

Planting Deadlines Near – Rainfall Now Bountiful in Most Areas

Friday, June 4, 2021

By Whitney Curry

Planting activity around the Plains Cotton Growers service area has kicked up in the recent weeks, that is, when producers have been able to get in the fields. The welcoming of rainfall has come with a price of fields standing in water in some areas and producers trying to dodge rainstorms to plant a crop in others.

The past couple of weeks have been wet for the better part of the PCG service area. Planting around the area is hit or miss, where some producers are wrapping up, others are partially getting started. Predictions during the PCG Friday morning Advisory Group roundtable meeting estimates that the PCG service area is about 60-65% planted. With the lingering crop insurance planting date deadlines approaching for parts of the PCG service area this weekend and into next week for the remaining area, returning to the fields is crucial for producers.

According to the West Texas Mesonet for the month of May, Northeast Amarillo has received 6.26 inches of rain bringing the 2021 rainfall total to 8.55 inches, Plainview has received 4.08 bringing the total rainfall to 7.01 inches, Northwest Lubbock 6.03 with a total of 9.50 inches for 2021, and Lamesa has received 4.22 inches bringing their area total to 6.01 inches of rain for 2021.

The market demand is holding strong with December future trading at 85.97 cents at press time.

Producers with Crop Insurance to Receive Premium Benefit for Cover Crop

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

By USDA-RMA

Agricultural producers who have coverage under most crop insurance policies are eligible for a premium benefit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) if they planted cover crops during this crop year. The Pandemic Cover Crop Program (PCCP), offered by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA),

helps farmers maintain their cover crop systems, despite the financial challenges posed by the pandemic.

The PCCP is part of USDA's [Pandemic Assistance for Producers](#) initiative, a bundle of programs to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions.

“Cultivating cover crops requires a sustained, long-term investment, and the economic challenges of the pandemic made it financially challenging for many producers to maintain cover crop systems,” said RMA Acting Administrator Richard Flournoy. “Producers use cover crops to improve soil health and gain other agronomic benefits, and this program will reduce producers’ overall premium bill to help ensure producers can continue this climate-smart agricultural practice.”

About the Premium Benefit

PCCP provides premium support to producers who insured their spring crop with most insurance policies and planted a qualifying cover crop during the 2021 crop year. The premium support is \$5 per acre, but no more than the full premium owed.

Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa have existing programs for producers to receive a premium benefit for planting cover crops. In these states, participating producers will receive an additional benefit.

All cover crops reportable to FSA are eligible and include cereals and other grasses, legumes, brassicas and other non-legume broadleaves, and mixtures of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time.

To receive the benefit for this program, producers must file a [Report of Acreage form \(FSA-578\)](#) for cover crops with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) by **June 15, 2021**, which is distinct from the normal acreage reporting date. The normal acreage reporting deadline with FSA has not changed, but to receive the premium benefit, producers must file by June 15. The cover crop fields reported on the Report of Acreage form must match what the producer reported to their insurance company for crop insurance policies. **To file the form, producers must contact and make an appointment with their local [USDA Service Center](#).**

Program Details

Certain policies are not eligible because they have underlying coverage, which would already receive the benefit or are not designed to be reported in a manner consistent with the Report of Acreage form (FSA-578). PCCP is not available for Whole-Farm Revenue Protection, Enhanced Coverage Option, Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index, and Supplemental Coverage Option. Stacked Income Protection (STAX) and Margin Protection (MP) policies are only eligible for PCCP when insured as a standalone policy. STAX and MP endorsements to underlying policies are not eligible for PCCP.

PCCP does not change acreage reporting dates, reporting requirements, or any other terms of the crop insurance policy.

Cover Crop Conservation Practice Standard

Meanwhile, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has made the determination not to update its conservation practice standard for cover crops. NRCS originally proposed restricting mechanical harvest of cover crops, but after reviewing input from agricultural producers and groups, NRCS recognizes this could present challenges for producers who use this important conservation practice. The latest version of the conservation practice standard can be found in the [Field Office Technical Guide](#) under Section IV, Conservation Practices and Supporting Documents, by State.

More Information

A [Notice of Funding Availability](#) was posted on the *Federal Register* today. Additional information on PCCP, including [frequently asked questions](#), can be found at farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/cover-crops.

RMA is authorizing additional flexibilities due to coronavirus while continuing to support producers, working through AIPs to deliver services, including processing policies, claims and agreements. RMA staff are working with AIPs and other customers by phone, mail and electronically to continue supporting crop insurance coverage for producers. Farmers with crop insurance questions or needs should continue to contact their insurance agents about conducting business remotely (by telephone or email). More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

Cotton Industry Seeks Volunteer Leaders

Friday, June 4, 2021

By Whitney Curry

The success of the High Plains cotton industry, like any group effort, is directly tied to the willingness of qualified individuals to volunteer to serve in various leadership positions.

PCG encourages all qualified individuals interested in representing the High Plains as a representative to the Cotton Board, National Cotton Council, or Cotton Incorporated to contact PCG CEO Steve Verett for more information.

Each year, a variety of volunteer positions within the NCC and Cotton Incorporated are filled directly through the industry's caucus process. In addition to naming representatives to the NCC and Cotton Incorporated, PCG and the Texas cotton industry also work together to identify and nominate qualified individuals to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for possible appointment as a Member or Alternate on the Cotton Board.

Qualified individuals interested in serving on the Cotton Board, which oversees the highly successful U.S. Cotton Research & Promotion Program, also are encouraged to contact Verett at the PCG office in Lubbock to request additional information. PCG's telephone number is 806-792-4904.

Editor's Note: The Cotton Board seeks to promote diversity and ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for all those who qualify for nomination and appointment to the Cotton Board regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, disability, socio-economic status, religion, or sexual orientation.

Editor's Note:

"Cotton News", a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 42-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