

Signups Begin Monday, June 20 for Cotton Ginning Cost-Share Program

Friday, June 17, 2016

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Cotton growers should be watching for a form in the mail from the Farm Service Agency that should be reviewed, signed and returned to FSA in order to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's recently announced Cotton Ginning Cost-Share Program. The program will provide an estimated \$300 million in much-needed assistance to growers across the Cotton Belt.

Signup for this one-time payment begins Monday, June 20. FSA will be mailing a pre-filled form to every cotton producer who had a share of the 2015 crop indicating certified planted acres. Any disputed acres must be reconciled in person at the FSA office. The signed form must be returned to the FSA office either in person, fax, or e-mail no later than August 5, 2016. There will be no extension of the deadline. Payments will be made periodically as signup takes place with expected payments to begin in early July.

Qualifying payments will be determined by a producer's 2015 cotton acres reported to FSA, multiplied by 40 percent of the average ginning cost for each production region. Payments to Texas producers will be \$36.97 per acre.

The program has the same eligibility requirements as were used for the 2014 Cotton Transition Assistance Program, including a \$40,000 per producer payment limit, requirement to be actively engaged in farming, meet conservation compliance and a \$900,000 adjusted gross income limit. Producers will not need to have a 2016 AGI certification in place if they already have an AGI form for 2015 that represents tax returns from 2011, 2012, and 2013.

For more on the Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program, visit <http://www.plainscotton.org> or contact your local FSA office.

State-Federal Agreement Will Provide Timely Crop Estimates For Texas Agriculture

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

From TDA

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller announced a new cooperative agreement between the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Services (USDA-NASS) to provide in-season district-level estimates on acreage, yield and production for Texas wheat, corn, cotton and sorghum crops. The agreement was signed at TDA's Austin headquarters by Commissioner Miller and USDA-NASS Southern Plains Regional Field Office Director Wilbert Hundl, Jr.

"This partnership is an important step forward in providing timely and accurate statistics to agricultural interests throughout Texas, including groups like Plains Cotton Growers," Commissioner Miller said. "I am very appreciative to Plains Cotton Growers for facilitating meetings between the Texas Department of Agriculture and directors of the USDA

agricultural statistics Texas field office. These meetings ultimately lead to the creation of this new agreement, and I couldn't be more pleased to see this partnership come to life."

The terms of the agreement stipulate that USDA-NASS wheat, corn, cotton and sorghum estimates will be provided for each crop when it is in season. These estimates are used throughout the agriculture industry for resource management planning, transport decisions and marketing strategies. The availability of in-season reporting is highly advantageous to Texas agricultural producers as it strengthens the reliability and availability of current crop data and trends. The electronic report will be posted to the Texas and Oklahoma USDA-NASS websites and provided to TDA as part of a monthly Crop Production Report.

"Texas is a large and diverse agricultural state," Johnie Reed, president of Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., said. "The ability to obtain district and county wide information derived from state data through this cooperative agreement is important to the agriculture industry. It provides the agriculture industry with more accurate information on planted and harvested acres, in addition to production and yield, which in many instances is utilized in federal farm programs and marketing and decision aid tools for producers. Plains Cotton Growers greatly appreciates this effort by TDA and USDA-NASS."

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Sunbelt Agricultural Leaders to See Idaho Agricultural Operations

Wednesday, June 15, 2016 From the National Cotton Council
Sunbelt farmers will get a look at a diverse range of agricultural production and processing operations in southern Idaho on June 20-23 as part of the National Cotton Council's Multi-Commodity Education Program.

Launched in 2006, the MCEP is coordinated by NCC's Member Services staff and local leaders and organizations. The program is supported by The Cotton Foundation with a grant from John Deere.

The program is designed to provide its participants with: 1) a better understanding of production issues/concerns faced by their peers in another geographic region and 2) an opportunity to observe agronomic practices, technology utilization, cropping patterns, marketing plans and operational structure. Other program benefits are the continuing dialogue among American farmers, regardless of their crops or locations, and the creation of strong and lasting relationships between this nation's current and future producer leaders.

