

NASS Raises 2016 Cotton Production Estimates for Texas High Plains

Friday, November 11, 2016

By Mary Jane Buerkle

The National Agricultural Statistics Service estimates in their November Crop Production Report that Texas High Plains cotton growers will produce 4,375,000 bales in 2016, which would be the largest crop since 2010.

This estimate is up 275,000 bales from their October report, supporting feedback from many area producers who have said that they've been pleasantly surprised with their yields. It is important to note, however, that the survey period ended before growers could assess the impact of the severe weather and rainfall events occurring over the past 10 days. Any changes will be reflected in the December report.

Production estimates in the Northern High Plains increased by 105,000 to 1,255,000 bales, and the Southern High Plains increased by 170,000 bales to surpass the 3-million bale mark at 3,120,000.

Yield per acre increased for the Northern High Plains from 741 pounds in October to 809 in the November estimate. The Southern High Plains was raised slightly from 530 pounds in October to 561 in November. Harvested acres remained the same as the October report – 745,000 in the NHP and 2,670,000 in the SHP. The abandonment rate stands at just more than 8 percent.

Statewide, the production number jumped by 400,000 bales from October, to 6.9 million bales. The nationwide estimate for upland cotton increased to 15.6 million bales, up slightly from an estimated 15.5 million in the October report and up 25 percent from 2015.

December futures were trading around 68 cents at press time, although they had surpassed the 70-cent mark earlier in the day.

Additional rainfall has delayed harvest progress, although some producers have been able to get back into the fields in the past few days. Quality so far remains good, with the Lubbock classing office reporting almost 83 percent at color grade 21 or better. Length for the season so far is at 36.43 and leaf grades are at 2.32. Complete quality reports are available at www.plainscotton.org.

EPA Registers Dicamba Formulation for Use on Dicamba-Tolerant Crops

Friday, November 11, 2016

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Cotton growers will have another tool in their toolbox for managing weeds in 2017, as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Wednesday announced that they are registering a dicamba formulation, Xtendimax™ with VaporGrip™ Technology, to control weeds in dicamba-tolerant cotton and soybean crops.

This formulation, according to the EPA, has an additive that is specifically designed to reduce volatility, and “the label requires very specific and rigorous drift mitigation measures,”

they said. The full release from the EPA is available at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/epa-registers-dicamba-formulation-use-dicamba-tolerant-crops>.

“I am pleased that the EPA has registered this unique formulation of dicamba for use in dicamba-tolerant cotton,” said Dr. Pete Dotray, Leidigh Professor in the Department of Plant and Soil Science at Texas Tech University, who serves on the EPA’s Science Advisory Board’s Agricultural Science Committee and also is a weed science specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. “A weed management system utilizing dicamba will improve weed management options in West Texas, especially for control of glyphosate-resistant Palmer amaranth and other difficult-to-control weeds. I look forward to discussing this registration at county meetings this off-season, so growers are fully aware how best to utilize and steward this herbicide.”

PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett noted that this technology will be useful to growers across the Cotton Belt and particularly on the Texas High Plains.

“Cotton producers have been waiting for this and other technologies that will help them manage weeds more effectively while maximizing yield potential,” Verett said. “However, it is important to remember that growers must continue to be vigilant about their spraying and be aware of their surroundings and others’ farming practices.”

Monsanto Company projects more than 3 million acres of Bollgard II® XtendFlex® cotton in 2017, according to a news release.

“XtendiMax with VaporGrip Technology introduces a step-change reduction in volatility potential compared to dicamba formulations currently on the market today,” Ryan Rubischko, North America dicamba portfolio lead for Monsanto, said in the release. “With the EPA’s approval of XtendiMax with VaporGrip Technology, we will build on our existing education programs and best management practices using XtendiMax with VaporGrip Technology in-crop with the Roundup Ready Xtend Crop System.”

Want the facts about the U.S. agriculture and farm policy?

<http://www.farmpolicyfacts.org>

PCG's Bessent Named as One of Lubbock's Top 20 Under 40

Friday, November 11, 2016

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Kody Bessent, vice president of operations and legislative affairs for Plains Cotton Growers, was named to Lubbock’s Top 20 Under 40 by the Young Professionals of Lubbock, a program of the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce.

