

Growers Prepare for 2020 Cotton Crop

Friday, April 24, 2020

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Cotton planting time is approaching, and even though growers are looking for some kind of normalcy and the forecast over the next seven days calls for warm temperatures, a number of factors may keep planters in the barn for a little bit longer.

Soil temperatures in the Lubbock area are optimal for planting, but areas north of Lubbock likely are still a bit cool. At press time, the West Texas Mesonet station in Stratford was showing a soil temperature of 55 degrees at the 8-inch depth. Dimmitt was at 60, and Lubbock at 67. Those interested in viewing soil temperatures can find them on a link at PCG's website at plainscotton.org.

Growers also are keeping an eye on the market, which surged this past week to a five-week high, but still much lower on the year. At press time, December cotton was trading at almost 58 cents.

"Given the economic conditions, the input costs, and the current price of cotton, producers are not going to want to plant more than one time, so that may encourage them to wait a little longer in the planting period," PCG CEO Steve Verett said. "The dry weather may encourage that as well. We could really use a planting rain."

In policy news, both the House and the Senate passed legislation to provide additional assistance to small businesses and hospitals in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant portion of the \$483.4 billion package provides more funding for the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program. President Trump signed the bill today.

"America's farmers and ranchers have suffered through a recession in the farm economy that is now in its seventh year, devastating natural disasters, and now a global health pandemic that has altered life as we know it," House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Mike Conaway (R-Midland) said. "While additional help for America's farm families will almost certainly be needed, this bill does extend a critical interim lifeline to farmers and ranchers who are struggling."

Farm Stress: Help and Hope

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

ACP Convenes Via Webinar

Friday, April 17, 2020

From the National Cotton Council

The American Cotton Producers (ACP), chaired by California producer Mark McKean, met via webinar for its Spring meeting.

The webinar included a cotton economic report and summary of Washington activities, which included updates on the status of various COVID-19 aid provisions passed recently by Congress.

NCC President and CEO Gary Adams briefed the group on cotton-specific USDA recommendations for aid to the producer, merchandiser and textile manufacturer segments. He emphasized that the recommendations were designed to 1) provide support for the U.S. cotton textile industry as product orders plummet, 2) assist cotton merchandisers as costs/risks accumulate due to sharply lower demand and business disruptions and 3) aid U.S. cotton producers who are struggling to secure financing necessary to purchase production inputs. He also reported that the NCC considered these recommendations as a comprehensive package.

Other agenda items included a detailed update on cotton classing operations by Darryl Earnest, deputy administrator, USDA-AMS Cotton Program. Earnest reported no change in the cotton classing fees for 2020. A new Risk Management Agency (RMA) hurricane endorsement, available for the 2020 crop, was reviewed. Producers were reminded that the deadline for the hurricane endorsement signup was April 30. Clif Parks with AgriLogic reviewed a proposed tropical cyclone endorsement which could be available for the 2021 crop. Provisions of a new RMA quality loss option endorsement for the 2021 crop also were reviewed. Adams also reported on the status of the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol implementation.

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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>.