

Cotton Harvest Commences on the Texas High Plains; Farm Bill Still Stalled

Friday, September 28, 2018

By Mary Jane Buerkle

It's off to the races for the 2018 cotton crop, with at least three gins processing cotton already, and if the weather holds, many more will follow soon.

Oasis Gin, located in Gaines County west of Seminole, ginned the PCG service area's symbolic first bale on Thursday, September 20, at 3:18 p.m. It was grown and harvested by Clay Kemper of Midland County on acreage in Andrews County. The variety was NexGen 4601 and the bale weighed in at 453 pounds.

Rainy, cool weather over the past couple of weeks have slowed end-stage development of this year's crop in parts of the PCG region, but if sunny, warmer days prevail in the next week or two, harvest activity should increase significantly and be in full swing by the middle of October. Hot weather this summer encouraged earlier maturity in some fields.

On the policy front, Sunday's deadline to complete the Farm Bill looms with no resolution immediately in sight. In the House Agriculture Committee's "#FarmBillFriday" series, Chairman Mike Conaway expressed his frustration and reaffirmed once again his commitment to completing the bill before the end of the year. Conaway's remarks as released are as follows:

"I told a writer the other day that I probably played football too long but as long as there was time on the clock, the score didn't matter, you just go at it as hard as you can, for as long as you can. Once the clock goes to all zeros, which will be midnight on Sept. 30, then it's a new game.

"Folks are beginning to talk about extensions or whatever they want to. To me, that means they've given up and I hate giving up. I just—I don't like people who give up. That's just not what we do. Where we sit right now it is across almost all of the titles, there are legitimate policy differences of opinion across them. It's not just SNAP, it's not just the farm bill, it's not just conservation, it's not title—it's a variety of things that we have yet to come to grips with. It's really frustrating because no one of them, who are actually all of them in combination, are worthy of us not getting this done. It's just a matter of having the political will to make those hard choices," Conaway said.

"Producers don't need the additional anxiety or uncertainty of not knowing what the next five years looks like with respect to a farm bill. They're living this five year drop in net farm income, 50 percent drop, the worst since the depression, no real prospects of the commodity prices getting any better, so getting the farm bill done is really important, but it's got to be important to everybody negotiating. Right now, I don't get the sense that getting something done has quite the sense of urgency with my Senate colleagues as it does with me.

"I need to make hay while the sun shines right now. It's shining on us and getting this farm bill done ought to be about the policy, it ought to be about the people, it ought to be about who we can help, who we can assist in these really really hard

times. And just know that, the House of Representative guys that are fighting this fight are in it to get this thing done because their recognition of just how tough times are right now in production agriculture," Conaway said.

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Upcoming Seed Cotton Program Meetings, Crop Tours and Field Days

October 3 – NexGen Field Day, 9 a.m., Agrisearch, Inc., Farm, **Edmonson**. Donuts and coffee provided. More info: Americot, 806-793-1431, or your local NexGen representative.

October 3 – Ag Law Workshop, G.C. Broughton Jr. Ag. Complex, 2411 Echols St., **Big Spring**. Meal from 5-6 p.m., program from 6-8 p.m. No fee to attend, but must RSVP by October 1 to the AgriLife Extension office in Howard County at 432-264-2236 or enchandra.mendoza@ag.tamu.edu.

October 4 - Seed Cotton Program Educational Meeting, 9 a.m., Crosbyton Library, 114 W. Aspen St., **Crosbyton**. More info: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Crosby County, 806-675-2347.

October 8 - Swisher County Cotton Tour, 8:30 a.m., Tule Creek Gin, located 4 miles south of **Tulia** on Texas Highway 87. Lunch served, three CEUs available (1-General, 1-Drift, 1-IPM). More info: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Swisher County, 806-995-3726.

If you have a meeting or conference to add to this list, please email maryjane@plainscotton.org or call (806) 792-4904.

Cotton Board Seeks Photos for 2019 Calendar Photo Contest

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

From The Cotton Board

The Cotton Board wants to see your best cotton photos. One winning photo will be selected and featured in The Cotton Board's 2019 Industry Calendar.

To be eligible to win, contestants must first "like" The Cotton Board Facebook page and then email their high-res jpeg photo to sgorman@cottonboard.org. Up to three entries per contestant will be considered. The contest ends on October 5, 2018. Cotton Board staff will vote to determine the winning photo.

The Cotton Board calendar is mailed to every cotton producer and ginner in the U.S. The winner will have their photo, along with photo credit, featured in the 2019 calendar and will also receive a cotton prize pack, including 25 copies of the calendar to share with friends and family, and other cotton prizes.