

## **USDA, Texas Tech to Partner on New Cotton Classing Office**

Friday, June 28, 2019

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Members and friends of Plains Cotton Growers are invited to attend an event on Monday, July 1, as USDA and Texas Tech announce an agreement to open a new Cotton Classing Office in Lubbock on the Texas Tech campus. Remarks begin at 10:30 a.m. in the courtyard of the Bayer Plant Science building, located on campus at 2911 15<sup>th</sup> Street.

Greg Ibach, USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, will join Texas Tech President Lawrence Schovanec for the event. U.S. Reps. Jodey Arrington and Mike Conaway also are scheduled to be in attendance.

“We are very pleased that USDA and Texas Tech are moving forward on building a state-of-the-art cotton classing facility here in Lubbock,” PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said. “This office will serve the majority of PCG’s 41-county service area, where growers produce about 25 percent of the nation’s cotton crop each year. We greatly appreciate our friends at USDA and Texas Tech for their support of the cotton industry.”

**AgriLife Extension  
Hailout/Replant/Late Plant Guide**  
Available at <https://tinyurl.com/ybmbpbbo>

## **USDA Farm Bill Implementation Progress Update**

Wednesday, June 26, 2019

From USDA

*(PCG EDITOR’S NOTE: This article has been edited for space and includes only provisions of particular interest to cotton growers. The full release is available at <https://www.usda.gov/medial/press-releases/2019/06/26/usda-farm-bill-implementation-progress-update>)*

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced an update on the implementation status of the 2018 Farm Bill. President Trump signed this Farm Bill into law on December 20, 2018, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture promptly began implementing key programs. In addition, USDA held several listening sessions with stakeholders and the public specific to each agency’s respective mission areas.

### **Implementation Progress:**

#### **TITLE I – Commodity Programs**

**Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC):** FSA will open ARC/PLC elections for the 2019 and 2020 crop years beginning in September 2019.

#### **TITLE II – Conservation**

##### **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):**

- FSA began accepting applications on June 3, 2019, for certain practices under the continuous CRP, offering a one-year extension to existing CRP participants who have expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less, and reopening enrollment for existing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) agreements.

- FSA plans to offer a General CRP sign-up in December 2019.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):** On April 26, 2019, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) released guidance to State committees to identify RCPP coordinators in each State.

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** On May 10, 2019, NRCS posted guidance for state conservationists regarding the handling of participant requests to apply for new contracts, as well as extending unexpired contracts from 2014. Additional guidance was posted regarding changes needed for existing RCPP partnership agreements to enroll in new CSP contracts.

**Technical Changes to NRCS Conservation Programs:** On May 6, 2019, NRCS published an interim final rule to make existing regulations consistent with the 2018 Farm Bill. These include:

- Waiving duplicative requirements under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program;
- Expanding the purposes of the Healthy Forests Reserve Program to allow protection of at-risk species and allowing permanent easements on Tribal lands;
- Authorizing that certification of technical service providers be through a qualified non-federal entity; and
- Requiring that \$3 million of funds to implement the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program be used to encourage public access for hunting and other recreational activities on wetlands enrolled in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

##### **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG):**

- On May 15, 2019, NRCS announced that it is investing \$25 million per year over the next five years to help support On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials, part of the CIG and available to farmers eligible to participate in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. NRCS will accept proposals through July 15, 2019 for the new On-Farm Trials.

- On May 30, 2019, NRCS announced the availability of \$12.5 million to support CIG on agricultural lands. NRCS will accept proposals through July 30, 2019.

*(“COTTON NEWS” continued on Page 2)*

**TITLE III – Trade**

- **Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation:** on May 28, 2019, FAS announced a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for FY 2020 Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development Program, Emerging Markets Program, and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program funding. Submissions are due on June 28, 2019.

**TITLE V – Credit**

- **Loan Limits:** On May 17, 2019, FSA issued an amendment to increase the loan limits as authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill – specifically, to \$600,000 for direct loans and \$1,750,000 for guaranteed loans.

