

Texas High Plains Cotton Crop Progress Mixed

Friday, July 14, 2017

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Cotton crop progress on the Texas High Plains is all over the board, experts say, with July 4 weekend hail forcing some growers to make adjustments to their game plan.

Mother Nature hasn't exactly been cooperative this season, as some good rains have been accompanied by high winds and hail. Some growers have devoted much of the past several weeks to simply getting their cotton crop started and keeping it alive.

"We're finally to a point where we can stop putting out fires, so to speak, and really begin managing this crop," PCG chairman and Dawson County grower Shawn Holladay said.

Crop insurance adjusters have been working fields across the region over the past few weeks. Although it is a challenge to assign general abandonment estimates for the PCG region at this point, some Extension agents are reporting significant loss in their area. Kerry Siders, the integrated pest management agent for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Hockley, Cochran and Lamb counties, said in this week's AgFax Southwest Cotton Report that losses in Cochran County could be as high as 55 percent.

"We've heard various reports from all over our 41-county service area about potential abandonment, and although damage and loss still are being assessed, we likely will wind up around our overall average of 18 to 20 percent, perhaps a bit higher." PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said.

"We should have a much better handle on abandonment from recent hail and high winds in the next couple of weeks. Some of this cotton could recover, but some of it definitely is gone," Verett said, noting that some growers with earlier loss had replanted cotton, but others are turning to traditional alternative crops such as grain sorghum and sunflowers.

Those considering replant decisions can consult Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Texas South Plains Hailout/Replant/Late Plant Guide at <http://bit.ly/17HailoutReplantLatePlantGuide>.

Other areas look good, particularly in the Northern High Plains, save for some acreage hit by hail. A grower from that area attending the PCG board meeting earlier this week reported that their crop was one of the best they'd had.

"Couple that with increased acreage, and we could see a significant increase in production in the Northern High Plains, barring any future severe weather," Verett said.

Thanks to otherwise beneficial rainfall, weed pressure is increasing. Weed science experts at the PCG Friday Morning meeting noted that fields started a lot cleaner than in previous years thanks to producers using residuals, which has improved the weed management situation as a whole.

"Thus far, it appears that growers generally have been good stewards of new weed management technologies," Verett said. "We continue to encourage all growers to know what's around them, follow all label instructions, and do everything you can to keep your spray on your farm."

Deadline Approaching to Enroll in ARC, PLC

Thursday, July 13, 2017

From the Farm Service Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture Texas Farm Service Agency Acting State Executive Director, Erasmo (Eddie) Trevino, reminds farmers and ranchers that they have until Aug. 1 to enroll in Agriculture Risk Coverage and/or Price Loss Coverage programs for the 2017 crop year. These programs trigger financial protections for participating agricultural producers when market forces cause substantial drops in crop prices or revenues.

"Producers have already elected ARC or PLC, but to receive program benefits they must enroll for the 2017 crop year by signing a contract before the Aug. 1 deadline," said Trevino. "Please contact your local FSA office to schedule an appointment if you have not yet enrolled."

Covered commodities under the programs include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

For more program information, contact your local FSA office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc>. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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COTTON17

Farm Bill Listening Session Scheduled for July 31 in San Angelo

The House Agriculture Committee will host a listening session at Angelo State University in San Angelo on Monday, July 31, at the C.J. Davidson Conference Center inside the Houston Harte University Center, located at 1910 Rosemont Drive.

Further details related to the listening session will be forthcoming.

The sessions, titled "The Next Farm Bill, Conversations in the Field," are designed to gather input from farmers, ranchers and stakeholders across the country.