

NASS Decreases Texas High Plains Cotton Production Estimate

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By Mary Jane Buerkle

The National Agricultural Statistics Service decreased High Plains upland cotton production estimates by 130,000 bales from their September report, projecting that area growers will produce 4,520,000 bales this season.

Most of the decrease came from the Southern High Plains, where the estimate was adjusted downward from 3.475 million bales in September to 3.35 million bales in the October report. The Northern High Plains estimate decreased from 1.175 million bales in September to 1.17 million bales in October.

Projected yield per acre decreased in both regions. The Northern High Plains went from 742 pounds in the September estimate to 739 pounds in the October estimate, and the Southern High Plains went from 602 to 581.

Harvested acres remained unchanged. Growers on the Northern High Plains are projected to harvest 760,000 acres of cotton, while Southern High Plains growers are expected to harvest 2,770,000 acres. Projected abandonment rate for the High Plains region remains at about 17 percent.

Statewide, the production number decreased to 7.8 million bales, down 200,000 from the 8 million projected in the September report. The nationwide estimate for upland cotton is 21 million bales, down slightly from an estimated 21.1 million in the September report but up 19 percent from 2018.

Harvest activity is increasing steadily across the Texas High Plains, with more gins beginning operations over the past week. A cold front brought a frost to the Lubbock area and a hard freeze to the Amarillo area, which, along with chemical applications for some producers, should induce defoliation and boll opening. The average first freeze date for the Lubbock area is October 31. Harvest progress still is at less than 10 percent regionwide.

December futures were at nearly 64 cents at press time, rallying on encouragement from trade talks with China and the cold snap in Texas, although it still is too early to tell the true impact. Although a lot of cotton was planted late, a good bit of it caught up developmentally in August thanks to hot, dry weather.

“This should finish off a significant portion of our crop that had not already been defoliated, and we should see harvest begin in full force over the next couple of weeks, barring any weather delays,” PCG CEO Steve Verett said.

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2020 Beltwide Cotton Conferences Providing Insight on Latest Research, Innovative Technology

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From the National Cotton Council

The 2020 Beltwide Cotton Conferences, set for January 8-10 at the JW Marriott in Austin, Texas, will update attendees on the latest research and technology.

The BWCC, coordinated by the National Cotton Council, annually brings together university and USDA researchers, extension personnel/agents, consultants, and industry sales/support personnel. The forum helps U.S. cotton industry members tailor new products and production/processing systems to their operations for maximum efficiency.

Attendees may register and secure housing at the BWCC's website, www.cotton.org/beltwide/. That site, which includes a link to BWCC proceedings from 2005-2019, will be updated with the 2020 BWCC program and other information.

The 2020 BWCC will begin at noon on January 8 with the half-day Cotton Consultants Conference – open to all attendees. Among topics selected by the consultant community for consideration on the 2020 program are: an expert panel of entomologists to discuss timely topics ranging from Bt resistance to results of testing Bollgard 4. Among other key issues receiving a focus will be water restrictions, including the status of aquifers across the Cotton Belt; an update on precision agriculture technology; a discussion of EPA's role in the plant protection chemicals' review and registration processes; and a briefing on a multi-state potash study.

The 10 BWCC cotton technical conferences, which will provide updates on research and current/emerging technology, will meet concurrently beginning on the morning of January 9 and conclude by noon on January 10. Topics include sustainability, crop insurance, disaster assistance, trade, ongoing ginning research, ginning efficiencies, new equipment, and lint contamination prevention/research. Among other topics to be covered in the technical sessions are results from breeding and variety trials, research looking at the relationship between plants and water; and cotton's competitive advantage over synthetic fabrics.

Registration costs for the 2020 BWCC before December 16 are: \$200 for NCC/Cotton Foundation members, university and USDA researchers, extension personnel, associations and consultants; \$500 for non-U.S. research, extension, associations, and consultants; \$400 for non-NCC/Foundation members; and \$80 for students. On-site conference self-registration kiosks will be available 24 hours a day beginning the evening of January 7.