

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR VIRTUAL BELTWISE COTTON CONFERENCES

Friday, December 11, 2020

By Whitney Curry

Due to continued concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19, the National Cotton Council will conduct the 2021 Beltwide Cotton Conferences (BWCC) virtually January 5-7.

The 2021 BWCC final program was recently released and is now available under the 2021 Beltwide details tab (<http://www.cotton.org/beltwide/>). Participants can register for the virtual conference, which is aimed at speeding the transfer of new technology to U.S. cotton producers and other industry members.

Registration costs for the 2021 BWCC has been reduced to the following: \$180 for NCC/Cotton Foundation members, university and USDA researchers, extension personnel, associations and consultants; \$500 for non-U.S. research, extension, associations, and consultants; \$350 for non-NCC/Foundation members; and \$75 for students.

PCG REMINDS CONSUMERS TO BUY COTTON

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By Whitney Curry

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, or something made with cottonseed oil for your favorite foodie, or even cold hard cash! Did you know U.S. paper currency is made of 75 percent cotton and 25 percent linen?

According to the Cotton Incorporated *Lifestyle Monitor*TM Survey, holiday shoppers plan to spend \$725 on holiday gifts this year, down 5 percent from 2019. Of the total amount estimated to be spent on gifts, Cotton Incorporated says about \$283 will be spent on clothing items.

Don't forget while you are out shopping this season that many of your local shops, family-owned stores and boutiques carry cotton products. Consider shopping local this year!

GROWERS ENCOURAGED TO VERIFY WHIP+ APPLICATIONS INCLUDE ALL ELIGIBLE LOSSES

Friday, December 11, 2020

By Shawn Wade

As the USDA Farm Service Agency works to complete the Wildfires and Hurricane Indemnity Program+ (WHIP+) sign-up process, growers are encouraged to ensure that all of their eligible losses are included in currently pending applications or were properly included in previously submitted claims.

The WHIP+ sign-up period officially ended October 30; however, USDA FSA county offices were given the authority to create a register of producers who had not yet had their

applications started to ensure that no eligible producers were inadvertently left out of the program. As a result, FSA offices continue to process WHIP+ applications for eligible producers.

Because of the unique nature of the WHIP+ program and the extended sign-up process, USDA FSA also has been asked to clarify information about various program eligibility and process questions. Some of the revised guidance provided throughout this process may have altered previously understood assumptions and it is important for growers to ensure that applications, regardless of their being previously completed or still in process, are complete include all eligible losses based on the most recent information available.

One of the common misunderstandings among producers initially was that an insurable loss had to have occurred in order to qualify for WHIP+ benefits. This was never the case, however, and the WHIP+ program actually provides benefits for any eligible loss below the WHIP+ guarantee percentage associated with the level of crop insurance that was purchased on the farm.

Another misunderstanding is that the stated cause of loss on an insurance loss record or reported by the producer when an insurable loss did not occur on a particular unit, had to exactly match either the "drought" or "excessive moisture" causes referenced as primary causes of loss in the WHIP+ rules. The WHIP+ program actually covers a broad range of losses from conditions related to the primary causes noted above.

Eligible causes of loss from related conditions are identified in the WHIP+ rules and also include causes of loss defined in the rules associated with the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

"The bottom-line advice for producers in regard to WHIP+ is that there are a broad array of eligible causes of loss that can trigger benefits under WHIP+ and an underlying crop insurance claim is not a prerequisite for eligibility," notes PCG Chief Executive Officer Steve Verett.

Due to the extended nature of the WHIP+ process and the various clarifications that have been issued, producers who have already completed the WHIP+ application process but are unsure if all of their eligible crops and losses were included in the calculations, are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to verify that their initial application was complete and determine if additional steps may be needed to complete or revise their application under the most recent guidance.

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