

Brown, Holladay Testify Before House Agriculture Committee at Listening Session

Friday, August 4, 2017

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Dawson County cotton producers Julie Holladay and Jeremy Brown were among those who testified before members of the House Agriculture Committee in San Angelo on Monday during one of the committee's three listening sessions held nationwide.

The sessions, titled "The Next Farm Bill: Conversations in the Field," are designed to gather input from farmers, ranchers and stakeholders as the committee works to develop a policy package for 2018. The committee hosted a session in Minnesota earlier this week and have one in California tomorrow (August 5).

Members present for the hearing included House Ag Committee Chairman Mike Conaway (TX); Ranking Member Collin Peterson (MN); Rep. Jodey Arrington (TX); Rep. Darren Soto (FL); Rep. Rodney Davis (IL); Rep. Glenn Thompson (PA); Rep. Roger Marshall (KS); and Rep. David Rouzer (NC).

Both Holladay and Brown stressed the need for assistance for cotton producers in the next Farm Bill, particularly bringing cotton back into the commodity program.

"It is imperative that cotton be afforded the same safety net provided other commodities by inclusion in Title I of the Farm Bill," Holladay said in her remarks. "The level of support which we seek is not a windfall, nor a guarantee of profit; it merely provides stability in the farm economy to help most operations obtain financing and manage through periods of economic stress."

To illustrate some issues growers currently face, Brown spoke of a time he posted a photo on social media of a tractor displayed at the Bayer Museum of Agriculture in Lubbock, and someone commented that they had bought that tractor, brand-new, for \$34,000 in 1979 when he sold cotton for 80 cents a pound. Last year, the commenter said, a tractor cost him \$228,000 and he sold cotton for 60 cents a pound.

"Farmers...we're resilient," Brown said. "We do have challenges, but we'll meet those challenges; I believe that. But we're going to have to have a strong farm bill to meet those challenges. ...Putting cotton back in Title I is very crucial to what I do."

Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson expressed their appreciation to those testifying at the listening session in a news release.

"Agriculture is the lifeblood of Texas, and the stories we heard from farmers and ranchers today strike at the heart of why we have a farm bill," Conaway said. "The farm bill underpins the entire rural economy – an economy that has been under tremendous strain over the past four years. Improving economic conditions in farm country is instrumental in ensuring that Americans continue to enjoy the safest, most abundant and most affordable food and fiber supply in the world.

"I appreciated hearing from Texas farmers and ranchers today, and I am eager to take their input back to Washington as we continue crafting the next farm bill," Conaway said.

"It was great to be in Texas with Chairman Conaway to hear directly from the region's farmers and ranchers on what is, and maybe isn't working, in the current farm bill," Peterson said. "The Committee can use the input we gathered today when we go back to Washington to write a new bill. I thank everyone who took the time to come out and share their opinions."

2017 Risk-Sharing Claim Deadlines Rapidly Approaching

Friday, August 4, 2017

By Shawn Wade

Deadlines to file 2017-crop claims for Replant and Crop Loss under risk-sharing programs offered by seed and technology providers are rapidly approaching. To assist growers in sorting out the details of the various programs offered in 2017 Plains Cotton Growers, Inc. has aggregated available, printable versions of the various risk-sharing program documents available from cotton seed providers.

As a general rule August 14 or August 15 appear to be two dates that growers need to be aware of at this time. Most companies offering replant and/or crop loss programs in 2017 have established these dates as the final dates growers may file claims for reimbursement under either of these early season risk-sharing programs.

Growers should contact their sales representative or distributor to obtain definitive information regarding deadlines and eligibility.

It is important to note that the replant and crop loss claims process are separate from the dryland drought programs for which eligibility depends on whether the crop is ultimately harvested and, if harvested, the final harvested yields on non-irrigated acreage and typically utilize claim deadlines in early January 2018.

Documentation for the 2017 Replant, Crop Loss and Non-irrigated Drought Relief is available on the PCG website.

Southeast, Far West Cotton Producers to See Texas Operations

Wednesday, August 2, 2017

From the National Cotton Council

Fifteen cotton producers from the Southeast and Far West U.S. cotton production regions will see cotton and other agriculture-related operations in Texas on August 14-18 as part of the 2017 National Cotton Council's Producer Information Exchange.

Sponsored by Bayer's grant to The Cotton Foundation, the P.I.E. program is in its 29th year of helping its U.S. cotton producer participants improve yields and fiber quality. The program has exposed more than 1,100 U.S. cotton producers to innovative production practices in regions different than their own. Specifically, the program helps producers improve their overall farming operation efficiency by: 1) gaining new perspectives in such fundamental practices as land preparation,

(*"COTTON NEWS" continued on Page 2*)

planting, fertilization, pest control, irrigation and harvesting and 2) observing firsthand the unique ways in which their peers are using current technology. The NCC's Member Services staff, in conjunction with local producer interest organizations, conducts the program, including participant selection.

