

Efforts Continue on Cotton Assistance

Friday, November 3, 2017

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Harvest is well under way and although discussion surrounding the next farm bill is beginning to intensify, cotton producers facing factors beyond their control are hoping for more immediate assistance for the 2017 crop year.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott was in Washington, DC this week and met with several members of Congress, the USDA and the Office of Management and Budget, and thanks to the efforts of Plains Cotton Growers and Texas Sen. Charles Perry, who serves as Chairman of the Texas Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs, Gov. Abbott carried a letter with him that outlined the need for disaster assistance, including a Cotton Ginning Cost Share Program for the 2017 crop year.

The letter specifically asked for the following:

--Additional flexibility for the Secretary to use Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and Section 32 funds to provide relief as has been successfully done in response to previous disasters;

--Adequate funding to fill the backlog of existing disaster programs such as Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised fish (ELAP), Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Emergency Watershed Program (EWP), or other similar programs to aid producers recovering from Hurricane Harvey;

--Operation of the Cotton Ginning Cost Share Program (CGCS) for the 2017 crop year, as was used in 2015. A disproportionate share of direct losses were borne by cotton producers in the Coastal Bend due to Harvey and in additional cotton states as a result of other hurricanes. These negative impacts were felt across the entire industry, thus an industry-wide program would be appropriate, and;

--Consideration of retroactive changes to existing programs where limitations have affected their efficacy or the provision for alternative methods of delivering assistance where current programs are insufficient to respond to this historic disaster event.

"Cotton growers across the Cotton Belt are dealing with numerous challenges to their operations, and we're doing everything we can to effectively advocate for them and work to secure some assistance," PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said.

The letter was addressed to House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue and OMB Director Mick Mulvaney. Copies also were sent to the Texas Congressional delegation.

Plains Cotton Growers greatly appreciates the collaborative work with Chairman Perry and Governor Abbott in advocating for much needed assistance for the agriculture industry and cotton producers in Texas.

Key Textile Customers Tour Cotton Belt

Friday, November 3, 2017

From Cotton Council International

Textile manufacturing executives representing 15 countries visited the U.S. Cotton Belt to get a better understanding of why U.S. cotton is the cotton the world trusts. Twenty-five international textile executives, from 25 different companies, participated in this 40th COTTON USA Orientation Tour.

The purpose of the Orientation Tour is to provide participants with an overall understanding of the U.S. cotton industry and introduce them to new business contacts to grow their purchases of U.S. cotton. As a result of the Orientation Tour, 100% of the participants expect to purchase additional cotton in the next year. In total, they anticipate purchasing almost 930,000 additional bales of U.S. cotton.

CCI President Eduardo L. (Eddy) Esteve said this long-standing CCI event "provided our industry members the opportunity to enhance relationships with some of U.S. cotton's best global customers. These customers got a closer look at COTTON USA and saw how we are working to grow the highest quality, cleanest fiber in the world in the most sustainable manner."

On post-event surveys, all of the respondents said they felt the Orientation Tour provided them an opportunity to learn more about COTTON USA and to learn more about the U.S. cotton industry. Some 95 percent felt the Orientation Tour provided them an opportunity to develop new business contacts and relationships.

When asked how familiar they were with COTTON USA, 62 percent of the participant responded they were very familiar (38 percent somewhat familiar). This is in contrast to 40 percent who responded they were very familiar prior to the Tour.

The Orientation Tour included executives from Bangladesh, China, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam. The manufacturers are expected to consume about 2.6 million bales in 2017, and the U.S. market share with them is estimated at about 43 percent. The countries represented on this year's tour consume about 100 million cotton bales per year in their textile mills, which represents about 85 percent of the world's cotton consumption.

The Tour participants visited a cotton farm in West Texas, observed cotton research in North Carolina and Mississippi, and toured the USDA cotton classing office in Bartlett, Tennessee. They met with exporters in the four major Cotton Belt regions and got briefings from CCI; the NCC; Cotton Incorporated; the American Cotton Shippers Association; the Texas Cotton Association; the Lubbock Cotton Exchange; AMCOT; the American Cotton Producers; the Delta Council; the Southern Cotton Growers Association; Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.; the Western Cotton Shippers Association; and Supima.

Nearly 900 textile executives from more than 60 countries have participated in CCI's biennial Orientation Tour, which was initiated in 1968. Major Tour objectives are to increase U.S. cotton customers' awareness of the types/qualities of U.S. cotton, help them gain a better understanding of U.S. marketing practices and enhance their relationships with U.S. exporters.

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

<http://www.farmpolicyfacts.org>