This initiative aims to recognize outstanding individuals under the age of 40 who exemplify leadership in their careers, while actively participating in the community.

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"We are thrilled that Kody was chosen for this prestigious award," PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said. "This is a testament to his hard work and his leadership qualities, but most importantly, his excellent character. We are a better team at Plains Cotton Growers because of Kody, and we recognize and thank him for his tireless, passionate work on behalf of agriculture and the cotton industry in particular. We're proud to be members of the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce and thank them for providing programs like this to recognize exemplary young leaders like Kody."

Bessent was honored at a banquet on Thursday. The full list of this year's recipients can be found at <http://www.lubbockchamber.com/news/details/lubbock-chamber-2016-twenty-under-forty-award-recipients-announced>.

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Dawson County Cotton Grower Named to USFRA's Faces of Farming and Ranching

Friday, November 11, 2016

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Jeremy Brown, a producer from Dawson County, on Wednesday was named as one of five "Faces of Farming and Ranching" by the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance.

According to a release from the USFRA, this selected group of farmers and ranchers will "share their personal stories through influential conversations on a national stage with consumers, influencers and end users to help earn consumer trust and confidence in U.S. food and agriculture."

"We are excited that Jeremy is being recognized for his advocacy in agriculture," PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said. "It is vital that our farmers, especially our younger farmers, have the opportunity to share their experiences, and Jeremy has done an excellent job of that through social media and by being active in the industry."

Brown serves on the Plains Cotton Growers' Executive Committee, as well as with Texas Farm Bureau and several other agriculture and community initiatives.

For more information on the Faces of Farming & Ranching program and each of the five winners, visit www.fooddialogues.com/farmers-ranchers.

Our View: Hold the Thin Green Line

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

From Farm Policy Facts

Farm Policy Facts has recently noticed an influx of national security-themed commentary coming from the Heritage Foundation.

Jim DeMint, the president, wrote the following in two recent tweets:

"A fully funded defense is a great deterrent to bad actors around the world."

"Years of...budget cuts have resulted in a much weaker military – putting our troops and national security at risk."

And, on the Heritage website, a section devoted to national security and defense says:

"America must be capable of proactively protecting the nation and its citizens. Our armed forces must be ready to act anywhere in the world where vital national interests are threatened. This can be achieved by giving the military the resources it needs to keep us safe and maintain freedom."

We absolutely agree that national security should be a top priority, which is why we find it so ironic that Heritage is simultaneously lobbying to unilaterally disarm America's farm policy. Doing so would harm the rural economy and deal an operational setback to what is currently the most dynamic, competitive, and productive agricultural sector in the world. And, such actions would only make our country less secure.

Having the ability to feed and clothe its citizens is the first step of any country's security, which may be why a recent poll found that 8 in 10 voters agree, "A strong and thriving American farming industry is critical to American national security."

In February 2011, retired Army General Wesley Clark, who also served as the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, penned a passionate article on the topic. Here's an excerpt:

"As a new Congress debates America's future, and the White House builds on a promising State of the Union speech, they should think of the 210,000 farms that produce 80 percent of the country's agricultural output as a thin green line standing between prosperity and disaster.

"Simply put, we must hold the thin green line."

And, most recently, during a hearing of former military leaders speaking to the importance of farm policy, retired Major General Darren G. Owens told members of a congressional panel:

"I firmly believe that America's first line of defense is our ability to feed and clothe the people. Without American agriculture providing adequate supplies of food and fiber at a reasonable cost we would all be dependent on other nations and that could place the food security and ultimately the security of the nation at risk."

These military generals are 100 percent correct.

Let us never forget that America once had to ration food so its citizens and soldiers had enough to eat during World War II. And if we ever think sacrifice like that is a thing of the past, look no farther than the civil unrest currently unfolding in other parts of the world over commodity shortages.

As the Secretary of Agriculture, during World War II, said time and time again: "Food will win the war and write the peace." Or, translated for modern-day: "Hold the thin green line."

Heritage and other farm policy critics would do well to take note.

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 U.S. all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email PCG at: editor@plainscotton.org