

PCG Elects New Officer Team, Executive Committee Members

Friday, April 15, 2016

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Johnie Reed of Kress, Texas, was elected president of Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., for 2016-2017 during PCG's quarterly Board of Directors meeting last week in Lubbock.

Joining Reed on the PCG officer team are Stacy Smith of New Home, Texas, elected vice president; and Brent Nelson of Sudan, Texas, elected secretary-treasurer of the 41-county cotton producer organization.

Each year the PCG Board also elects a total of nine directors, three from each of the organization's three districts, to serve alongside the organization's three elected officers and two most recent past presidents. The immediate past president serves as chairman of the board.

Members of the 2016-2017 PCG Executive Committee are: District 1 representatives Frank Bezner Jr. of Hereford, Brent Coker of Springlake, and Martin Stoerner of Lockney; District 2 representatives Travis Mires of O'Donnell, Scott Harmon of Idalou, and David Carter of Levelland; District 3 representatives Jeremy Brown of Lamesa, Al Spinks of Midland and Eddy Herm of Ackerly; President Johnie Reed of Kress, Vice President Stacy Smith of New Home, Secretary-Treasurer Brent Nelson of Sudan, Board Chairman Shawn Holladay of Lamesa, and Past President Craig Heinrich of Slaton.

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Holladay, Verett Receive Awards from Lamesa Cotton Growers

Friday, April 15, 2016 By Russel Skiles, Lamesa Press-Reporter
Shawn Holladay and Steve Verett each knew they would be taking part in a special award presentation this past Wednesday at the Lamesa Cotton Growers meeting.

Each, however, thought he would be involved only as a presenter, not as an award recipient.

Holladay, a former president of the Lamesa Cotton Growers and current president of Plains Cotton Growers, received the prestigious Mr. Cotton award.

Verett, executive vice president of Plains Cotton Growers, was presented with the Lamesa organization's Friend of Cotton award.

"This is a great honor. I was led to believe I would only be presenting an award," Verett said after accepting a plaque from Lamesa Cotton Growers President Johnny Todd.

Helping present the Mr. Cotton honor, Verett praised Holladay for being a tireless advocate for cotton and cotton producers.

"He's worked very hard on everyone's behalf," Verett said. "I just can't say enough about what he has done for you and for every producer on the High Plains."

The time Holladay has spent in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere on behalf of the cotton industry sometimes has been at the sacrifice of his own farming operation, Verett added.

Holladay drew similar praise from Craig Brown, vice president of producer affairs for the National Cotton Council.

Noting that one mark of a true leader is an ability to develop a consensus, Verett said, "Shawn has helped bring the industry together on some difficult issues."

Brown noted that Holladay has been retained by two different leaders of the National Cotton Council's American Cotton Producers organization to chair that group's Farm Policy Committee.

A Lubbock resident who grew up in Dawson County and continues to farm here, Holladay is a board member of the National Cotton Council.

Only a short time earlier, Holladay had praised Verett during the presentation of the Friend of Cotton award.

"He's passionate about cotton and cotton producers," Holladay said.

In addition to his leadership of Plains Cotton Growers, Verett is a Crosby County cotton producer and has held various national leadership positions in agriculture.

"I appreciate the relationship we've always had with Lamesa Cotton Growers," Verett said after receiving the award. "This organization has provided a tremendous amount of leadership for cotton."

Both Holladay and Verett also received praise from Congressman Mike Conaway (R-Midland), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, who was a guest speaker at Wednesday's meeting.

"They truly have got your best interests at heart," Conaway told the group. "You guys are well represented."

USDA Announces 2016 Cotton Loan Rate Differentials

Thursday, April 14, 2016

From the Farm Service Agency

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency today announced the 2016-crop loan rate differentials for upland and extra-long staple cotton.

The differentials, also referred to as loan rate premiums and discounts, have been calculated based on market valuations of various cotton quality factors for the prior three years. This calculation procedure is identical to that used in past years. The

Commodity Credit Corporation adjusts cotton loan rates by these differentials so that cotton loan values reflect the differences in market prices for color, staple length, leaf, extraneous matter, micronaire, length uniformity and strength.

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The 2016-crop differential schedules are applied to 2016-crop loan rates of 52.00 cents per pound for the base grade of upland cotton and 79.77 cents per pound for extra-long staple cotton. The loan rate provided to an individual cotton bale is based on the quality of each individual bale as determined by Agricultural Marketing Service classing measurements.

The tables of these loan rate differentials are available on the FSA website at <http://go.usa.gov/3W8tV>. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Erik Dohlman at (202) 720-4284 or by email at Erik.Dohlman@wdc.usda.gov.

