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CULTURAL SYSTEMS FOR HABANERO PEPPER FOR CAPSAICIN PRODUCTION

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The use of Habanero type peppers for capsaicin production has been proposed as a new crop and part of the NC Speciality Crops Program. In 2001 we attempted to assist in the development of a new industry in the coastal Plain of North Carolina. We took a two pronged approach: growing product on grower fields with the Best Management Practices (BMP) know at present and conducted large research trails to refine these BMPs. We grew from one to two acres of habanero pepper on nine farms within a 30 mile radius of Kinston, NC. During the season we monitored crop production practices and advised growers on various cultural practices. Our research trials evaluated frequency of sidedress fertilization and we determined that application of 18 kg of N per ha one, two or three times did not differ in production or plant growth. We compared plant populations of 12.3 to 31 m per ha and found only slight variations in yield. We are awaiting laboratory analysis for determination of the yield of capsaicin per hectare from these trials.