

Senate Ag Appropriations Bill Includes Cottonseed Policy Provisions

Friday, July 21, 2017 By Mary Jane Buerkle

Cotton growers are one step closer to a much-needed long-term policy solution after the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the FY18 Agriculture Appropriations Bill, which included a key provision regarding a cottonseed program.

The bill, approved 31-0 by the committee on Thursday, provides \$145.4 billion in discretionary and mandatory funding, \$4.85 billion above the President's budget request and \$7.9 billion below the FY2017 enacted level, according to a Committee news release.

Language in the bill, which will go before Congress later this year, clearly calls for cottonseed to be designated as an "other oilseed" under Title I of the 2014 Farm Bill. If enacted, the cottonseed program would begin with the 2018 crop.

"This bill certainly is a step in the right direction to helping ensure long-term stability for our industry, and we appreciate our friends in Congress who are standing with us," PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said. "We are hopeful, but the cottonseed program is not a done deal yet, and we must stay the course in our efforts to get meaningful relief for cotton producers."

The FY18 House Agriculture Appropriations Bill includes similar language and goes even further in urging the USDA to implement the Cotton Ginning Cost Share program, an initiative that remains a priority for the industry.

Verett, PCG's Kody Bessent and Chairman Shawn Holladay will be in Washington, DC, next week making visits on Capitol Hill, gathering additional support for the Cotton Ginning Cost Share Program and thanking those Senators and Representatives who already have signed letters asking President Trump to use his authority to operate the program on an ongoing basis beginning with the 2016 crop.

"We especially are appreciative to Texas Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, along with all three Congressmen from the PCG service area – House Ag Committee Chairman Mike Conaway, Representative Jodey Arrington, and Representative Mac Thornberry – for their support of this effort," Verett said. "Even as we continue to work on a cottonseed program, our growers need a short-term solution, and the Cotton Ginning Cost Share Program already has been proven to be an effective and efficient way to help meet their needs."

The Senate's letter to President Trump is at <http://bit.ly/SenateGinningAssistanceLetter0717>. The House letter is at <http://bit.ly/HouseGinningAssistanceLetter0717>.

Texas South Plains Hailout/Replant/ Late Plant Guide

(from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension)

<http://bit.ly/17HailoutReplantLatePlantGuide>

Farm Bill Listening Session Scheduled for Monday, 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, beginning at 1 p.m. at the C.J. Davidson Conference Center inside the Houston Harte University Center, located at 1910 Rosemont Drive.

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

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COTTON17

"Flag the Technology" Program Helps Identify Herbicide Sensitive Fields

From AgriLife TODAY By Blair Fannin

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Plant Protection Association have collaborated on a Flag the Technology program that identifies crop fields sensitive to certain herbicides.

With two new herbicide resistance technologies which will be widely used in cotton, corn and soybeans, program coordinators say it is critical farmers know which fields are safe for application of the new products and which are sensitive to them.

The program, which originated in Arkansas, is a system that helps farmers identify fields that are safe for application and those which must be avoided to prevent unintentional damage to the producers field or to adjacent crops. Farmers will place colored flags at entry points on fields, with each flag color representing a different kind of technology. This will make herbicide applicators aware which products are appropriate and safe to use on a specific field.

Texas Plant Protection Association chairman Ray Smith in College Station said during the association's recent conference in Bryan the program and mobile app will "help enlighten our farmers on how to use the new technology. This app also emphasizes good recordkeeping."

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The mobile app can also be available to spray applicators who can check flag colors as they enter a field. The flag indicates which products they can use.

The following are flag colors and uses:

- White — Technology is tolerant to glyphosate herbicides.
- Green — Tolerant to glufosinate herbicide, Liberty.
- Yellow — Clearfield rice, sunflowers, wheat and canola which are tolerant to imidazolinone herbicides.

