

Nicosia to Speak at Lamesa Cotton Growers Annual Meeting April 12

Friday, April 7, 2017 Information from Lamesa Cotton Growers

Joe Nicosia, senior head of cotton and merchandising platforms for Louis Dreyfus Company, will be the featured speaker at the Lamesa Cotton Growers Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 12, beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Leroy Colgan Community Building. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

Lunch, provided courtesy of ProCot, will be served at noon at the Forrest Park Community Building with brief comments by Charles Hilbodt, a futures and options specialist from Memphis, Tenn.

Attendees are asked to RSVP to (806) 872-3444.

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Ag Producers Invited to Participate in HPWD Irrigation Assessment Program

Friday, April 7, 2017 From High Plains Water District

High Plains Underground Water Conservation District (HPWD) reinstated its Irrigation Assessment Program to better understand the volume of pumping and its effect on aquifers within its 16-county service area.

During the past four years, participating producers volunteered to have their center pivot or subsurface drip irrigation system evaluated by HPWD staff. Water levels are measured at the beginning and the end of the growing season. In addition, flow rates of the wells/irrigation system are checked with an ultrasonic flow meter. The program is a service provided to willing participants.

The pumping hours, total gallons of water per minute, and number of irrigated acres are calculated to determine the total acre-inches of groundwater applied during the growing season.

Water samples are also collected as an extra service to those participating in the program. HPWD is able to check Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), chloride, and pH levels. It is important to understand water chemistry since it impacts the efficient use of supplemental nutrients applied to crops.

Rainfall totals are determined through use of satellite data from April to September. This gives an estimate of the total inches of water available for crop use.

All information gathered by HPWD staff is entered into a database. Total usage may be calculated using pumping hours during the season. This is used with other data to better understand the water level changes in aquifers within the district.

Producers receive a report of all information gathered from their site, including irrigation amounts and pumping data. Several participants have noted that the data has helped them better understand their system performance. The published information is compiled and averaged by county and crop type.

“HPWD encourages interested agricultural producers to participate in the Irrigation Assessment Program. There are two major benefits. It helps farmers understand how much water is used per year for crop production. It also helps with future water planning efforts where accurate irrigation pumping information must be considered,” said Whitworth.

Additional information about the HPWD Irrigation Assessment Program is available by contacting Keith Whitworth at (806) 762-0181 or by emailing keith.whitworth@hpwd.org.

NCC Conveys Farm Law Priorities

Friday, April 7, 2017 From the National Cotton Council

The National Cotton Council looks forward to working with the House and Senate agriculture committees and with other agricultural organizations to gain passage of a farm bill that effectively addresses the needs of all commodities.

In testimony before the House Agriculture Committee’s Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management here today, NCC Chairman Ronnie Lee said, “market volatility and mounting economic pressures underscore the critical importance of an improved safety net for cotton farmers.” He said cotton must be brought back into the farm law’s Title I commodity policy as it “is the only program crop that does not have any long-term price or revenue protection policy in the farm bill.”

The Bronwood, Ga., cotton producer said including cotton in Title I would enable cotton producers to access the risk management tools that provide protection during prolonged periods of depressed market conditions.

The NCC’s testimony revealed that farms and businesses directly involved in the production, distribution and processing of cotton employ more than 125,000 workers and produce direct business revenue of more than \$21 billion. Accounting for the ripple effect through the broader U.S. economy, direct and indirect employment surpasses 280,000 workers with economic activity of nearly \$100 billion.

That testimony stated, though, that while current cotton futures market prices have increased from year-ago levels, many producers continue to struggle with prices at levels not adequate to cover all production costs. USDA 2016 data shows that 19 percent of cotton farms are considered either highly or extremely highly leveraged.

Lee told the Representatives that the U.S. cotton industry still is seeking to get cottonseed designated as a covered commodity and eligible for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs – a move that will serve as a bridge until new farm law is enacted.

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Regarding new farm law, the NCC's testimony noted strong opposition to attempts to reduce the budget available for the upcoming legislation. An ongoing cotton industry priority is maintaining a properly functioning marketing loan program that helps ensure orderly marketing and flow of cotton to the market.

Likewise, the NCC also will work to prevent any further tightening of payment limits and eligibility requirements. The NCC stated it believes the current definition of 'family member' that is used for actively engaged provisions in the farm bill should be broadened to ensure extended family members are not forced out of the family farm simply because they do not fit within an arbitrary definition for 'family member.'

Among other farm law priorities conveyed by the NCC was the need for adjustments to the extra-long staple loan program and competitiveness program and steps to improve crop insurance and conservation programs, which are integral parts of many producers' operations and achieve the goal of improving and protecting the environment while also improving farming operations.

Regarding crop insurance, the NCC stated that overall the federal program is working well but there are a few areas that can be improved. The NCC is working with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to improve quality loss provisions that have proved inadequate for many producers in the Southeast region who suffered through extensive rains during the 2015 and 2016 harvest seasons. Another crop insurance component – important in the Southwest region and that was allowed in the 2014 farm law – is the ability to insure Enterprise Units by practice. The NCC believes the RMA has not implemented this provision in the manner intended by Congress and it should be reconsidered by USDA, and if necessary, further clarified in the next farm bill.

The NCC believes new farm law also should continue to fund the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program (EAAP). First authorized in the 2008 farm law, the EAAP is helping to stabilize the U.S. textile manufacturing sector and help it remain competitive.

The NCC's testimony noted that while the world's consumers continue to express their preference for cotton products, the tremendous increase in low-priced polyester production has created extraordinary hurdles for increasing global cotton demand.

"In the past decade, (global) cotton mill use fell by 12 million bales, and polyester production capacity increased by 145 million bales," Lee testified. "Excess production capacity is contributing to artificially low polyester prices in key Asian markets such as China and India."

With 75 percent of U.S. raw cotton now being exported, Lee testified that the NCC strongly supports additional investment in USDA's Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development programs. He said these trade promotion programs "are highly successful public-private partnerships that help leverage industry funds to open and expand export markets."

The NCC's testimony also called for continuing cotton's research and promotion program (check-off program) as this effort generates a positive return (\$7 for every \$1 contributed) for U.S. cotton producers and cotton product importers at no cost to taxpayers.

2017 PCG Seed Cost Calculator Available

Friday, April 7, 2017

By Mary Jane Buerkle

The 2017 version of the Plains Cotton Growers, Inc. Seed Cost Calculator is ready and available for download from the PCG website at <http://www.plainscotton.org>.

The PCG seed cost calculator is an interactive Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that allows producers to calculate an estimated cost per acre, for both seed and technology, based on published suggested retail prices.

The calculator has become a popular tool among producers interested in comparing seed and technology prices as they work to finalize their cotton variety selections.

The 2017 version of the spreadsheet includes listings for more than 100 conventional, Roundup Ready FLEX, XtendFlex, GlyTol, Bollgard II, TwinLink, Enlist and Widestrike varieties, including numerous stacked gene versions of these technologies that will be available for sale in West Texas in 2017.

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Editor's Note:

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