

PCG Takes Friday Morning Meeting to Zoom

Friday, May 1, 2020

By Mary Jane Buerkle

For the past several years now, the Plains Cotton Growers Advisory Group has met around the conference table to discuss all things cotton every other week during the growing season and every month in January-April.

With COVID-19 restrictions in place, the April meeting was cancelled, but as growers begin to plant the 2020 crop, PCG staff knew it was critical to keep the conversation flowing between various segments of the industry in the “roundtable” format, so the organization hosted their first-ever Friday Morning Meeting via Zoom today.

Attendees heard from Extension specialists and agents, seed companies, governmental agencies, cotton marketers and policy analysts, following the same general flow of the in-person meetings.

“It is unlikely that we will be meeting in-person by our next scheduled meeting on May 15,” PCG CEO Steve Verett said. “Although we look forward to welcoming everyone back to our offices, this online method does work, and an added benefit is that we were able to have people in attendance who aren’t able to attend in person.”

Agronomists cautioned growers against planting everything too soon while the weather is pretty. Forecasts next week call for cooler weather that could impact soil temperatures and newly planted seed. The month of April was dry on the Texas High Plains, adding concerns regarding soil moisture going into planting. The first final planting date for the PCG service area is May 31 for areas to the north and northwest of Lubbock.

December cotton inched up slightly to around 58 cents earlier this week but had dropped back to 57.65 at press time.

U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol Added to Textile Exchange’s List of Preferred Fibers and Materials

Monday, April 27, 2020

From the National Cotton Council

The U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol has been added to Textile Exchange’s list of preferred fibers and materials. The Trust Protocol will now be one of 36 fibers and materials that over 170 participating brands and retailers can select from as part of Textile Exchange’s Material Change Index program.

Textile Exchange defines a preferred fiber or material as one which results in improved environmental and/or social sustainability outcomes and impacts in comparison to conventional production. The Trust Protocol will join a portfolio of more sustainable cotton production initiatives including the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), Cotton Made in Africa (CmiA), Fairtrade Cotton, Organic Cotton, REEL, ISCC, and Recycled Cotton as a preferred cotton fiber.

The master list of preferred fibers and materials evolves over time as sustainability innovations prove themselves. Textile Exchange consults widely with its members and NGO partners to ensure the categories are always reflective of the latest thinking.

“We are pleased to see the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol recognized on Textile Exchange’s list of preferred fibers and materials,” said Ken Burton, executive director of the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol. “The U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol is an industry-wide system that will guide U.S. cotton growers to continuously improve and reduce their environmental footprint. We will provide brands and retailers with aggregate data that track the efforts of U.S. cotton growers to improve water and soil conservation and reduce greenhouse gases. These data will support the fashion and retail industries in their efforts to demonstrate progress toward sustainability goals.”

Textile Exchange encourages companies to accelerate their use of preferred fibers, and acknowledges and honors companies that recognize the importance of integrating a preferred fiber and materials strategy into their business practices.

“At Textile Exchange, our mission is to inspire and equip people to accelerate sustainable practices in the textile value chain,” said La Rhea Pepper, Managing Director of Textile Exchange. “We’re pleased to add Trust Protocol cotton to our list of preferred fiber and materials, which will give brands and retailers another option to source sustainable cotton as they integrate preferred fibers into their business strategy.”

PCG Reminds Growers to Verify Seed Source in Pima Cotton due to FOV4 Risk

Friday, May 1, 2020

By Mary Jane Buerkle

As planting commences on the Texas High Plains, some growers may choose to plant Pima cotton, which raises a point of concern due to the soil-borne fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* f. *sp. vasinfectum* Race 4 (FOV4).

Before making good on that decision, growers should verify the source of the seed they intend to plant and make absolutely sure that seed of any Pima variety was not produced in an area such as California, the El Paso Valley of Texas, or the Mesilla Valley of New Mexico where the FOV4 fungus has been confirmed to exist.

Fusarium wilt is a highly virulent cotton disease caused by the soil-borne fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* f. *sp. vasinfectum*. There currently is no variety of upland cotton that is resistant to FOV4, and once it’s introduced onto a farm, it will be a permanent infestation and there are no chemical control options for controlling FOV4.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension last year published an informational bulletin highlighting the risk that FOV4 poses to the Texas cotton industry. A copy of that bulletin is available for download here: <https://bit.ly/FOV4Bulletin>

“We want it to be abundantly clear that by no means are we discouraging growers who decide to plant Pima cotton,” PCG CEO Steve Verett said. “Our concern centers around helping ensure that growers are one hundred percent aware and sure of where their Pima seed is coming from.”