

Rain, Potential Early Snow Impact High Plains Cotton Harvest

Friday, October 12, 2018

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Between Hurricane Michael damaging and destroying cotton crops across the Southeast, Tropical Storm Sergio preparing to move over the Texas Panhandle and Rolling Plains and a cold front swooping in over the coming weekend, Mother Nature again is causing headaches and heartaches for growers across the Cotton Belt.

From early-season drought to now late-season hail and rainfall, most Texas High Plains growers have experienced less-than-ideal weather conditions at some point throughout the year. As of press time, forecasts for this weekend going into next week include the potential for snow and a hard freeze across the northern portions of the PCG service area and temperatures dancing around the freezing mark as far south as Lubbock. The average first freeze date for Lubbock is October 31.

Some growers north of Amarillo took to social media, requesting assistance with getting enough aerial applicators to the area to apply boll opener in advance of the forecasted freeze. Although some cotton already has been harvested in that area, many fields could have used a little more time, and rainfall over the past week has left fields too wet to run ground sprayers.

The past week across the PCG service area has mostly been cool, cloudy and stormy with rainfall amounts of up to six inches in some places. PCG received reports of hail pummeling crops in northern Lynn, southern Lubbock and Terry counties, and other areas could have been impacted by hail as well. Harvest currently is stalled for most growers until it dries up enough to get equipment back into the fields, and additional rainfall certainly would cause further delays.

Hurricane Michael roared into the Florida panhandle on Wednesday as a Category 4 storm and quickly spun up through parts of Alabama and Georgia, leaving soaked and battered fields of open cotton in its wake. USDA reports indicate that only about 12 percent of Georgia cotton had been harvested as of early this week. This storm came on the heels of Hurricane Florence, which caused significant loss in the Carolinas.

2018 Farm Bill Fluttering Toward A Lame Duck Conclusion

Friday, October 12, 2018 By Shawn Wade & Mary Jane Buerkle

Policy differences and a general lack of progress and policy differences have significantly hampered efforts to complete the 2018 Farm Bill, despite the efforts of House Ag Committee Chairman Mike Conaway who had pushed to finish the bill prior to the September 30 expiration of the current legislation.

As it stands, the bill will now wait until after the November elections when Congress returns to complete its legislative business for the year. Work undoubtedly will continue among House and Senate staff throughout the month of October and November in anticipation of a return to the negotiating table by Conference Committee principles after the election.

“We are making inroads slowly but surely,” Chairman Conaway said in an emailed statement to PCG. “Unfortunately, getting the farm bill done this month is not likely because I think some folks prefer to keep the issue open.”

Farm bill observers have noted repeatedly that differences between the two bills are not so great that they could prevent a final package from being put together. Unfortunately, the tense political landscape in Washington, DC has proven to be a major obstacle to getting the bill completed.

For the most part, negotiations have gone well with progress being made on the vast majority of the titles. However, House and Senate principals have a few items which remain in contention, and Sen. Debbie Stabenow has called out Conaway directly in news reports, saying that his push for cotton policy is impeding progress and comes at the expense of policy for other crops.

“We fixed cotton before the farm bill even started,” Conaway said. “If there is a tension in this process it is this: I want to strengthen the safety net for all farmers and ranchers, regardless of crop or region. We need to do this because times are tough.

“But, others want to create new programs to fund rooftop gardens in Manhattan,” Conaway said. “That’s not the proper role of the Farm Bill. That’s a big distinction between my position on the farm bill and that of some others.”

PCG continues to be engaged in the process and is pushing for a bill to be completed as soon as possible.

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AgriLife Extension to Offer Seed Cotton Farm Bill Training Oct. 16 in Lubbock

Tuesday, October 9, 2018 By Kay Ledbetter, AgriLife TODAY

A Seed Cotton Farm Bill Training will be held Tuesday, Oct. 16, at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Lubbock. The center is located north of the airport on Interstate 27. Take Exit 11, turn right on Farm-to-Market Road 1294 and go a quarter mile.

The program will begin with registration at 8 a.m. and conclude at noon. There will be no registration fee. It is sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Plains Cotton Growers.

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Jackie Smith, AgriLife Extension economist at Lubbock, said the workshop will help producers choose between the Price Loss Coverage, PLC, or Agricultural Risk Coverage, ARC.

