

Planting Continues on Texas High Plains

Friday, June 2, 2017

By Shawn Wade

While it wasn't the driest May on record, planting on the Texas High Plains has been a relatively uninterrupted process. Planting progress overall stands at approximately 75 percent complete, with most of the balance being dryland acres that need rainfall to top of the soil profile.

Growers have been working steadily to finish up planting activities in most areas as conditions allow to take advantage of any recent moisture that has been received, but also to ensure compliance with Federal Crop Insurance planting deadlines.

The region has three different Federal Crop Insurance final planting dates, the earliest being May 31 for cotton planted in counties to the north and west of Lubbock. Producers in the central and southern portions of the High Plains have final planting dates of June 5 and June 10, respectively. Rolling Plains counties east of the Caprock have June 20 final planting dates for cotton. Insured producers should contact their local crop insurance agent to verify their final planting date.

According to reports provided at this week's PCG-hosted Plains Cotton Advisory Group meeting, subsoil moisture below the first 3-5 inches is still fair to good in many areas, although some locations are drier than they would like to be. Stands that have been established thus far were generally described as fair to average across the area.

Despite these early challenges there is good news for growers in the region's current near-term weather forecast, which indicates improved rain chances, primarily in form of scattered thunderstorms, through the next ten days. While there is no guarantee that a widespread rain event will materialize, any storms that do materialize will be a blessing and would improve both established fields and planting conditions.

Indications are still strong that the region will plant significantly more cotton in 2017 than has been seen in the last couple of seasons, thanks to improved market conditions for cotton relative to many other alternative crops.

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Farm Leaders Take to Newspaper Opinion Pages to Defend Crop Insurance

Wed., May 31, 2017 From National Crop Insurance Services

In the days surrounding the release of a proposed White House budget that included cuts to crop insurance, farm leaders are taking to newspaper opinion pages across the country to defend the successful program.

Jimmy Dodson, chairman of the Farm Credit Bank of Texas, stressed the importance of crop insurance to both farmers and lenders in a guest editorial appearing in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* on May 22.

"When it comes to obtaining credit, the vast majority of crop loans incorporate crop insurance in their operation plans, and coverage is a requirement for many loans," Dodson wrote. "Without it, credit would be limited to those with the strongest balance sheets. Given the recent price trends and outlook for commodity prices, there just aren't many farmers who fall into this category."

Dodson, who raises cotton, corn, wheat, hay and grain sorghum on his family farm near Corpus Christi, stressed that crop insurance is especially important for beginning farmers, who will be critical to the future of agriculture.

"I am 64 years old, which is the average age of a farmer in the U.S. As baby boomers retire, we are relying on the next generation of farmers to follow in our footsteps. They will need crop insurance to do that," Dodson said.

Dodson also highlighted the benefits of crop insurance to both the rural economy and taxpayers.

"The current downswing in agriculture means the next Farm Bill will be more important than ever. American farmers are the most efficient in the world, but we need strong farm policies that give us the right tools, like reliable credit and a vibrant crop insurance program, in order to keep meeting our growing global food, fiber and energy needs," Dodson concluded.

Bill Pearson, a longtime crop insurance agent in Sibley, Iowa, authored a guest column that appeared in the *Des Moines Register* over the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Pearson's article, "Don't Drain the Crop Insurance Pool," discussed the unintended consequences of proposals to cap insurance discounts or even excluding larger — and less risky — farms altogether.

Pearson likened crop insurance to swimming pool, noting that the deeper and wider the pool — that is, the more people covered — the more insurers can spread risk, which makes insurance cheaper for everybody who's swimming.

"By removing your most established farms, and all the acreage associated with those farms, you are doing the same thing as excluding the healthiest people from life insurance," Pearson wrote. "You are draining the pool, making insurance costlier and less available for everyone left."

Pearson pointed out that America hasn't always had a good crop insurance system to protect farmers from the whims of Mother Nature. And that in the past, farmers had to go to Congress to ask for disaster aid. Taxpayers had to foot the whole bill and farmers often waited years for help to arrive.

"Crop insurance works well because it is a tool available to farmers of all sizes in all geographic regions. Congress should not upset this delicate balance by discriminating against one group of growers and weakening their ability to manage risk. Doing so would throw small farmers, and ultimately taxpayers, in the deep end," Pearson concluded.