The tour participants are: Alabama - Phil Ashley, Fort Payne; Liz Rhodes, Guin; Justin Smedley, Gadsden; and Adam Wilson, Jacksonville; Florida - Nick Marshall, Baker; Georgia - Dillard Cody, Damascus; and Win Rentz, Newton; North Carolina - Alex Britton and Justin Burgess, both of Conway; Virginia - Jamie Babb, Windsor; and Jameson Lowe, Wakefield; and California - Corky Pedretti, El Nido; Matt Burns and Eric Fontana, both of Dos Palos; and Wyatt McKean, Riverdale.

The tour will begin on August 14 in Lubbock where the group will get an overview of the Texas High Plains from Plains Cotton Growers Executive Vice President Steve Verett, a presentation on Texas water issues/Ogallala Aquifer from Ronnie Hopper, a Petersburg cotton producer; and a report on the e3 Sustainable Cotton Program at Bayer's Seeds Innovation Center.

The group then will travel to Brownfield for tours of Nick Seaton's and Anthony Ferguson's farms where they will see cotton production as well as production of black eyed peas, peanuts and wine grapes. They will end the day with a visit to Cotton Creek Farms in New Home and tours of other cotton farms in the area.

On August 15, the group will see cotton production on Smith Farms in Floydada; get a presentation on High Plains farm equipment at Hurst Farm Supply in Lorenzo; and then tour PYCO and Farmers Cooperative Compress in Lubbock.

The next two days will be spent in Texas' Rio Grande Valley. On August 16, the group will begin their day in Mercedes with a look at ginning at the Ross Gin Company before observing sugar cane processing at Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers in Santa Rosa. They also will hear a presentation on trans-shipment of cotton to Mexico at Colimar International's warehouse in Alamo before touring Rio Farms in Monte Alto and visiting other farms in that area.

On August 17, the producers will begin their tour in Harlingen with visits to Valley Coop Oil Mill and then to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality where they will learn about water delivery from the Rio Grande river. They also will visit the Hidalgo Water District #5 Rio Grande River Lift Station, see agricultural traffic at the Progreso International Bridge; and tour Chris Bauer Farms and the Frank Russell Farm, both near San Benito. The group's tour will end at the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation in Harlingen with an update on the status of boll weevil eradication in the Rio Grande Valley.

The Cotton Board Hires New Regional Communication Managers

Tuesday, August 1, 2017

From The Cotton Board

The Cotton Board has hired two new Regional Communication Managers (RCMs). Christi Chadwell will serve as the Southwest RCM, with a territory including central and south Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Shelley Heinrich will serve as the Southern Plains RCM, covering north

Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma. The new RCMs will train under the current Southwest RCM, Bob Stanley, who is retiring in October of this year.

The Cotton Board's RCMs work to ensure that stakeholders of the Cotton Research and Promotion Program in their respective territories are informed of the activities stemming from the Program as conducted by Cotton Incorporated and administered by the Cotton Board. The RCMs visit producers in the field, speak at industry meetings, participate in trade shows, and coordinate producer tours of Cotton Incorporated.

Christi Chadwell currently serves as the Communications and Recruiting Coordinator for the Plant and Soil Science Department at Texas Tech University. In her role at Texas Tech, Chadwell organizes the Texas International Cotton School. Chadwell has a master's degree in Agricultural Communications from Texas Tech University and currently resides in Lubbock, TX. Her official start date with The Cotton Board is August 23rd.

"I'm excited to join a dynamic group of individuals with such a positive impact on the cotton industry. I'm looking forward to being able to interact with producers, give them insight into the groundbreaking research and promotion being done in the industry, and working alongside so many other great organizations," said Chadwell.

Before joining The Cotton Board, Shelley Heinrich, from Slaton, TX, served as the Development Director for the National Sorghum Producers. Her role with the National Sorghum Producers included developing and building successful relationship programs with both industry and producers. Heinrich serves on the board for the Bayer Museum of Agriculture in Lubbock and on the Lubbock County Ag Committee. Heinrich officially joined The Cotton Board team on July 17th.

"I'm looking forward to traveling across my territory and meeting as many cotton producers as possible. Bob Stanley has been an instrumental industry leader for many years. I look forward to following in his footsteps and continuing to serve and educate producers about the many benefits of the Program so they are better positioned to maximize their opportunities," said Heinrich.

The Cotton Board's other RCMs are: Monty Bain, Southeast RCM covering Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia; and Brent Murphree, Mid-South RCM, covering Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.

TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE

6th Annual
 Celebrate Cotton Game
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 7 p.m.
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Special Promo Code
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COTTON17

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