

Congress Averts Government Shutdown, Includes Disaster Relief for Agriculture

Friday, October 1, 2021

By Kody Bessent

The House and Senate on Thursday approved a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR), averting a partial government shutdown, keeping federal agencies funded through December 3. The stopgap funding measure passed the Senate on a vote of 65-35 and cleared the House 254-175.

In addition to keeping the federal government open, the CR included supplemental disaster relief for recent hurricanes, wildfires, and other natural disasters. Agriculture disaster funding would primarily be administered through an extension of the Wildfire, and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) for the 2020 and 2021 calendar year with some program enhancements. Key components of the disaster relief include:

- Eligible commodities for WHIP+ include crops that were eligible for either federal crop insurance or Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage as well as milk, on-farm stored commodities, crops prevented from planting in 2020 and 2021, and harvested adulterated wine grapes, trees, bushes, and vines.
- Assistance will be available for losses incurred due to drought, wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze, including a polar vortex, smoke exposure, quality losses of crops, and excessive moisture occurring in calendar years 2020 and 2021.
- Losses due to drought specifically, shall only be eligible if any area within the county in which the loss occurs was rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (Severe Drought) for eight consecutive weeks or a D3 (Extreme Drought) or higher level of drought intensity during the applicable calendar years.
- 1 percent of disaster relief funds may be used for administrative costs, including streamlining the application process and easing the workload on county Farm Service Agency (FSA) employees, to carry out the disaster program.

- Separate payment limitations are applied for a person or legal entity that experienced a loss in 2020 and 2021.
- Eligible disaster payments are calculated net of crop insurance premiums or fees.
- Disaster relief is capped for a producer or legal entity at 90% of the loss if a producer or legal entity was insured and 70% of the loss if the producer or entity was uninsured.

A comprehensive list of all provisions of the agricultural disaster assistance contained in the CR can be found by visiting <https://bit.ly/39SUBim>

“Passage of the Continuing Resolution, ensures federal agencies including the FSA and NRCS continue to remain open and operational through December 3, providing certainty to employees and cotton producers as Farm Bill safety-net and conservation programs are currently being implemented,” said PCG CEO Kody Bessent. “Additionally, the supplemental agricultural disaster assistance contained in the CR will provide much needed relief to farmers and ranchers who have been vastly impacted by recent drought, hurricanes, wildfires and other natural disasters.”

Plains Cotton Growers looks forward to working with USDA and other agencies as these importance improvements and enhancements to WHIP+ are implemented.

PCG Sets Quarterly Board Meeting

Friday, October 1, 2021

By Whitney Curry

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors for Plains Cotton Growers, Inc. (PCG) has been set for 9 a.m. **Wednesday, October 13**, in the Plains Cotton Growers Conference Center at the FiberMax Center for Discovery in Lubbock. Lunch will be served at the conclusion of the meeting.

Agenda items planned include a cotton market report by Darren Newton with Viterra, a weather update from Matt Ernst with KCBD News Channel 11, and a U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol and federal policy update from Tas Smith with the National Cotton Council. Additionally, Dr. Bart Fischer with the Texas A&M University Agricultural & Food Policy Center will provide details and analysis of Congress’s \$3.5 trillion budget reconciliation package and the proposed

tax reform implications to production agriculture. Several updates from PCG and the Plains Cotton Growers, Inc. PAC are also on the agenda.

NASS Survey Forthcoming

Friday, September 24, 2021 From Cotton's Week

In the next few weeks, cotton producers may be contacted by a USDA representative to participate in the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS). Conducted by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the survey is a major source of U.S. farm production and economic data that has a direct impact on farm policy. This year, the survey will focus on cotton producers' production practices and chemical use.

NASS Heartland Region Director Brad Summa said, "ARMS is a vital survey that tracks how U.S. farms use technology to manage production of their major field crops. The results of this survey also help policymakers and farm groups understand the factors driving the costs and returns of crop production."

Cotton producers will be asked to provide input about their operation's nutrient/fertilizer use, tillage/pest management practices and production costs. To protect the health/safety of producers, partners, and employees, NASS has suspended in-person interviews. Instead, USDA representatives will call to schedule a telephone interview. NASS recommends that producers have their fertilizer and pesticide spray records available to speed up the survey process.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents. The information provided will be used for statistical purposes only. In accordance with federal law, survey responses will be kept confidential and will not be published in identifiable form. More information about ARMS is at www.nass.usda.gov/go/arms. ARMS data analysis is at www.ers.usda.gov/arms. Survey results and all NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov/Publications

Cotton Board 2022 Calendar Photo Contest

Friday, October 1, 2021 From The Cotton Board

The Cotton Board wants to see your best, calendar-worthy, cotton photos. One winning photo will be selected and featured in The Cotton Board's 2022 Industry Calendar.

"We are looking for creative, captivating images of cotton in any stage of production to include in the

calendar. The cotton should be the focal point of submitted entries and we ask that there be no people in the images submitted," says Stacey Gorman, Director of Communications for The Cotton Board. "I am looking forward to submissions from across the Cotton Belt, as I know each region has its own unique and beautiful cotton landscapes," she said. Photos should be taken in a horizontal orientation and be at least 300 dpi.

To be eligible to win, contestants must first "like" The Cotton Board Facebook page and then email their high-res jpeg photo to sgorman@cottonboard.org. Up to three entries per contestant will be considered. The contest ends on **Friday October 8, 2021**, at noon, CST. Cotton Board staff will vote to determine the winning photo and the winner will be announced on Tuesday, October 12.

The Cotton Board calendar is an industry staple and is mailed to every cotton producer and ginner in the U.S. The winner will have their photo, along with photo credit, featured in the 2022 calendar and will also receive a cotton prize pack, including 25 copies of the calendar to share with friends and family.

Editor's Note:

"Cotton News", a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 42-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