Two days later, an opinion piece by New York crop insurance agent and farmer Steve Van Voorhis appeared in *The Buffalo News*. ("COTTON NEWS" continued on Page 2)

Van Voorhis' column focused on the role of crop insurance in protecting the state's agriculture economy. He noted that part of the reason so many farmers in his state have confidence in the crop insurance program is because many improvements have been made in recent years. The last Farm Bill, for example, took steps to make crop insurance more affordable and available to specialty crop growers, organic producers and young farmers.

He also noted that New York farmers appreciate the flexibility of the crop insurance program. Policies can be tailored to each farm's crops, production methods and risk and each farmer's risk tolerance.

Van Voorhis had a message for the critics of crop insurance, as well.

"Sometimes folks are quick to criticize crop insurance because they don't realize that, like agriculture, the program touches every state in the nation. It has proven itself to be our most effective risk-management tool," Van Voorhis wrote. "Let's allow this program to keep it working, not just for the farmers who put everything on the line year after year, but for the solvency of our state and national agriculture economies as well."

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COTTON USA Celebrates "Cotton Day" in China

Friday, May 26, 2017 From Cotton Council International

CCI celebrated "Cotton Day" in Beijing, China, for the first time on May 15, positioning U.S. cotton as the fiber of choice for today's sustainability-conscious Chinese hospitality industry.

Themed "COTTON USA: Travel in Comfort with the Cotton the World Trusts," Cotton Day brought together COTTON USA licensees and travel industry buyers invited by the China Tourist Hotel Association (CHTA).

"Global hospitality players are tailoring their offerings to provide hotel guests with home comforts, outfitting guest rooms with textile product made of natural fibers," CCI Executive Director Bruce Atherley said. "The objective of COTTON USA is to be the supplier of choice for brands and retailers who are committed to only buying cotton that is produced with sustainable and responsible environmental, safety and labor practices. We want to make a difference and drive change, to make the world a better place for future generations."

As of May 25, more than 180 print and online trade publications have reported on the debut of Cotton Day in China. Held at Beijing's boutique Hotel Éclat, Cotton Day featured a workshop, mini-fair and main event. COTTON USA transformed two hotel suites into showrooms to display U.S. cotton-rich hotel bedding, toweling and amenity products from 13 COTTON USA licensees. A discussion about sustainable hotel procurement with 30 members from the China Tourist Hotel Association, including representatives from global hotel chains, also highlighted the

advantages of using U.S. cotton in hotel products to increase durability and reduce costs.

Atherley kicked off the new "COTTON USA - The Cotton the World Trusts" global campaign at Cotton Day China. The event also featured a travel-themed runway show, where six licensees (BIB, Byford, Devil Nut, Indigo Tank, JNBY and le coq sportif) showcased fashionable and comfortable travel apparel made of U.S. cotton. The finale featured "Travel in Denim" by Chen Wen, the most influential denim designer in China, whose collection had support from COTTON USA, Indigo Tank and the 125-year old classic American denim company, Cone Denim.

"We have great appreciation for everything that COTTON USA has done over the years," said Zhang Hua, vice general manager, Jiangsu Sidefu Textile Co., Ltd. "They share our corporate values, and we are very proud to be licensed by CCI and begin our partnership this year. We are glad to see that many consumers have also shown an interest in our products at the Hotelex Expo. They know what good quality means."

Mdm. Gao Fang, director of Cotton and Jute Bureau of the All-China Federation of Supply & Marketing Cooperatives ACFSMC, and executive vice president of the China Cotton Association; Mr. JING Shenquan, deputy secretary general of the China Cotton Textile Association; Ms. CAO Xuejun, the deputy director general of the Department of the Consumer Goods Industry under the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology; Ms. ZHAI Xueling, director of Market and Trade Research Office, Research Center for Rural Economy of Ministry of Agriculture; and Mr. Mark Ford, director of the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) in Beijing, also attended the event.

Enrollment Continues for Texas International Cotton School

Registration continues for the 37th session of the Texas International Cotton School, set for August 7-17, 2017, in Lubbock.

The TICS is uniquely structured to provide an integrated understanding of the Texas cotton industry and how it interacts with the global cotton/textile complex. The intensive two-week program covers all aspects of cotton, from the field to the fabric.

For more information, including tuition and curriculum, visit <http://www.texasintlcottonschool.com> or call Christi Chadwell, TICS coordinator, at (806) 834-8124.

SAVE THE DATE

6th Annual
 Celebrate Cotton Game
 Saturday, Sept. 16
 7 p.m.
 Texas Tech Red Raiders
 Arizona State Sun Devils



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