

Faces & Places

Research speaks for itself at Agronomy Day

By JOSH FLINT

ONCE again, folks flocked to the University of Illinois' annual Agronomy Day. As always, the big draw was the research showcase. U of I professors were spaced throughout the campus' South Farms, while crowds of farmers sat for a brief 15-minute presentation at each location.

This year's Agronomy Day featured four tours, which focused on weed management, plant genetics, biomass production and insect control. As always, the farming crowd enjoyed picking professors' brains and hanging around to ask farm-specific questions.



BIO CROPS: D.K. Lee, assistant professor of bioenergy crop production, answers questions about potential commercial biomass crops. Folks asked how long energy grasses take to reach maturity, and about harvesting and planting tactics.

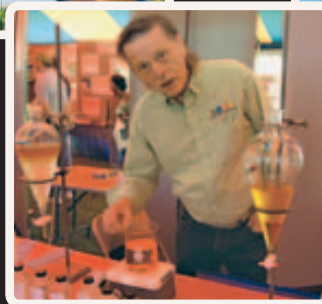


CARBON CONDITION: Elizabeth Ainsworth, assistant professor of plant biology, explains the SoyFACE study, which looks at how corn and beans respond to rising carbon dioxide and ozone levels.



ECONOMICS LESSON: Gary Schnitkey, economics professor, projects how input costs will affect profitability in corn and soybeans for 2009 and 2010.

CHEMISTRY EXPERIMENT: Scott Buchanan, with the National Soybean Research Lab, has all the ingredients to make a small batch of biodiesel.



CROP DIFFERENCES: Gary Letterly, natural resources educator, holds stalks of miscanthus. Unlike switchgrass, which has a hollow core, it has a spongy interior.



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