

Bipartisan Budget Act Includes Cotton Policy

Friday, February 9, 2018

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Congress' passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act on Friday morning means that cotton growers now have a long-term, viable safety net for the first time since the inception of the 2014 Farm Bill.

The Act not only keeps the government in operation, ensures essential defense spending and incorporates long-overdue disaster relief for hurricane-affected areas, it also includes a provision that provides for seed cotton to be made eligible for ARC and PLC under the commodity title of the Farm Bill, restoring a much-needed farm program for cotton growers effective with the 2018 crop year.

"PCG and the National Cotton Council have worked toward a long-term solution for growers for many years now, and we appreciate our friends in Congress who have been steadfast in their support and understanding of our needs," PCG President Johnie Reed, a grower from Kress, said. "This is significant for cotton growers who for years have operated without a viable safety net, and this will allow many growers to stay in business."

The House vote was 240-186 in favor of the legislation, and the Senate passed it with a final vote of 71-28. All three representatives from the PCG service area, and both Texas senators, voted to pass the policy package. It was signed by President Trump on Friday morning.

"This is a great day for cotton, and the countless hours our staff and growers have spent in DC advocating for effective cotton policy certainly has shown success," Kody Bessent, PCG's vice president of operations and legislative affairs, said. "In addition to the industry's constant presence on Capitol Hill, there is no doubt that the strength of our PAC was a positive influence and key in helping Members of Congress understand why the need for this legislative package was so great."

The reference price will be \$0.367 per pound. According to the new law, generic base will be allocated to seed cotton base acres in a quantity equal to the greater of 80 percent of the generic base acres on the farm, or the average number of seed cotton acres planted or prevented from being planted on the farm during the 2009-2012 crop years (not to exceed total generic base acres on the farm), or to base acres for covered commodities including seed cotton on a proportional basis based on the average planted or prevented from being planted acres on the farm during the 2009-2012 crop years. There will be a one-time, optional yield update at 90 percent of a grower's 2008-2012 yield. It is important to note that at this point, the program will remain the same for any base acres already signed into ARC/PLC for other commodities.

PCG commends the House Agriculture Committee, led by Chairman Mike Conaway; Ranking Member Collin Peterson; Rep. Jodey Arrington; Rep. Mac Thornberry; Sen. John Cornyn; Sen. Ted Cruz; Sen. Jerry Moran; Sen. John Boozman; and many other friends in Congress for their support of the cotton industry through this process.

SAVE THE DATE!

April 5-6

Texas Cotton Ginners Association Annual Conference and Trade Show, Lubbock Memorial Civic Center

April 6

PCG Annual Meeting, LMCC

September 15

Celebrate Cotton Game, Texas Tech vs. Houston, Jones AT&T Stadium

Mandatory Auxin-Specific Herbicide Trainings Scheduled for Dicamba Applicators

The Texas Department of Agriculture requires special training in 2018 for new auxin herbicides applied under a Section 3 approval on dicamba-tolerant cotton.

February 12 – Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center, 1102 E. FM 1294, **Lubbock**. 10-11 a.m.

February 13 – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office - Lubbock County, 916 Main Street, Suite 401, **Lubbock**. 10-11 a.m.

February 20 – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office – Terry County, 209 S. 5th St., **Brownfield**, Noon-1 p.m.

February 21 – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office – Hockley County, **Levelland**, 9-10 a.m.

February 21 – **Littlefield** Show Barn, 1-2 p.m.

February 22 – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office – Cochran County, **Morton**, 10-11 a.m.

February 27 – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office - Lubbock County, 916 Main Street, Suite 401, **Lubbock**. 10-11 a.m.

February 27 – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office – Yoakum County, 901 Avenue G, **Plains**, Noon-1 p.m.

There is no registration fee on any of these training programs and each class will provide one TDA continuing education unit in laws and regulations. A complete list is available at <http://www.plainscotton.org/agconferences.html>.

Upcoming Area Ag Conferences

February 13-14 – No-Till Texas' Inaugural Soil Health Symposium, Bayer Museum of Agriculture, Lubbock. \$50 fee, lunch included. Register by contacting Tamara Daniel, Texas Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, 254-778-8741 or email tamaradaniel@thegateway.net.

March 1 – Permian Basin Cotton Conference, G.C. Broughton Jr. Ag Complex on the campus of Howard College, 2411 Echols Drive, **Big Spring**. Info: Tommy Yeater, CEA-Ag/NR, (432) 264-2236.

PCG EDITOR'S NOTE: A complete list is available at <http://www.plainscotton.org/agconferences.html>. Please submit any additions/edits to maryjane@plainscotton.org.