

## **2006 Kentucky Burley Tobacco Leadership Forum Results of Breakout Discussions**

**What is limiting your profitability in burley tobacco?**

### **GROUP**

1. Production costs
2. Yield/acre
3. (tie) Labor
3. (tie) Market prices

Other:

Production calendar  
Barns  
Water  
Contract restrictions/requirements

### **GROUP**

1. Rotation issues
2. Labor issues
3. Uncontrollable issues
  - Disease
  - Weather
  - Yield
  - Quality

Other:

Increased input costs (insurance, fertilizer, fuel)  
Labor efficiency, availability  
Fungicide usage  
Capital investment costs  
Market structure  
Disease pressure  
Economical yield  
Market prices  
Mechanization

## **What is limiting your profitability in burley tobacco? (Continued)**

### **GROUP**

1. Labor cost – burley price/profits
2. Rising input costs – land, barn rent; other inputs
3. Using resources efficiently – customizing labor force to infrastructure (barns) and crop

#### Other:

Disease pressure, disease-free land  
Facilities  
Burley prices (volatility)  
Availability of good barns  
Alternatives to direct contracting (marketing)  
Weeds, insects (primarily diseases as major pest)

### **GROUP**

Yield per acre flat – need current data, identify limiting factors  
Economic yield/profit  
Plant population  
Long-term buyer commitment  
Limit investment  
Black shank-limited acres  
Match yield/quality so quality is not sacrificed for yield  
Labor cost – harvest/stripping; housing cost; per hour cost  
Regulation  
H2A (too much)  
Plant disease import (not enough)

## What is limiting your ability to grow the pounds of burley tobacco you want?

### GROUP

Infrastructure  
Land  
Capital  
Labor  
Best variety – education, on-farm demonstrations  
Variety/soil/environment  
Crop protection products labeled for tobacco

### GROUP

Infrastructure  
Land availability  
Confidence in companies to make infrastructure investments  
Labor  
Age/ambition

### GROUP

1. Labor – mechanization needed to reduce costs; harvesting and stripping; labor shortages, aggravation; expensive
2. Long-term uncertainty – markets
3. Land and infrastructure (barns, etc)

Other:

Varieties to lengthen season – optimize growing conditions  
Age of grower (justification for large investments)  
Time – limited by other farming operations

### GROUP

1. Labor
2. (tie) Land
2. (tie) Barns/facilities
3. (tie) Prices
3. (tie) Uncertainty – future markets

Other:

Water  
Age of producer

**What can the University of Kentucky do in research and Extension to address these limitations, and how can we best communicate this to you?**

**GROUP**

1. Project positive attitude and support for tobacco
2. Delivery of information
  - On-farm trials
  - Grower meetings
  - Faster responses to disease diagnosis
  - Web site information
  - Innovative Grower program
3. Continue research in mechanization (cost-effective)

Other:

- Keep out-of-state plants out of Kentucky
- Overproduction – contract concerns
- Contract oversight
- Economic implications of “specialty” types of production
- Strip-till implications – weed control, disease management, varieties, etc
- Varieties with less lodging
- Variety development

**GROUP**

- Continue research in mechanization
- Continue research in disease prevention/management/control
- Interactive computer software to aid management decisions
- Continue research in variety development
- Machinery management/maintenance

Communication:

- e-mail
- Regional meetings
- Demonstration plots
- County Extension programs
- UK Farm Analysis

**What can the University of Kentucky do in research and Extension to address these limitations, and how can we best communicate this to you? (Continued)**

**GROUP**

Labor management training  
Varieties – black shank, yield, disease resistance  
Mechanization  
Is current practice (infrastructure investment) future practice?  
Hard copy handbook/information – updated; charge?  
Tobacco budget software  
Sucker control – MH-free  
Crooked tobacco – sucker control issue  
More Innovative Tobacco Grower programs  
More frequent tobacco communications – web site, Internet  
Train agents on tobacco  
Regional burley field days – focus areas  
Producers miss the Burley EXPO  
More on-farm research and demonstration

**GROUP**

1. Maintain research and Extension excellence; maintain good personnel
2. Help farmers network with other growers
  - Information delivery
  - Education to growers on TSNAs and other tobacco constituents
  - Education on standards for quality
3. Technology development
  - Best barn designs
  - More research in structural engineering

Other:

Better varieties/early varieties – even GMOs (foreign market acceptance); disease resistance  
Make presently known information more accessible  
Risk management – maintain farm families; educate young farmers on risks  
Information delivery

- Meetings, phone calls, publications
- Regional meetings with more specialists

