

June 10, 2016

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USDA Announces Cotton Ginning Cost-Share Program

Friday, June 10, 2016

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Cotton growers across the Cotton Belt received some good news on Monday as the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program, which will provide an estimated \$300 million in much-needed assistance to growers across the Cotton Belt.

"We greatly appreciate U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and the USDA for listening to the concerns of cotton producers and coming up with a viable short-term solution that will help us face some of our challenges," PCG President Johnie Reed, a cotton producer from Kress, said.

This one-time payment will be available upon signup, which will begin June 20 and run through August 5. USDA officials say that producers should receive a form in the mail from the Farm Service Agency that is pre-filled with certified acreage information the producer has reported to FSA, along with the payment amount. The producer can sign the form and either mail it or take it to their local Farm Service Agency office. According to a USDA news release, payments are expected to begin in July.

Qualifying payments will be determined by a producer's 2015 cotton acres reported to FSA, multiplied by 40 percent of the average ginning cost for each production region. Payments to Texas producers will be \$36.97 per acre.

One question many people have asked is about the difference in the amount of the cost-share. Ginning costs per planted acre are published annually by the USDA's Economic Research Service. The cost-share generally will be relative to the average yield per planted acre and ginning costs in each region.

The program has the same eligibility requirements as were used for the 2014 Cotton Transition Assistance Program, including a \$40,000 per producer payment limit, requirement to be actively engaged in farming, meet conservation compliance and a \$900,000 adjusted gross income limit. Producers will not need to have a 2016 AGI certification in place if they already have an AGI form for 2015 that represents tax returns from 2011, 2012, and 2013.

"We had hoped for some flexibility in the payment limit, but we are grateful for the assistance, because our producers certainly need it," Reed said, noting that the program is a short-term solution. "We recognize that this is a program for the near term, and we remain committed to working with Congress and others in trying to establish cottonseed as an 'other oilseed' under Title I of the 2014 Farm Bill, which would provide long-term stability for our industry."

PCG has provided several links with more information on the Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program at their website, <http://www.plainscotton.org>.

Want the facts about the U.S. agriculture and farm policy?

<http://www.farmpolicyfacts.org>

SAVE THE DATE

5th Annual
Celebrate Cotton Game
Saturday, Sept. 17
6 p.m.
Texas Tech Red Raiders
Louisiana Tech Bulldogs



Cotton Industry Seeks Volunteer Leaders

Friday, June 10, 2016

By Shawn Wade

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. To identify these volunteers, the High Plains cotton industry caucuses each year with other cotton groups within Texas to identify producers interested in serving as a volunteer leader.

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 Executive Vice President 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.

To be a qualified producer nominee for the Cotton Board, an individual should be actively engaged in cotton production at the time of nomination, be committed to the mission of the Cotton Board and the Cotton Research and Promotion Program, and have demonstrated leadership skills and experience.

"Whether it is a nomination to serve on the Cotton Board or appointment to a leadership position within the National Cotton Council or Cotton Incorporated, the membership of Plains Cotton Growers has proven to be fertile ground for leaders within our industry," Verett said. "Our industry owes much to the dedicated men and women who step forward to serve their fellow producers. We look forward to extending that tradition of leadership in the years ahead."

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.