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USDA Risk Management Agency Responds to PCG Request *RMA Clarifies Non-Irrigated Cotton/Small Grain Insurability Questions*

In a year of unprecedented drought, cotton producers on the High Plains will have one less worry as the USDA Risk Management Agency issued a bulletin yesterday that clarifies a number of issues related to small grain crops and the insurability of non-irrigated cotton.

As a typical conservation tillage practice, many producers plant small grain crops, such as wheat, as a cover crop for their cotton and complete termination of that crop before planting cotton is usually not an issue. However, extreme drought conditions can prevent herbicides from fully terminating the cover crop, possibly rendering a field uninsurable.

The bulletin from RMA (MGR-11-007) recognizes that because of the drought, there could be small portions of a cover crop that could have produced a seed head, but if the producer did everything they could to terminate the cover crop before it reached that point and followed all other guidelines, subsequent crops such as non-irrigated cotton can be insured. This clarification applies also to volunteer wheat.

“We appreciate RMA’s prompt attention to and clarification of this matter,” Steve Verett, Plains Cotton Growers’ Executive Vice President, said Wednesday. “Our producers are having to deal with some extremely tough conditions this year, and this will ease some of their concerns.”

Plains Cotton Growers has worked diligently with the RMA, USDA, the House Agriculture Committee, and other interested organizations and agencies to resolve these issues. PCG and four members of the U.S. Congress submitted letters to the RMA. Those letters are available on PCG’s website at <http://www.plainscotton.org>.

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