("COTTON NEWS" continued on Page 2)

The 2016 tour's participants, selected by the NCC and USA Rice, are: Curtis Berry, Robinsonville, Miss.; Lee Cromley, Brooklet, Ga.; Barry Evans, Kress, Texas; Allan Fuchs, Garden City, Texas; Richard Lindsey, Centre, Ala.; Tommy Moore, Somerville, Tenn.; Steve Olson, Plainview, Texas; Herbert Price, Dixie, Ga.; Sam Spruell, Mount Hope, Ala.; Dean Wells, Casa Grande, Ariz.; Jim Whitaker, McGehee, Ark.; and Steve Wilbur, Tulare, California. Also participating are Andrew Grobmyer, representing the Agricultural Council of Arkansas, Little Rock; and Craig Brown, the NCC's vice president, Producer Affairs, and John Gibson, the NCC's director, Member Services, both from NCC headquarters in Memphis.

The tour, which was arranged by the Idaho Barley Commission and Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGPA), will begin on June 20 with an overview of Idaho agriculture from staffers with IGPA and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. The group then will look at operations involved with malt barley, seed barley, wheat, seed potatoes and cattle before touring a cow-calf operation and a phosphate mine.

The next day, the group will visit the University of Idaho Aberdeen Research & Extension Center and the USDA Agricultural Research Service's National Small Grains & Potato Research Facility before traveling to American Falls for a tour of the ConAgra Lamb Weston frozen potato processing plant.

The group will begin June 22 with a tour of Glanbia Cheese's world research and development headquarters in Twin Falls before touring the Southfield Dairy in Buhl and then the nearby Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station for a presentation on farm-raised trout production.

On the tour's last day, June 23, the group will depart Idaho Falls for a visit to the InteGrow Malt Plant before touring the Larsen Farms hay compaction facility and seeing local crop production operations in the Dubois area. They also will visit a John Deere implement dealership in Rexburg, tour the nearby Wilcox Fresh potato packing facility, and conclude the trip with a look at more barley, wheat and potato farming operations in the area.

Farm Service Agency Opens County Committee Nominations

Tuesday, June 14, 2016 From the Farm Service Agency
 The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that the nomination period for farmers and ranchers to serve on local Farm Service Agency county committees begins Wednesday, June 15, 2016.

"Through the county committees, farmers and ranchers have a voice. Their opinions and ideas get to be heard on federal farm programs," said FSA Administrator Val Dolcini. "I encourage all eligible farmers and ranchers across the spectrum of American agriculture, to get involved in this year's elections. We have seen an increase in the number of qualified nominees, especially among women and minorities, and I hope that trend continues."

To be eligible to serve on a FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an FSA administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area where they are nominated.

Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others. Organizations representing minorities and women also may nominate candidates. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. 2016 nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 1, 2016.

FSA will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 7, 2016. Ballots must be returned to the local county office via mail or in person by Dec. 5, 2016. Newly-elected committee members and alternates will take office on Jan. 1, 2017.

Nationwide, there are approximately 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. These individuals make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs, and other agricultural issues. Committees consist of three to 11 members that are elected by eligible producers, and members serve three-year terms.

To learn more about county committees, contact your local FSA county office or visit <http://offices.usda.gov/> to find a county office near you.

SAVE THE DATE

5th Annual
Celebrate Cotton Game
Saturday, Sept. 17
 6 p.m.
 Texas Tech Red Raiders
 Louisiana Tech Bulldogs



Denim: A Cotton Icon

Friday, June 10, 2016 From Cotton Council International
 COTTON USA's latest UK campaign explored and celebrated the importance of cotton denim. The campaign looked back at the styles that have made jeans such a key part of fashion and textiles industries, and brought iconic looks to life in a dedicated video.

The campaign was supported by fresh insights discovered as part of Cotton Council International and Cotton Incorporated's Global Lifestyle Monitor, which revealed that the UK's wardrobes are bursting with more than 321 million pairs of jeans – the same as five pairs per person.

To date, the campaign has caught the eye of international media, and has resulted in an overall readership of more than 544 million. This includes pieces published on Daily Express (26.7 million unique monthly readers), Daily Mirror (76.3 million unique monthly readers) and two separate hits on Daily Mail Online (220.0 million unique monthly readers).

The campaign has also proved as a hit with COTTON USA's social media followers. So far, the content has reached a staggering 207,000 people around the world on channels including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. It has generated high levels of engagement and positive comments across all platforms - including 4,600 likes on Instagram.

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