

## AFPC Releases COVID-19 Response Resource for Agricultural Producers

Friday, April 17, 2020

Information from AFPC

Dr. Bart Fischer and Dr. Joe Outlaw at the Agricultural Food and Policy Center at Texas A&M recently released “Initial COVID-19 Response for Agricultural Producers,” a briefing paper designed to identify federal policy provisions most directly applicable to agricultural producers.

The reference includes background information on what authorities are available to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue under the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act, along with details of ag-related provisions in legislative packages recently passed by Congress, including H.R. 6074, the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act; H.R. 6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act; and H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

The briefing paper can be found via the AFPC website at <https://afpc.tamu.edu/research/publications/697/BP-20-03.pdf>.

## Updated Seed Cotton PLC Payment Matrix Available on PCG Website

The 2019 Seed Cotton PLC Matrix has been updated to reflect the most recent seed cotton PLC program payment estimate for the 2019/2020 crop year.

The matrix is a helpful decision tool for producers, lenders and others as they make agronomic, marketing and finance decisions for the 2019/2020 crop year. Seed cotton PLC participants can plug in their own seed cotton yield to estimate their seed cotton PLC payment rate per base acre. The matrix takes into account the marketing year average (MYA) price for lint and seed. It is current as of April 14, 2020 and will be updated monthly throughout the marketing year, which runs from August 1, 2019 through July 31, 2020.

The spreadsheet, while not optimized for mobile view, is available via desktop. The link can be found on the Tools and Reminders page on the PCG website at <https://plainscotton.org/tools-and-reminders/> or on the Quick Links page at <https://plainscotton.org/quick-links/>.

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### Pest News in About 10 Minutes Per Week

April 2020

From FOCUS on Agriculture

Extension IPM Agents on the Southern High Plains and in the Concho Valley and St. Lawrence areas are now producing short audio recordings about what is being found in the field. The intent is to address current insect, weed and disease issues and look forward a bit to what might be coming next week.

High Plains IPM Agents Kerry Siders, Blayne Reed, Dagan Teague and John Thobe record and post their audio file on Wednesday afternoon.

For the Concho Valley and St. Lawrence areas, Brad Easterling and Haley Kennedy record and post their audio file on Tuesday afternoon.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension soon will start a service that will text subscribers when a new version is uploaded. For now you can go to the web page where these are posted: <https://www.texasinsects.org/southern-high-plains-pest-news.html>.

### Farm Stress: Help and Hope

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

### Unique COVID-19 Social-Distancing Message for Farmers

April 2020

By Susan Himes, AgriLife TODAY

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has specialists and agents statewide helping to keep Texans educated, informed and safe in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Calvin Trostle, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension agronomist in Lubbock, is a regular fixture on many agriculture radio programs in and around the center of the South Plains. His message, however, is reaching farther than ever before as stations share his message with dozens of their syndicated affiliates.

Given his broad platform, Trostle decided it was time to discuss something besides sorghum, soil testing, cotton or cover crops over the air.

“Farm and ranch country in Texas is still in the early phase of the coronavirus outbreak,” Trostle recently said over the KFLP airwaves in Floydada. “We can still contain it, which is especially important as health experts explain how easily it spreads.

“The next few weeks are very important. Common sense in Texas agriculture about how we conduct our business and social interactions, now, will better help us backstop jobs and the economy across the state.”

Trostle went on to explain to listeners how Texas agriculture could help “flatten the curve.”

“There is no immunity to COVID-19—if you are exposed,” Trostle said. “But our discipline in minimizing and eliminating social contact for now protects loved ones, friends, neighbors—and fellow Texas farmers and ranchers and those who work with them.”

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Trostle explained his desire to spread the message about social distancing was inspired by an email from a farmer in Lamb County. Billy Tiller, who owns a geosciences company that caters to the agricultural community, expressed to Trostle his concerns that some producers weren't taking COVID-19 seriously enough.

Tiller was concerned some farmers weren't understanding how crucial their well-being was to America's food supply. Trostle emailed Tiller back with some advice to share with his clients and fellow farmers. That communication led Trostle to think about how he could reach even more people in rural areas to emphasize how crucial they are to the nation right now.

"I and my AgriLife Extension colleagues are committed to the people who make Texas agriculture possible," he said. "I realized I could use the radio to let Texas farmers, ranchers and agriculture employees know how important each one of them are to Texas at this critical time.

"We need to be safe, otherwise the rural communities and way of life we cherish could see the nightmares of our urban neighbors."

Trostle also reminded listeners that people in rural communities tend to have far fewer medical resources like a local hospital or sometimes even a doctor—making social distancing and self-isolation for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms all the more important.

Trostle explained that farm and ranch operations will strengthen local Texas economies in a way a restaurant, a nail salon, or a clothing store cannot.

"A portion of Texas agriculture with greater challenges are our commercial fruit and vegetable farmers," he said. "They contribute foods and produce you might immediately see in our grocery stores. If we're sick, we won't have the labor for planting and especially harvesting. We see this happening in Europe now."

Trostle shared with radio listeners that the virus and the sickness it inflicts is not just a Dallas or a New York City or a California problem.

"It might not be our problem in much of Texas agriculture at this moment, but it will soon be our problem if we're not careful. And the consequences could be dire."

The Texas agriculture community should follow the same coronavirus safety guidelines as everyone else, said Trostle.

"Even if you are in a farm and ranch community in Texas, or a county with not yet a single reported COVID-19 case, the too-common thinking is 'what is to fear?' That thinking needs to change. People around us may already be infected. We may just not know yet due to lack of widespread testing."

Trostle said limiting person-to-person contact immediately can help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

"In weed control, AgriLife Extension says, 'start clean.' Remove weeds before you plant. For coronavirus, 'stay clean.' Avoid infection in the first place."

Trostle encouraged Texas farmers and ranchers to wave, call, chat over the fence line or online – just make sure you visit with each other in ways that avoid groups and respects the 6-foot social distancing guideline.

Trostle told listeners, "It might take someone like you to be the responsible one—at the gin or the farm store—and insist on social-distancing to account for the inaction of others."

Since he addressed KFLP listeners, Trostle has also spoken about social distancing on KDHN in Dimmitt. He also will share his message on KRFE in Lubbock and is hoping to speak on some Amarillo stations as well. His KFLP program was recorded and is being used on Ag News Updates on stations from California to New York.

"Whether you are a commercial produce grower or a farm and ranch operation with a few employees, communicate and translate to each employee how important it is for them to follow safe health practices," Trostle said.

"Texas farmers, ranchers and ag workers, you are too important to get sick. Isolate from others. The remote nature of your work makes this easier—and we always have plenty to do anyway. Together we will help sustain the Texas economy via agriculture to help our state pull through."

## 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!

## PCG Posts 2020 Seed Cost Calculator

Friday, April 10, 2020

By Mary Jane Buerkle

The 2020 version of the Plains Cotton Growers, Inc. Seed Cost Calculator is ready and available for download from the PCG website at <https://plainscotton.org/seed-cost-calculator/>.

The PCG seed cost calculator is an interactive Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that allows producers to calculate an estimated cost per acre, for both seed and technology, based on published suggested retail prices. The calculator has become a popular tool among producers interested in comparing seed and technology prices as they work to finalize their cotton variety selections.

Questions about the seed cost calculator can be directed to Shawn Wade at (806) 792-4904 or [shawn@plainscotton.org](mailto:shawn@plainscotton.org).

### Editor's Note:

"Cotton News", a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to U.S. all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email PCG at: [editor@plainscotton.org](mailto:editor@plainscotton.org)