

**June 25, 2021**

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## **“Ag Committee Reviews Efficacy of the Farm Safety Net”**

Friday, June 25, 2021 By Whitney Curry

On Wednesday, June 23, 2021, the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management met to assess the efficacy of the current farm safety net as lawmakers begin the lengthy process of considering what changes might be needed to enhance or bridge current inadequacies in farm programs leading up to the development of the 2023 Farm Bill.

In her opening comments, Chairwoman Cheri Bustos (D-IL), stated “This is an important hearing to get input from producers about how the 2018 Farm Bill programs are working and to get a better understanding of what is happening in the countryside.” Bustos added, “The information we gather from you today and in future hearings is critically important in our work to ensure that help is there when times are tough and when disaster strikes.”

Ranking Member Austin Scott (R-GA) followed by stating, “As we review the effectiveness of the safety net and begin to consider future changes, our primary objective must be to do no harm to the existing programs and make sure any enhancements are to the benefit of all of production agriculture, not just certain regions of the country or specific causes of loss.”

Jeff Kirwan, a corn and soybean farmer from Illinois who testified before the committee, noted “That crop insurance is the cornerstone of my operation and the ability to market grain, manage risk, and financially survive depends on crop insurance.

Moreover, Kirwan and other witnesses testified, that while crop insurance is a critical safety net tool for the agriculture industry, CFAP, WHIP-Plus and MFP have been “timely emergency assistance” for producers throughout the last three years as ARC and PLC programs were not designed to deal with some of the recent challenges brought on by trade disruption, cataclysmic natural disasters, or the recent pandemic.

House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA) outlined his guiding

principles for disaster programs during the subcommittee hearing and stated in his opening comments, that “Whether it be a natural disaster that can wipe out a crop at a moment’s notice, a foreign government that interferes with a market, or a pandemic that disrupts the entire supply chain producers are in a constant battle to remain viable. That is why a strong safety net is a critical piece of rebuilding a robust rural economy.”

The three principles that Representative Thompson outlined included:

- The program must complement rather than compete with crop insurance;
- The program should be easy to implement, and;
- The program should be reliable and respond quickly to disaster events.

Representative Thompson finalized his statement with a call for bipartisanship and stated that, “If Chairman David Scott (D-GA) is willing to work within those three principles, I want to work with him to craft the best policy possible. No one member or single party has a monopoly on good ideas and working together to achieve a common goal will undoubtedly render a better outcome.”

### **Important Program Deadlines**

*Crop Acreage Certification Deadline*

**July 15**

*Conservation Reserve Program General Signup*

**July 23**

*Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands*

**July 12 – August 20**

### **Texas High Plains Crop Progress**

Friday, June 25, 2021 By Whitney Curry

Producers in the PCG service area have been busy the past few weeks trying to wrap up planting their crops prior to the crop insurance deadlines in their respective areas. With final planting dates and late planting periods now mostly passed, cotton planting is virtually complete, and growers are now shifting their focus to irrigation and weed control activities.

According to the USDA Crop Progress report from June 20, 2021, planting of the U.S. cotton crop is essentially finished. The report revealed that 96% of the U.S. crop is now planted, which is up by 6% from the previous week and 1% above the 5-year average for mid-June. Cotton stages around the PCG service area range from seedling to early square, with some growers reporting cotton at 5-6 leaf. While there haven't been any reported, IPM agents and researchers continue to monitor for pests or diseases in the area. Regionally, growers and industry segments continue to speculate how many acres have been planted to cotton versus other crops in Texas, especially in the High Plains production region.

As growers now pivot from planting to weed control, many are concerned about the availability of crop protection chemicals and whether they will be able to have access to the products needed to finish out this growing season based on current supply. When discussing the situation with chemical providers, most of the current shortfalls can be traced back to the impact of the global shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic as many of the key ingredients for crop protection chemicals are made a year in advance overseas. It seems that supply chain disruptions brought on by the pandemic over the last year have put a damper on those ingredients being produced and shipped in a timely manner. As an industry, we are feeling the spiraling effect of that disruption with limited supplies of important herbicide and pesticide products.

On the weather front, according to the National Weather Service, cooler temperatures and chances of timely rains are forecasted across portions of the PCG service area throughout the weekend and the end of June.

The market has held steady over this past week with prices staying in the mid-80s and December 2021 futures trading at 87.11 cents at press time. The Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) reported this week that cotton's export sales were 74,670 running bales during the week that ended June 17. That was down 33% from week-to-week and 24% below the same week last season. Sales to China made up 19% of the total business for the week. Despite the week-to-week export sales decline, accumulated exports remain at record pace with 13.4 million running bales shipped through June 17.

## Farm Service Agency Accepting County Committee Nominations

Friday, June 25, 2021 By Farm Service Agency

USDA's Farm Service Agency began accepting nominations for county committee members on June 15. Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by August 2, 2021.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program, and reside in the LAA that is up for election this year, may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others, and organizations including those representing beginning, women, and minority producers, also may nominate candidates.

The committees are made of three to 11 members and typically meet once a month. Members serve three-year terms. Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to find out how to get involved in their county's elections. To be considered, a producer must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about the FSA county committee elections are available at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/county-committee-elections/index>. Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning November 1, 2021.

**ENROLL TODAY!**

**40<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Texas International  
Cotton School**

**August 2-12, 2021**

<https://www.texasintl cottonschool.com/>

<https://youtu.be/ZsMh2FqzYBc>

**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