Cotton PCG News
from Plains Cotton Growers, Inc.

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4517 West Loop 289
Lubbock, Texas 79414
Telephone: 806-792-4904 • FAX: 806-792-4906
www.plainscotton.org

High Plains Ag Conference Set For December 9 in Lubbock

November 2016 From AgriLife TODAY

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will conduct the annual High Plains Ag Conference from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Dec. 9 at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, 1102 E. Farm-to-Market Road 1294, Lubbock.

The Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units offered for those with a valid private pesticide applicators license will be two integrated pest management, one laws and regulations, and two general.

Individual preregistration, which includes lunch, is $35 by Dec. 7 and $45 thereafter with no lunch guarantee. For more information, contact Robert Scott, AgriLife Extension agent in Lubbock County at 806-775-1740 or email rj-scott@tamu.edu.

Topics and presenters will include:

Preview of New Cotton Varieties and Traits, Dr. Seth Byrd, AgriLife Extension cotton specialist, Lubbock.

Brush and Weed Management, Dr. Tim Steffens, AgriLife Extension range specialist, Canyon.

Pesticide Laws and Regulations, Steve Boston, Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide inspector, Lubbock.

2017 AgriLife Extension Program Updates for Lubbock County, Scott and Dr. Mark Brown, agriculture and natural resources agents, and Dr. Katelyn Kowles, integrated pest management agent, all serving Lubbock County.

Corn Herbicide Trial Results, Dr. Jourdan Bell, AgriLife Extension agronomist, Amarillo.

Drift Prevention, Dr. Wayne Keeling, AgriLife Extension systems agronomist and weed science project leader, Lubbock.

Disease Management on the South Plains, Dr. Jason Woodward, AgriLife Extension plant pathologist and state peanut specialist, Lubbock.

Cotton Council International Presents 2016 Sourcing USA Summit

Friday, November 11, 2016 From Cotton Council International

Cotton Council International presented its ninth biennial Sourcing USA Summit on November 5-7 in Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., to facilitate U.S. cotton networking opportunities for some 415 delegates from 31 countries who attended. The Summit explored challenges and opportunities facing the general use of cotton in the textile supply chain and specific topics surrounding U.S. cotton, including innovation and global economic issues.

National Cotton Council Chairman Shane Stephens welcomed the attendees, reiterating the value of strong industry relationships, the consistent quality and reliable supply of cotton grown in the United States, and the commitment of U.S. cotton producers to maintaining their strong relationship with the global cotton supply chain.

CCI President Keith Lucas said, “Cotton has a history of innovation, of reinventing and evolving aspects of its complex supply chain to keep pace with the needs and expectations of the market and consumers, alike.”

CCI hosts the conference in cooperation with Cotton Incorporated and USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service.

At a time when cotton is facing increasing competition, such as man-made fibers that can offer greater length uniformity at a lesser cost, it was not surprising that the themes of change and challenges to business-as-usual permeated the conference, including the perspective-changing content of the three keynote speakers.

Josh Linkner, the tech entrepreneur and bestselling author, recommended that the attendees transform their current best practices into “next practices,” reminding the audience that “we are all innovators.” Zachary Karabell, an authority on the global economy and author of “The Leading Indicators,” challenged the practical value of longstanding economic models, such as supply and demand, in today’s increasingly complex and tech-driven world. Johnny “Cupcakes” Earle, founder of the multi-million-dollar T-shirt brand “Johnny Cupcakes,” challenged attendees to expand their creative thinking to achieve success.

Economics and innovation were common threads of the conference, which included a cotton commodity update by Jody Campiche, the NCC’s vice president, Economics & Policy Analysis; an examination of certain domestic policies relevant to cotton from Johnathan Fee, a partner at Alston & Bird; and a “Bull and Bear” panel comprised of U.S. exporter and textile mill representatives. Additional updates on agricultural, fiber quality and textile innovations were presented by Dr. Kater Hake, Mike Watson, and Mike Tyndall, respectively; all from Cotton Incorporated, the research and marketing company for cotton.

CCI Executive Director Bruce Atherley returned to unity in his closing remarks to the audience, (an assembly representing 16 percent of global cotton use), stating, “We must all work together to overcome man-made fibers and other challenges that get in the way of cotton consumption.”

The U.S. cotton industry and its allied industries are integral supporters of the Sourcing USA Summit.

The 2016 Summit Exporter Sponsors include: Jess Smith & Sons Cotton Co.; White Gold Cotton Marketing LLC; Allenberg Cotton Co.; Cargill Cotton; Toyoshima; PCCA; Calcot, Ltd.; Omnicotton; COFCO Agri; Glencore; Staplcotn; Toyo Cotton; ECOM; JG Boswell; Cotton Growers Cooperative; Engelhart CTP (US) LLC; Olam Cotton; San Joaquin Valley Quality Cotton Growers Association; and Supima.

