

Save the Date: Cotton U at the Amarillo Farm & Ranch Show Dec. 5

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

From HPJ and IDEAg

An all-new cotton education program is scheduled for Dec. 5, at the Amarillo Farm & Ranch Show in Amarillo, Texas. Dubbed Cotton U, this half-day, farmer education event, presented by High Plains Journal, will bring industry knowledge and forward-thinking presentations to attendees.

Oklahoma State University Cotton Extension Specialist Seth Byrd will be a featured speaker. Byrd, formerly a cotton specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, now researches cotton production across the state of Oklahoma and the High Plains. He'll present some of the latest findings from university trials in the Oklahoma Panhandle, as well as answer questions about how cotton fits in to existing crop rotations and other production concerns.

Jeff Miller with Fore Front Agronomy will also speak at Cotton U. Miller, a cooperating consultant with the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation in Lubbock, Texas, will present "2 Goals, 1 Drop: Irrigation for Profitability and Soil Health." The presentation will touch on some of the latest results from a multi-year soil and water management study on cotton in the West Texas region and how farmers might adopt new practices to get similar results on their acres.

"Cotton production continues to grow in the High Plains, so we saw a need for this type of education," said Jennifer Latzke, associate editor, High Plains Journal. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that Texas produces about 45% of the total U.S. cotton crop annually."

Attendees are invited to participate in the half-day event, and then visit the Amarillo Farm & Ranch Show in the afternoon.

"The Amarillo Farm & Ranch Show is the perfect event to host Cotton U," said Niki Jones, marketing manager, IDEAg Group. "Our goal is to provide farmers and ranchers a place to network and learn through exhibits and educational opportunities. Our collaboration with High Plains Journal's Cotton U helps fill a need for cotton education in the panhandle."

Cotton U registration is free but limited to the first 150 registrants. Attendees are encouraged to pre-register online at Cottonu.net or by calling 620-227-1834. On-site registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Central, Dec. 5, in the Grand Plaza Ballroom at the Amarillo Civic Center; the event will conclude at 1:30 p.m. Central. Cotton U is sponsored by High Plains Journal and the Amarillo Farm & Ranch Show.

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NCC Applauds EPA Revisions for Pesticide Applications

Friday, October 25, 2019 From the National Cotton Council

The National Cotton Council appreciates the EPA's proposal to change some aspects of the Worker Protection Standards (WPS) that were finalized under the last Administration.

EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler made the announcement today regarding the proposal that provides much needed changes to what is called the Application Exclusion Zone, or AEZ. The AEZ is a 25- or 100-foot, unoccupied, "floating" area around any pesticide application equipment that "moves" with the equipment. This zone is to remain unoccupied during the pesticide application. Problems arose, though, because farmer's homes and buildings are most often in or next to their fields and would have to be vacated under the AEZ rules. Also, many fields are adjacent to other properties and public roads where the farmer or applicator has no control.

The proposed revisions will: 1) modify the AEZ to be enforceable only on the farmer's property; 2) exempt immediate family from having to leave their homes or outbuildings; 3) clarify that applications can resume as soon as an individual has vacated the AEZ; and 4) simplify the decision-making process on whether the AEZ must be 25-foot or 100-foot.

NCC Chairman Mike Tate, an Alabama cotton producer, said, "I believe these changes, when finalized, will provide much-needed assurance to farmers and applicators, reduce their potential liability, eliminate the loss of useable field edges and still protect human health and the environment. Our industry is grateful for the practical, commonsense approach that Administrator Wheeler and his team continues to utilize when determining how best to ensure public safety and health without undue, burdensome regulations on family farms."

In EPA's news release regarding the agency's proposal, Wheeler noted that the proposal would "enhance the agency's Application Exclusion Zone provisions by making them more effective and easier to implement. In listening to input from stakeholders, our proposal will make targeted updates, maintaining safety requirements to protect the health of those in farm country, while providing greater flexibility for farmers."

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue stated in EPA's release that, "President Trump made a commitment to our farmers to reduce burdensome regulations, and this is another example of him making good on that promise. This action will make it easier for our farmers and growers to comply with the Application Exclusion Zone provisions, providing them with the flexibility to do what they do best - feed, fuel, and clothe the world."

The proposal will be open for public comment for 90 days from the date it is published in the Federal Register.