest fully appreciate that Upland cotton is the only viable option for millions of acres due to cotton's extreme drought tolerance and its ability to generate a profit even under adverse weather.

There will be substantial economic hardship if FOV4 spreads throughout the Southwest or into other states before you collectively can identify and develop tolerant varieties. We must figure out how to accelerate this effort while slowing the pathogens spread.

Fortunately this is what agricultural scientists do best - bring cutting edge science to challenges and opportunities for our most basic needs - food, feed and fiber.

The charge I would like to leave with you is to spend time over the next 2 days talking with your colleagues in academia, USDA and industry about solutions to FOV4, share ideas and help with an action plan for 2018 and start to build a longer term strategy to deal with the many Fusarium wilts showing up across the cotton belt.

The Cotton Breeder Tour has a wonderful history of advancing cotton through public science and industry collaboration. It demonstrates to growers with tangible advancements the value of science in agriculture. We have perhaps the clearest example of scientific need and hopefully future benefit with FOV4.

Let me close by thanking and congratulating Don Jones for organizing another successful Cotton Breeder Tour and for his leadership in the cotton research community.

Thank you.