The 2016 Allied Industry Sponsors include: Uster Technologies; Wakefield Inspection; Cargo Control Group; Cotton Outlook; Rieter Textile Systems; ICE Futures U.S.; CoBank; TransGlobal Inspections; Bayer CropScience; Applied DNA Sciences; Monsanto; Murata Machinery, Ltd.; and INTL FCStone Merchant Services.

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How Critics of U.S. Farm Policy Have It Wrong

Monday, Nov. 14, 2016 By U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-ND)

When it comes to U.S. farm policy, some folks who don't know much about risks of farming and ranching want to cut twice before measuring once. Common sense says we should measure things first.

Net farm income is down by 42 percent from just three years ago, the largest plunge since the start of the Great Depression.

Yet, under these very tough economic conditions the current Farm Bill's commodity title -- crafted to deal with market forces beyond a farmer's control such as depressed prices brought on by unfair predatory trade practices of foreign countries -- is helping farmers while saving taxpayer money.

In fact, the 2014 Farm Bill's commodity provisions are saving an estimated $16 billion when compared to an extension of the previous law.

And, crop insurance outlays are also down -- by a whopping $9 billion -- as compared to the Congressional Budget Office's estimates during the Farm Bill's consideration.

Despite these policy successes the fact remains times are very difficult for our nation's farm and ranch families. In announcing the issuance of Farm Bill commodity title support for farmers recently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture acknowledged the help is in response to roughly $28 billion in losses sustained in just one year alone.

The Farm Bill and Crop Insurance will not make our farmers and ranchers anywhere near whole from these heavy losses. But these policies will help hard working families -- who feed, clothe, and increasingly fuel us in a manner unrivaled in history -- to repay their loans and secure financing for the coming year.

Still, as we look forward to the next Farm Bill, we are going to need to focus on shoring up the farm safety net in places where it really needs some work. For instance, I often hear from my farmers about problems with the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) option and dairy, and my colleagues in southern states tell me cotton policy must also be fixed.

These are areas where current policies must be strengthened or otherwise exchanged for more durable risk management tools our farmers can more effectively use during hard times like these. And, of course, any changes we make must be made while honoring the mantra of nearly every farmer in the country -- first, do no harm to crop insurance.

But, far beyond any alterations to farm policies that are designed to mitigate the symptoms of much larger problems, we must actually tackle at least some of the larger problems themselves.

Among these problems that make it difficult for farm and ranch families to make ends meet are regulations, including the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Waters of the U.S. and the so called Clean Power regulations, which drive up the cost of doing business.

Tax burdens on our farmers and ranchers must be reduced and, in the case of the death tax, repealed. And, unfair predatory trade practices by our largest foreign competitors need to be tackled aggressively and head on.

Recently, the U.S. government finally challenged China's excess subsidies on just three crops -- corn, wheat, and rice -- totaling $100 billion in a single year. Put in perspective, in 2015 the U.S. spent about $11 billion on the safety net for all commodities.

Not long ago, U.S. sugar farmers sued Mexico, a country that owned one-fifth of its industry and heavily subsidized the rest, for dumping sugar onto the U.S. market at below Mexico's cost of production. The International Trade Commission unanimously ruled in favor of our sugar farmers.

Similarly, my colleagues in southern states say China drove the price of cotton up to $2.20 before altering policy and subsidizing its domestic farmers, driving world cotton prices into the 50-cent range.

These examples are not notable exceptions to the rule that trade is somehow free and fair. These examples are very much the norm our farm and ranch families must contend with every day.

Some have argued the United States should simply unilaterally disarm our farmers and ranchers, repealing U.S. farm policy and even our trade remedies currently available against cheaters, and that foreign countries, moved by our good deed, will follow suit. This is Pollyanna.

During the Doha Round negotiations the U.S. offered to repeal 70 percent of its domestic support in exchange for meaningful market access for our farmers and ranchers to other countries. The answer from our foreign trading partners was a resounding no.

We saw this during the 2014 Farm Bill when the U.S. was cutting domestic support for farmers and ranchers, foreign countries not only did not follow suit, but they doubled down on subsidies, tariffs, and non-tariff trade barriers.

I believe the sound approach to creating free and fair markets in agricultural trade around the globe can be found in the zero-for-zero legislation authored by Rep. Ted Yoho of Florida. The bill would repeal U.S. sugar policy when major sugar producing countries around the world fully repeal their subsidies and protections. The one change I would make to this legislation is apply it to all agricultural commodities.

We need to negotiate from a position of strength if we really want truly free and fair world markets.

Federal crop insurance and livestock disaster aid will always be necessary because Mother Nature will always throw curveballs. And, protection from multiple peril losses is not available in the private market because of the high risks involved in farming and ranching.

But, what if we could truly open up foreign markets and create a level playing field for our farmers and ranchers that actually passes the smell test? If we also reined in taxes and regulations, the natural effect could be Farm Bill safety net costs would fall even more as markets recover and farmers and ranchers get a decent return on their investments.

Now, that's a win for taxpayers, consumers, and America's farmers and ranchers.

Rep. Kevin Cramer is North Dakota's only member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He serves on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Editor's Note:
"Cotton News", a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 41-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