- **Farm Ownership Loans:** On May 8, 2019, FSA issued an amendment to clarify eligibility requirements for farm ownership loans, including increased loan limits, and waiver authority for the 3-year experience requirement in the case of a qualified beginning farmer or rancher.

**TITLE XI – Crop Insurance**

- **Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA):** On April 26, the 2020 SRA changes were distributed to Approved Insurance Providers. The SRA includes new requirements for training loss adjusters and agents, including the submission of Actual Production History to RMA.

telephone number is 806-792-4904.

To be a qualified producer nominee for the Cotton Board, an individual should be actively engaged in cotton production at the time of nomination, be committed to the mission of the Cotton Board and the Cotton Research and Promotion Program and have demonstrated leadership skills and experience.

“Whether it is a nomination to serve on the Cotton Board or appointment to a leadership position within the National Cotton Council or Cotton Incorporated, the membership of Plains Cotton Growers has proven to be fertile ground for leaders within our industry,” Verett said. “Our industry owes much to the dedicated men and women who step forward to serve their fellow producers. We look forward to extending that tradition of leadership in the years ahead.”

*Editor’s Note: The Cotton Board seeks to promote diversity and ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for all those who qualify for nomination and appointment to the Cotton Board regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, disability, socio-economic status, religion or sexual orientation.*

**CCI President Hank Reichle  
Kicks Off Cotton Day Japan**

Friday, June 21, 2019 From Cotton Council International  
 CCI received 22 new inquiries on joining the COTTON USA™ licensing program after celebrating its 24th Cotton Day in Tokyo, Japan. three current COTTON USA™ retailer licensees in Japan also reported that they will significantly increase licensed products this fall and winter.

Cotton Day positioned U.S. cotton as the fiber of choice for the Japanese textile industry and brought together 299 COTTON USA licensees and potential licenses throughout the supply chain and 25 press representatives. ATO Osaka Director also Jeff Zimmerman joined the event.

CCI President Hank Reichle opened Cotton Day, followed by Marshall Hardwick of Hardwick Planting Co. and textile expert Roger Gilmartin. Their presentations on U.S. cotton’s sustainability and traceability, as well as its technical and financial benefits, were well received by the audience. CCI also invited a representative of Murata Machinery, as a local guest speaker, to give a seminar on VORTEX and sustainability.

CCI introduced its WHAT’S NEW IN COTTON™ initiative to show COTTON USA’s commitment to innovation and to inspire attendees to see the potential of U.S. cotton. Models wearing innovative U.S. cotton-rich outfits appeared on stage and walked down the catwalk. CCI provided eight COTTON USA™ licensed spinners with the opportunity to showcase garments that applied their innovative technologies.

A reception following the presentations allowed guests to network with the entire supply chain. Cotton Day Japan has received coverage in 151 media publications, including 14 print media and 137 online media.

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**Cotton Industry Seeks Volunteer Leaders**

Friday, June 14, 2019 By Shawn Wade

The success of the High Plains cotton industry, like any group effort, is directly tied to the willingness of qualified individuals to volunteer to serve in various leadership positions. To identify these volunteers, the High Plains cotton industry caucuses each year with other cotton groups within Texas to identify producers interested in serving as a volunteer leader.

PCG encourages all qualified individuals interested in representing the High Plains as a representative to the Cotton Board, National Cotton Council, or Cotton Incorporated to contact PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett for more information.

Each year, a variety of volunteer positions within the NCC and Cotton Incorporated are filled directly through the industry’s caucus process. In addition to naming representatives to the NCC and Cotton Incorporated, PCG and the Texas cotton industry also work together to identify and nominate qualified individuals to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for possible appointment as a Member or Alternate on the Cotton Board.

Qualified individuals interested in serving on the Cotton Board, which oversees the highly successful U.S. Cotton Research & Promotion Program, also are encouraged to contact Verett at the PCG office in Lubbock to request additional information. PCG’s

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**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