

Texas High Plains Cotton Harvest Continues

Friday, November 22, 2019

By Mary Jane Buerkle

The finish line for the 2019 Texas High Plains cotton harvest is coming into view, and many growers simply are looking to put this year behind them and move toward 2020.

Rainfall this week temporarily halted progress, but warmer weather and sunshine should help harvest get back into full swing by the first part of next week. PCG estimates completion across the region at about 70 percent at press time.

The USDA announced last week that they would be issuing the second tranche of Market Facilitation Program payments this week. The first tranche of MFP payments provided 50 percent of the expected county payment rate per acre and the second tranche is providing an additional 25 percent of the county payment rate. For more information, visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Texas/texas-news-releases/2019/usda-issues-second-tranche-of-market-facilitation-program>.

“We greatly appreciate this second tranche of MFP payments, and are continuing to advocate for a third tranche in the absence of a long-term trade deal with China,” PCG President Stacy Smith said. “This assistance is coming at a critical time for growers dealing with the impacts of these retaliatory tariffs, especially as they prepare for next year’s crop.”

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PCG Reminds Consumers to Buy Cotton

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By Mary Jane Buerkle

With the holiday shopping season upon us, whether you’re taking advantage of a sale to purchase something for yourself or satisfying a loved one’s Christmas wish list, consider something made from cotton. This could be a pair of trendy jeans, a set of soft cotton towels or sheets, something made with cottonseed oil for your favorite foodie, or even cold, hard cash – U.S. paper currency is made of 75 percent cotton and 25 percent linen.

According to the Cotton Incorporated *Lifestyle Monitor™* Survey, holiday shoppers plan to spend \$758 on holiday gifts this year, a 12 percent jump from 2018. About 3 in 5 shoppers say they plan to buy clothes as a present this season, which is good because a high percentage of consumers have said they like to receive clothes as gifts, including T-shirts, sleepwear, jeans, and sweaters.

“As consumers, we must look for cotton in the things we purchase, whether it’s for ourselves or as a gift,” PCG CEO Steve Verett said. “Take a minute to check the tag, because each time we purchase cotton products, we’re helping ensure the success of our industry.”

USDA Extending Flexibility on Crop Insurance Premiums

Thursday, November 14, 2019

From USDA RMA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Risk Management Agency recently announced it will continue to defer accrual of interest for 2019 crop year insurance premiums to help the wide swath of farmers and ranchers affected by extreme weather in 2019. Specifically, USDA will defer the accrual of interest on 2019 crop year insurance premiums to the earlier of the applicable termination date or January 31, 2020, for all policies with a premium billing date of August 15, 2019. This extension is necessary since harvest progress has been very delayed and crop insurance claims are not typically settled until harvest is complete, squeezing cash flow even further.

USDA had previously announced a deferral to November 30, 2019, providing producers with an additional two months from the traditional September 30 date. With today’s announcement, producers will have until January 31, 2020, to pay the 2019 premium without accruing interest. For any premium that is not paid by the new deadline, interest will accrue consistent with the terms of the policy.

This extended deferral builds on other steps USDA has taken to support farmers and ranchers impacted by flooding and other disasters. So far this year, producers have reported they were prevented from planting on nearly 20 million acres, a modern record. Indemnities from crop insurance have reached almost \$6 billion this year, with more than \$3.9 billion of that going to producers unable to plant because of flooding or excess moisture.

More than \$3 billion is available through the disaster relief package passed by Congress and signed by President Trump in early June, including a “top-up” payment for producers who made prevented planting claims. USDA has distributed through producers’ Approved Insurance Providers nearly \$580 million in top-up payments. Additional payments will be made in the middle of each month as more prevented planting claims are processed.

Farmers who planted cover crops on prevented plant acres were able to hay, graze or chop those fields earlier than November this year while maintaining eligibility for their full 2019 prevented planting indemnity. USDA adjusted the 2019 final haying and grazing date from November 1 to September 1 to help farmers who were prevented from planting because of flooding and excess rainfall this spring. The agency also determined that silage, haylage and baleage should be treated in the same manner as haying and grazing for this year.

For more information on this extension, producers are encouraged to contact their crop insurance agents.

PCG Cotton News

will not be published next week.

We wish you a Happy Thanksgiving!