The program signup deadline is Dec. 7, Smith said. Producers must complete three steps: update program yields, allocate generic base acres and select one of the two safety net programs, ARC or PLC.

Guest speakers at the meeting, in addition to Smith, will be Shawn Wade, Plains Cotton Growers, Lubbock; Clay Evans, USDA Farm Service Agency Lubbock office; and Will Keeling, AgriLife Extension risk management specialist, Lubbock.

Topics to be covered will include the signup process for seed cotton in the farm bill, using the decision tool in that process, and knowing when ARC is better and the risks involved in choosing it.

For more information, call Smith at 806-746-6101.

Want the facts about the U.S. agriculture and farm policy?

<http://www.farmpolicyfacts.org>

NASS Increases Texas High Plains Cotton Production Estimate

Friday, October 12, 2018

By Mary Jane Buerkle

The National Agricultural Statistics Service increased High Plains upland cotton production estimates by 220,000 bales from their September report, projecting that area growers will produce 4,165,000 bales this season.

The Northern High Plains estimate increased from 1.915 million bales in the September report to 1.995 million bales in October. The Southern High Plains estimate increased from 2.03 million bales to 2.17 million bales.

Projected yield per acre increased in both regions. The Northern High Plains went from 884 pounds in the September estimate to 921 pounds in the October estimate, and the Southern High Plains went from 650 to 694.

Harvested acres remained the same, a significant portion of which are irrigated. Growers on the Northern High Plains are projected to harvest 1,040,000 acres of cotton, while Southern High Plains growers are expected to harvest 1,500,000 acres. Projected abandonment rate for the High Plains region remains at about 55 percent.

Statewide, the production number increased to 6.7 million bales, up 200,000 from the 6.5 million in the September report. The nationwide estimate for upland cotton is 19 million bales, up slightly from an estimated 18.9 million in the September report but down 6 percent from 2017. It should be noted that these surveys were conducted before the most recent weather events.

the New Orleans Marriott in New Orleans, La., will provide insight on current research and emerging technology – to help attendees improve production, processing and marketing efficiency.

The BWCC, coordinated by the National Cotton Council, annually brings together university and USDA researchers, Extension personnel/agents, consultants, and industry sales/support personnel.

Information on the 2019 BWCC, including registration and housing reservation instructions, is at www.cotton.org/beltwide/. The site also includes a link to BWCC proceedings from 2005-2018.

The 2019 BWCC will begin at noon on January 8 with the half-day Cotton Consultants Conference – open to all attendees. Among scheduled topics selected by the consultant community are: an expert panel of entomologists to discuss bollworm and Bt resistance; objectives of cover crop initiatives; status and new products pertaining to nematodes; the current state of integrated pest management in cotton and future considerations; the status of boll weevil eradication in the Lower Rio Grande Valley; and a product registration update.

The BWCC cotton technical conferences, which will provide updates on research and a look into the technology pipeline, will meet concurrently beginning on the morning of January 9 and conclude by noon on January 10.

The Ginning Conference, for example, will include several presentations critical to cotton quality and efficient processing. Included will be updates regarding ongoing ginning research, new equipment, cottonseed, and lint contamination research/prevention. Beginning on the afternoon of January 8, the National Cotton Ginners Association will hold several committee and subcommittee meetings. A schedule of those meetings is at www.cotton.org/ncgal/index.cfm.

The Cotton Engineering-Systems Conference will have a panel addressing sustainability issues. Also, the Cotton Improvement Conference will feature five-minute lightning talks from poster presentation authors. Initiated last year, the lightning talks' intent is to provide the main points of the authors' research for stimulating more discussion later at the poster session.

Registration costs for the 2019 BWCC before December 17 are: \$200 for NCC/Cotton Foundation members, university and USDA researchers, Extension personnel, associations and consultants; \$500 for non-U.S. research, extension, associations, and consultants; \$400 for non-NCC/Foundation members; and \$80 for students.

Elevating Efficiency Is 2019 Beltwide Cotton Conferences' Goal

Wednesday, October 3, 2018 From the National Cotton Council

The 2019 Beltwide Cotton Conferences, set for January 8-10 at

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