

Plains Cotton Growers Thanks USDA, Trump Administration for Trade Assistance

Thursday, July 25, 2019

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., expresses gratitude and appreciation to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, the USDA, and the Trump Administration for their commitment to assisting farmers bearing the brunt of trade disputes as they announced today details of the 2019 Market Facilitation Program (MFP), a \$16 billion support package.

“Today’s cotton market reflects the uncertainty surrounding trade, and we’ve seen futures fall to levels that are below break-even for many growers,” PCG President Stacy Smith said. “This assistance comes at a critical time as Texas High Plains farmers continue to nurture their crop toward what we hope will be a successful harvest. We greatly appreciate Secretary Perdue, the USDA, and the Trump Administration for honoring their commitment to U.S. farmers and helping keep us in business as we work toward longer-term trade agreements that are fair, free, and open.”

According to a news release from the USDA, signup for the MFP begins Monday, July 29, and runs through Friday, December 6, at local Farm Service Agency offices.

The release states, “MFP payments will be made in up-to three tranches, with the second and third tranches evaluated as market conditions and trade opportunities dictate. If conditions warrant, the second and third tranches will be made in November and early January, respectively. The first tranche will be comprised of the higher of either 50 percent of a producer’s calculated payment or \$15 per acre, which may reduce potential payments to be made in tranches two or three. USDA will begin making first tranche payments in mid-to-late August.”

Assistance through the MFP is based on a single-county payment rate multiplied by a farm’s total plantings of MFP-eligible crops in aggregate in 2019. Those per-acre payments are not dependent on which of those crops are planted in 2019. County payment rates range from \$15 to \$150 per acre, depending on the impact of unjustified trade retaliation in that county. To see MFP county payment rates, visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/market-facilitation-program/index>.

For more information on MFP, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/manage/mfp> or visit your local FSA office.

Mark Your Calendars!

West Texas Agricultural Chemicals Institute
Annual Conference

Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019

Bayer Museum of Agriculture, Lubbock

Program Available Soon at wtaci.tamu.edu

USDA-ARS to Host Field Day on August 6

The USDA-ARS Cropping Systems Research Lab Field Day has been set for Tuesday, August 6, at the USDA-ARS Research Farm, located at 3810 Fourth Street in Lubbock. Five CCA Crop Management Continuing Education Units are available, as are two Texas Department of Agriculture CEUs.

Registration begins at 8:15 a.m., and the program begins at 8:45 a.m. with an introduction and overview. A field tour begins at 9 a.m. and ends with lunch at noon. Afternoon presentations begin at 1 p.m., ending at about 2 p.m.

For more information or to RSVP, email Teresa McKelvey at teresa.mckelvey@ars.usda.gov.

AgriLife Extension Offers August, September QuickBooks Training in Amarillo, Lubbock

Thursday, July 18, 2019

By Kay Ledbetter

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will offer Panhandle District QuickBooks Pro Desktop Short Courses on Aug. 21-22 in Amarillo and Sept. 11-12 in Lubbock.

The two-day trainings will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day at the respective Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Centers, located at 6500 W. Amarillo Blvd. in Amarillo and 1102 E. Farm-to-Market Road 1294 north of Lubbock.

“After facing several years of low commodity prices and uncertain production, especially this year with the very wet planting season, it is important for producers to have good financial records to communicate with their bankers more effectively,” said DeDe Jones, AgriLife Extension risk management specialist in Amarillo.

Repeat attendees indicate they’ve seen thousands of dollars in benefit from what they learned during the courses, Jones said.

QuickBooks Pro is a double-entry business accounting program often used by agricultural lenders and producers, Jones said. It is available in both a desktop and online version, but only the desktop version will be taught.

During the two-day course, participants will learn to enter transactions into the program and analyze costs and profits. No prior computer experience is necessary, she said.

Registration is \$150 and includes computer use and teaching materials. Couples are encouraged to attend and will be charged only one registration fee if they share a computer.

Class size is limited to 15 people to provide a hands-on experience for all participants. Those planning to attend should RSVP by Aug. 19 for Amarillo and by Sept. 9 for Lubbock. Payment is due upon arrival on the first day of the course.

The class will be taught by Jones and Will Keeling, AgriLife Extension risk management specialist in Lubbock. For more information or to RSVP for either location, contact Jones at 806-677-5667 or dljones@ag.tamu.edu.