- Teal — Tolerant to both 2, 4-D and FOP (ACCase) herbicides, or Enlist technology. The white stripes indicate tolerance to glyphosate, Roundup. For Enlist cotton traits and soybean fields, a green flag should be added to denote tolerance to glufosinate herbicide (Liberty).

- Black and white checkered — Tolerant to both dicamba, Engenia and Extendimax, and glyphosate, Roundup Ready Xtend.

- Red — Extreme caution required. Indicates conventional crops with no herbicide tolerant traits as well as sensitive production areas such as vegetables, vineyards, apiaries and organic production.

The new app builds on the field program developed by Bob Scott at the University of Arkansas, Smith said. Dr. Todd Sink, AgriLife Extension wildlife and fisheries specialist in College Station, developed the Flag the Technology app.

Users also have the option of meshing the app with Hit the Target, formerly known as Texas Crop Registry, a voluntary program that allows producers with sensitive crop areas to register specific fields, including non-GMO acres, orchards and others, said Dr. Bob Coulson, Texas A&M AgriLife Research entomologist.

“That information will be available to pesticide applicators,” Coulson said. “Individuals must register to use the system. Producers who register will specify field location and add the crop or sensitive nature of the area.”

Coulson said producers would need to calculate field dimensions. With that information logged in, Coulson said, the producer can go to the Flag the Technology program and select the color flag needed for the fields.

“The applicator will have a dashboard with the field profiles included to prevent off-target applications,” Coulson said. He added Hit the Target will soon transition to a new program, which can be accessed through a mobile device.

Sink said the Flag the Technology app is user friendly.

“It loads within five seconds,” he said. “The pesticide applicator is aware of where sensitive crops are located and can adjust flight plans to avoid those areas.”

The mobile app is available free for iTunes and Google Play. A publication about the program is available for download at <http://bit.ly/2j9Sce0>.

RCPP Funding Still Available For Interested Producers

Friday, July 21, 2017

From High Plains Water District

Funding is still available to producers wanting to participate in the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

About \$900,000 in funding was allocated for the five year program (2016-2020). As of July 10, USDA-NRCS officials said the agency has obligated 35 contracts totaling \$222,750 on 19,929 acres. This leaves \$677,250 in available funds for the remainder of the program.

Participation in RCPP is entirely voluntary. Interested producers can sign up for the program at their local USDA-NRCS service center.

RCPP builds upon existing USDA-NRCS programs to address water conservation needs. These include the Conservation Stewardship Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

A special emphasis is being placed on irrigation water and soil moisture management for the Panhandle-South Plains RCPP. As a result, chemigation check valves, flow meters, and soil moisture monitoring equipment are included in the high priority items for RCPP funding.

High Plains Underground Water Conservation District in Lubbock serves as the lead RCPP partner. Supporting partners include Hemphill County UWCD in Canadian, Llano Estacado UWCD at Seminole, Mesa UWCD at Lamesa, North Plains GCD at Dumas, Sandy Land UWCD at Plains, and South Plains UWCD at Brownfield.

These agencies are partnering with producers to increase the restoration/sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife, and other related natural resources on a regional or watershed basis. These groundwater conservation districts do not receive any funding for the program, but provide in-kind services to assist with water conservation efforts.

Additional information about RCPP is available at www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

West Texas Agricultural Chemicals Institute Annual Conference Set for September 13

Friday, July 21, 2017

From WTACI

The West Texas Agricultural Chemicals Institute will host their 65th Annual Conference on Wednesday, Sept. 13, at the Bayer Museum of Agriculture, located at 1121 Canyon Lake Drive in Lubbock.

Topics to be discussed at the conference include pesticide application and laws and regulations, crop rotation and nutrient management strategies, weed resistance and insect resistance management, farm policy, unmanned aerial systems in agriculture, and much more. A detailed list of presentations and speakers soon will be available at <http://wtaci.tamu.edu>.

Contact Shawn Wade at (806) 792-4904 or shawn@plainscotton.org for questions about the program and CEU’s.

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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