

## **Transcript of the drip irrigation video from the Georgia Farm Monitor, 2009**

### **(Mark Wildman – Reporting)**

In the past this small field in Bleckley County would either be a dry land field or have to use a portable irrigation system. Fields like this are common in the state and many are left to the forces of nature to keep them irrigated often resulting in disaster. Now there is an option. The fruit and vegetable industry has used sub-surface irrigation for years, it is installed a foot deep beneath the soil and that method has been adapted for row crops. Bleckley County Farmer Mike Lucas is excited about its potential.

### **(Mike Lucas – Bleckley County Farmer)**

It is a cheaper way of irrigation. I am putting this tape in every other row and putting it at a 3 inch depth, so I do not have a lot in it other than the tape, the hose, and my well.

### **(Wildman)**

This technique for row crops was researched at the National Peanut Lab in Dawson as a way for producers to battle the long dry summer days. Not only will the farm be able to irrigate this field it will be able to conserve water as well.

### **(Jack Rattray – Irrigation Specialist)**

This is the most economic form of irrigation. It's been used for a number of years all over the world. Mostly developed in Israel when they started farming in the dessert. With this system you are using a low-pressure system, you are putting the water directly where the crop needs it and you are saving money and resources.

### **(Wildman)**

Although this particular field is a corn crop the practice can be used on peanuts and cotton as well, and executive director of the Georgia cotton commission Richey Seaton feels that it will be a big benefit.

### **(Richey Seaton – Exec. Director, GA Cotton Commission)**

We are going to have to continue pushing our yields up for our farmers to remain competitive and this is one way we think we can do it simply because, A – It's cheaper, it's a lot more efficient, it is conserving our resources and hopefully we are going to see some actual significant yield increases as if you will farmers spoon feed their crops.

### **(Wildman)**

Like anything else in farming there is cost involved but on this farm they feel the benefits will out weigh those cost.

### **(Lucas)**

It should, any time you make a higher yield you get paid more so I'm hoping this works out well. The theory of this is to plant cotton, corn, soybeans, and then maybe the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year plant peanuts, and anytime you plant peanuts you cannot go back and plow because you tear up the tape. So we're going to pull the tape up before we plow the peanuts up and the next year put the tape back in, new tape.

### **(Wildman)**

Besides just the benefit of moisture drip irrigation will also allow producers to inject nitrogen into the crop to produce better yields.

**(Gordon Lee – Bleckley County Extension agent)**

This is the heart of the process as far as getting anything we want to inject into the system. Of course the water is going through the well that is no problem we have an injector pump, this is going to hold our chemistry and our nitrogen and we are going to put this in through the system, through the water and the water is going to be our pusher. This will save our farmers if nothing else a trip with a tractor or several trips sometimes with a tractor putting out nitrogen and insecticides those kinds of things that we can put in right through the system.

**(Wildman)**

For more information on drip irrigation contact your local soil and water conservation office. In Bleckley County, I'm Mark Wildman for the Georgia Farm Monitor.