

Meetings Cancelled, Executive Orders Issued, Markets Lower on COVID-19 Concerns

Friday, March 20, 2020

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., has cancelled their 63rd Annual Meeting and April Board Meeting, originally scheduled for April 3, in order to, first and foremost, ensure the health and safety of all involved and also to comply with CDC and City of Lubbock measures put into place to help combat the spread of COVID-19.

“We have been monitoring news and information related to COVID-19, and while we’re disappointed, we know that this is in everyone’s best interest during these unprecedented times,” PCG President Stacy Smith said. “The health and safety of our staff, volunteers, speakers, attendees, and all involved is of paramount concern and we believe that cancelling our meeting will help limit the risk and potential impact of the spread of COVID-19.”

PCG has no plans to reschedule this year’s event, although some elements of the two meetings will be carried over to the July 8 regular board meeting, such as award presentations. The Executive Committee met via conference call on Tuesday and voted unanimously to postpone regularly scheduled Executive Committee and officer elections until the July board meeting. Current officers and Executive Committee members have agreed to remain in those positions until then. Next year’s PCG Annual Meeting is set for April 9, 2021.

The Texas Cotton Ginners Association also cancelled their Annual Meeting and Trade Show, set for April 2-3.

“This was an extremely difficult decision for our leaders as we are very aware this decision will affect many people,” TCGA Executive Vice President Tony Williams said. “At the end of the day, we must put the health of our members, exhibitors and everyone who attends the gin show first. We do not want to create an environment that puts people at risk and goes completely against what our government is telling us to do.”

The Texas Cotton Association cancelled both their 109th Annual Meeting in April and their Flow Meeting in September. TCA President John Romines with OLAM Cotton said the group will work to reschedule.

The situation surrounding COVID-19 changes constantly, and yesterday Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued Executive Orders to combat the virus and minimize risk to public health including capping social gatherings at 10 people; temporarily closing schools, gyms, bars and dine-in areas in restaurants; and restricting access to nursing homes and retirement centers unless providing critical assistance. At press time, these orders do not mandate sheltering in place. The orders are effective at 11:59 p.m. today (March 20) and will end at 11:59 p.m. on April 3, subject to extension thereafter based on the status of COVID-19 on Texas and CDC recommendations. The full order can be found at <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-executive-orders-to-mitigate-spread-of-covid-19-in-texas>.

Earlier this week, PCG worked proactively to sign on with several other organizations to submit a letter to the Governor requesting that agriculture and agribusiness be deemed as an “essential business” during the COVID-19 crisis and allowed to function as normal. Senate Water and Rural Affairs Committee Chairman Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) and House Agriculture Committee Chairman Drew Springer (R-Muenster) sent a joint letter as well. See these letters at <https://bit.ly/2020TXAgLetters>.

At press time, the cotton market was slightly higher on the rebound of the Dow, but those gains certainly are relative considering the overall hit the market has taken over the past several weeks and especially yesterday (Thursday) with the temporary closure of the Port of Houston after two employees there tested positive for COVID-19. Export sales are still strong, but retail worries and overall economic concerns will not be going away anytime soon.

Many Texas High Plains growers did have beneficial rainfall this week, further improving conditions going into planting time. Most stations on the West Texas Mesonet have recorded well over an inch of rain since March 1.

Farm Stress: Help and Hope

<https://pcca.com/farm-stress-help-and-hope/>

Links for Trainings and CEUs

Here are some Texas A&M AgriLife Extension online trainings you, an employee or someone you know may need:

Auxin Training (1 Laws & Regs CEU):
<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/product?catalog=AGCH-001>

Texas Pesticide Applicator Training Course (required to obtain TDA Pesticide License):

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/product?catalog=AGCH-015>

Paraquat Training (1 Laws and Regs CEU, good for three years; anyone who will be applying or mixing paraquat products must be licensed as well as completed the training): create account at <https://campus.extension.org/login/signup.php>
CEU’s

Minimizing Drift:

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/product?catalog=AGCH-012>

Herbicide-Mode of Action:

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/product?catalog=AGCH-018>

Aquatic Vegetation Management:

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/product?catalog=WFSC-002>

Here is the Texas Department of Agriculture Pesticide CEU online & correspondence course link:

<https://ceusearch.texasagriculture.gov/CourseList.aspx>

Thank you to Kerry Siders, EA-IPM for Hockley, Cochran and Lamb counties, and Debbie Slocum, Assistant Regional Director-Pesticides for TDA Region 1, for sharing this information!