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## **Study finds High Plains crop production supports 103,000 jobs**

**LUBBOCK, Texas (November 27, 2012)** – An economic analysis conducted by Texas Tech University and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension found crop production supported more than 103,000 jobs and generated more than \$12.2 billion in economic activity in 2010 in the Texas High Plains region.

Those findings come from a new, first of its kind economic model that can now be used to measure the economic effects of different policy options such as changes in water regulations, energy costs, and federal farm programs according to one of the leaders of the research, Darren Hudson, Ph.D, the Larry Combest Endowed Chair for Agricultural Competitiveness at Texas Tech.

“We’ve always known crop production was a huge part of the economy of this region, but now we have a comprehensive model that can measure in dollars and jobs the total amount of economic activity generated by growing, selling and processing crops in the Texas High Plains,” Hudson said at a press conference held today in Lubbock.

The measures in the study reflect the impact of a wide variety of economic activity including production costs, such as buying seed, fertilizer, fuel, labor and equipment, as well as post-production processing of crops in the area, including livestock and dairy usage, cotton gins, grain elevators and other relevant processing.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Program Specialist Bridget Guerrero, Ph.D, a lead researcher on the study, elaborated that the study also includes the effects of the spending by businesses and individuals who earn income from all of these activities.

“This is a unique approach to this kind of analysis that isn’t done anywhere else in the country,” Guerrero said. “We’re really on the forefront of being able to determine the full impact of agricultural production to the regional economy, and not just a piece of it.”

Economists will use this newly developed model to assess the economic impact of potential policy changes, including changes in regulations on using groundwater for irrigating crops.

The study used a five-year average (2006-2010) of crop production in 41 counties in the Texas High Plains. The crops analyzed were alfalfa, corn, corn silage, cotton, peanuts, grain sorghum, sorghum silage and wheat.

The research project was launched in April 2010 through financial contributions from Texas commodity groups. Representatives from five water districts and six commodity groups serve on a steering committee for the project.

Funding for this research was made possible by North Plains Groundwater Conservation District, Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., Texas Corn Producers Board, High Plains Underground Water Conservation District, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District, Select Milk Producers, Texas Association of Dairywomen, Texas Cattle Feeders Association, Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Seed Trade Association, Texas Sorghum Producers, Texas Wheat Producers, and Texas Peanut Producers Board.

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