Want the facts about the U.S. agriculture and farm policy?
<http://www.farmpolicyfacts.org>

Tour Seeks To Elevate Koreans' Desire For U.S. Cotton

Monday, April 11, 2016 From Cotton Council International
 Key textile executives from 10 Korean companies will tour the U.S. Cotton Belt on April 17-22 to observe U.S. cotton production, processing and marketing and to meet with U.S. cotton exporters. The COTTON USA Korean Special Trade Mission is being conducted by Cotton Council International (CCI), the National Cotton Council's export promotions arm.

At this point in the 2015-16 marketing year (which ends on July 31, 2016), Korea ranks as the sixth largest U.S. cotton importer with current U.S. export commitments to Korea at 440,000 bales. The country imported 650,000 U.S. bales in the 2014-15 marketing year.

U.S. market share with the 10 participating Korean companies is estimated at 54 percent. These mills are expected to consume about 1.1 million bales in 2015-16, representing 85 percent of Korea's total cotton consumption. Of significance is that many Korean textile mills also have textile investments outside of Korea, primarily in Vietnam, and those spinning mills consume some 390,000 bales, of which about 182,000 bales are from the United States.

CCI President Keith Lucas said, "We hope this tour will provide these Korean executives "with a better appreciation for U.S. cotton's superior quality and our industry's outstanding reputation for timely delivery so that their desire for using more U.S. cotton will increase."

The Korean delegation will begin its tour in New York with a CCI briefing and an ICE Futures seminar. They will see cotton research in North Carolina, tour the USDA cotton classing office in Bartlett, Tenn., and visit a farm in California's San Joaquin Valley. They also will spend time in Lubbock, where they will see the Bayer Museum of Agriculture, tour a farm, and visit with industry leaders at a dinner and also at a breakfast seminar.

The group will meet with exporters in the Cotton Belt's four major regions and with these industry organizations: AMCOT, American Cotton Producers, American Cotton Shippers Association, Cotton Incorporated, Lubbock Cotton Exchange, National Cotton Council, Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., Southern Cotton Growers Association, Texas Cotton Association, Western Cotton Shippers Association and Supima.

Subcommittee Examines Growing Farm Financial Pressure

Thursday, April 14, 2016 From the House Ag Committee
 Today, the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management held a hearing on the growing financial pressures faced by U.S. farmers and ranchers.

Conditions in farm country today contrast sharply with those during the formulation of the 2014 Farm Bill. While high prices for many farm commodities led to tremendous growth in net farm income through 2013, many of those prices have spiraled downward over the past three years. Witnesses spoke broadly about the factors that are driving current market conditions, the bleak outlook going forward, and the impact that both are having and could continue to have on our nation's farmers and ranchers going forward. They also spoke to the vital role that farm policy and crop insurance are playing in helping absorb some of the shock, and they stressed the devastating impact that further reductions to these vital tools could have.

"When America was going through the Great Recession, agriculture was one of the bright spots in the economy. It provided jobs, a trade surplus, and security for our nation. Now, as the overall economy continues to recover, the farm economy has been turned on its head. In fact, net farm income has dropped 56 percent over the past three years alone. While many producers are struggling just to hang on, some in Washington continue to advocate for gutting the farm safety net. Those same folks refuse to acknowledge that the 2014 Farm Bill was written for times just like these and that we would be spending considerably more were it not for the reforms included in the 2014 Farm Bill. Now is not the time to pull the rug out from under our nation's hard working farm and ranch families," said Subcommittee Chairman Rick Crawford (AR-01).

"Today's hearing was the first in a series the Agriculture Committee will be holding to focus on growing financial stress in farm country. With low commodity prices, high input costs, and no relief in sight, the farm safety net is proving vital to helping our nation's farmers and ranchers weather growing economic uncertainty. Today's hearing was also a reminder that farm policy critics live in a fantasy land where markets are fully functioning, foreign countries play by the rules, and the weather always cooperates. Unfortunately, our farmers and ranchers must operate in the real world, and it is in our nation's best interest to continue providing them with the risk management tools they need to continue feeding and clothing our nation," said Agriculture Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11).

Written testimony provided by the witnesses from today's hearing, along with more information about the hearing, is available on the House Committee on Agriculture's website at <http://agriculture.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=3258>. Witnesses included Vincent "Zippy" Duvall, President, American Farm Bureau Federation; Roger Johnson, President, National Farmers Union; Dr. Rob Johansson, Chief Economist, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Dr. Joe Outlaw, Professor and Extension Economist, Co-Director, Agricultural and Food Policy Center, Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University.

Editor's Note:
 "Cotton News", a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to us all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email editor@plainscotton.org