Advisory Saves Money, Helps Protect Environment

**The Need:** Diseases reduce the yield and quality of North Carolina peanuts by an estimated 10 percent annually. Particularly at a time when peanut prices have decreased, North Carolina growers need efficient methods of managing the diseases that attack their crops.

**Serving the Need:** The costs and potential environmental impact of chemical disease control can be significantly reduced and efficacy increased by precise timing of fungicide applications based on a better understanding of pathogen biology and disease epidemiology. Peanut disease advisories provided by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in a cooperative effort with the State Climate Office give growers the information they need to apply fungicide only when it is needed. Advisories take into account the weather conditions under which a disease outbreak will be likely and advise growers to spray fungicide only at these times rather than on a predetermined schedule. Every day from July 1 to mid-September in 2006, advisories were delivered to growers by email or over the Web ([http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/cronos/peanut/](http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/cronos/peanut/)). In addition, a new ECONet weather station was established in October at Buckland Elementary School in Gates County. The weather station will provide better quality weather data for peanut disease advisories in northeastern North Carolina and will be available for K-12 instruction in the County.

**Impact beyond North Carolina:** Depending on the location, peanut leaf spot and Sclerotinia advisories resulted in a savings of one or two fungicide sprays compared to a predetermined calendar spray program. Saving a single leaf spot spray across all North Carolina peanut acres saves growers $1 million in fungicide costs alone.

**For more information, contact:** Dr. Barbara Shew, Department of Plant Pathology, 919-515-6984 or barbara_shew@ncsu.edu