

H.B. 2089 Receives Favorable Vote by House Agriculture and Livestock Committee

Friday, April 2, 2021

By Whitney Curry

On Thursday, April 1, 2021, H.B. 2089 relating to the detection and mitigation of plant pests and diseases was voted on by members of the House Agriculture and Livestock Committee. The bill was passed out of committee by a vote of 8-0. The bill will now be sent to House Committee on Calendars until a time is set for floor consideration.

If enacted, this legislation would establish an early plant pests and disease detection and mitigation system through cooperative agreements with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and institutions of higher education. The bill authorizes a full range of activities, including field inspection for early detection before the invasive species becomes established or becomes too large and costly to eradicate or control.

Early detection of plant pests and disease will allow for better containment to slow the spread of an invasive organism or species, which will allow for timely biological control methods, research and development of resistant seed varieties, and the ability to identify better management practices in order to contain the issue before it becomes more widespread in the state. One example this legislation would help with is combating Fusarium wilt race 4 (FOV4) in cotton.

Additionally, this week, under Article VI of S.B. 1, Rider 25 was adopted by the Senate Committee on Finance which would appropriate funding from General Revenue to carry out H.B. 2089 if enacted.

USDA Forecasts 2021 Cotton Acreage

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By Whitney Curry

The latest estimates from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Prospective Plantings Report, released March 31, shows no increase in Texas planted acreage in upland cotton for 2021. Texas upland cotton planted acres is forecast at 6.8 million acres. Planting of Pima cotton is predicted estimated to be a total of 20 thousand acres, which is 47 percent below 2020.

While the USDA has estimated Texas to plant 6.8 million acres, the National Cotton Council' Planting Intentions Survey released, in February, estimated 6.4 million acres of upland cotton to be planted. Nationwide, the USDA expects 11.9 million acres of upland cotton to be planted, a slight increase from last year, while the NCC expects 11.3 million acres to be planted, a 4.9 percent decrease from 2020.

The survey from the USDA was conducted during the first two weeks of March and new estimates will be made based on surveys conducted in June when crops averages have been established or planting intentions are firm.

Paycheck Protection Program Extended

Friday, April 2, 2021

By Whitney Curry

On Tuesday, March 30, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the "PPP Extension Act of 2021" into law extending the Small Business Administration's (SBA) loan program application until May 31. The original cutoff date was March 31, but overwhelmingly both chambers of Congress passed legislation to extend accepting applications for two more months.

The SBA has been denying PPP applications from farmers and ranchers who operate in a partnership or as a sole-owner LLC. Because of this, two separate bills have been filed to help bring clarification to the issue at hand and to allow PPP access to farmers and ranchers who operate under a partnership or a sole-owner LLC status.

The "Paycheck Protection Clarification for Producers Act" (H.R. 1246) is being carried by Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) and Representative Henry Cuellar (D-TX). This bill was introduced to the House on February 23, 2021 and has been referred to the House Committee on Small Business.

The "PPP Flexibility for Farmers and Ranchers Act" (H.R. 1411) is being carried by Representative Jim Hagedorn (R-MN) and 67 co-sponsors, including 10 from Texas. This bill was introduced to the House on February 26, 2021 and has also been referred to the House Committee on Small Business.

PLAINS COTTON GROWERS, INC.

64th Annual Meeting

Friday, April 9, 2021

Overton Hotel & Conference Center

Deltapine Breakfast – 7:30 a.m.

Registration – 8:30 a.m.

Program – 9:00 a.m.

FiberMax Luncheon – Noon

Featured Keynote Speaker:

Jim Wiesemeyer,

Pro Farmer Journalist & Analyst – Washington, D.C.,

Sponsored by Farmers Cooperative Compress

Updates from:

Congressman Jodey Arrington, *District 19*

Dr. Gary Adams, *National Cotton Council*

Beau Stephenson, *Lubbock Cotton Exchange*