

# Agriculture News

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## Cotton News: Early Freeze helps, hurts

**By Mary Jane Buerkle**  
 When producers across the High Plains went to sleep on Sunday, October 7, many of them probably didn't think they would wake up that Monday morning to a finished crop, thanks to an early freeze.

Temperatures dipped to as low as 28 degrees, according to the West Texas Mesonet, and stayed below freezing for several hours in some areas.

With the cotton crop as a whole running about a week ahead of schedule because of the hot summer temperatures, the freeze actually benefited some growers, helping them avoid the additional expense of spraying harvest aids. However, there was a significant amount of cotton that was in the latest stages of development and needed another week or two to mature fully. The freeze slammed the door on that opportunity, possibly compromising fiber quality and yield.

"I think the cotton with better water was a little behind because it didn't grow until you made each pass with the pivot," Lamb County producer and PCG Chairman Brad Heffington said. "It would grow three days and wait a couple until another pass came, then grow three days and then sit there."

"We kept up with our irrigation just enough to not let (the cotton) burn completely up, but it wasn't growing like it normally would if it had underground moisture to go on between passes," Heffington said. "The jury is still out on a lot of this but I suspect this was very bad for what was going to be the better cotton over here because it needed time."

And if an early freeze wasn't enough, this weekend's forecast includes the potential for severe weather in the area, with a scenario setting up similar to the mid-October storm system that pummeled crops in 2010, according to the National Weather Service.

Although the latest National Agricultural Statistics Service's Texas district estimates indicate that the High Plains will produce 3.96 million bales of cotton in 2012, down 390,000 bales from the August estimate, many believe the actual number will be lower.

"We fully expect district numbers to shift downward in the next report, which will be in December, especially upon realizing the impact of the freeze and any other inclement weather," PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said.

According to the report, that 3.96 million bales would be almost 65% of the state's total crop, which currently is estimated at 6.1 million bales. The report states that 4.23 million acres of cotton were planted on the High Plains, and 3.11 million acres are expected to be harvested with an average yield of 837 pounds to the acre in the northern half of the Plains Cotton Growers service area and 536 pounds to the acre in the southern half.

Nationwide, the latest USDA-NASS crop production report estimates an increase in cotton production, up 1 percent from the September estimates to 17.3 million bales.

### Texas Commodity Symposium Set for November 28 in Amarillo

The twelfth annual Texas Commodity Symposium will be held Wednesday, Nov. 28, in Amarillo in conjunction with the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show in the Grand Plaza Room at the Amarillo Civic Center. The free event will begin at 9:30 a.m.

The symposium, which is hosted by the Corn Producers Association of Texas, Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., Texas Grain Sorghum Association, Texas Peanut Producers Board, Texas Wheat Producers Association and Southwest Council of Agribusiness, will conclude with the annual Ag Appreciation Luncheon, presented by the symposium and the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce Ag Council.

"This year's program offers relevant information on a variety of topics that will not only affect the agricultural industry, but everyone in our state," CPAT Executive Vice President David Gibson said. "We encourage both farmers and those in agribusiness to attend the event."

David Wasserman with The Cook Political Report will present the symposium's keynote address during the Ag Appreciation Luncheon. Wasserman is responsible for handicapping and analyzing U.S. House races for the publication, and will provide an overview of the 2012 elections and their potential implications.

"The Cook Political Report has always provided knowledgeable insight on elections," PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said. "Area producers and business persons will both be able to gain a lot of valuable information by attending the symposium."

Additionally, the symposium will examine a variety of issues that impact producers and the agribusiness sector. Featured topics this year include the farm bill and agricultural policy, establishment of a state grain indemnity fund, water technology, and program updates from NRCS and FSA.

The Water Conservation Advisory Council also will recognize its 2012 Blue Legacy Award in Agriculture recipients at the event.

"This is a great opportunity to hear a diverse group of speakers

addressing key issues affecting Texas agriculture," TWPB Executive Vice President Rodney Mosier said.

For sponsorship opportunities or more information, please call 800.647.CORN (2676) or email info@texascorn.org.

### 2013 Beltwide Cotton Conferences Aim to Improve Producers' Bottom Lines

**by the National Cotton Council**

Cotton producers will find an abundance of information aimed at increasing their profitability at the 2013 Beltwide Cotton Conferences -- set for January 7-10 at the Marriott Rivercenter/Riverwalk hotels in San Antonio, Texas.

The National Cotton Council coordinates the annual Beltwide Cotton Conferences. The forum brings together those with a stake in a healthy U.S. cotton production sector, including cotton industry members, university and USDA researchers, Extension personnel, consultants, and service providers, to share timely information. Programming is designed to update U.S. cotton producers on new technology, innovative and effective production practices, and key industry issues.

Bill Robertson, the NCC's manager, Agronomy, Soils and Physiology who coordinates the conferences with oversight by the conferences' steering committee, said one of the Cotton Production Conference general session's key presentations will be a market outlook from Allenberg Cotton Company CEO Joe Nicosia. Other general session reports will include an update on key legislation/regulations, including farm bill status; a review of the 2012 production season; a discussion of herbicide resistance in Texas; and a presentation on climate trends.

The Cotton Production Conference also will offer multiple seminars and workshops that promise to deliver a wealth of information to cotton producers. Among sessions being developed are:

--Comparison of conventional and transgenic cotton production systems;

--Irrigation practices and other tools to improve efficiency;

--Discussion of 2,4-D and dicamba tolerant traits and industry efforts to address tank cleanout, volatility, drift, and importance of marking fields;

--Cotton options workshop that demonstrates the use of innovative marketing strategies, crop insurance and advanced farm and financial management techniques to develop a strong risk management program;

--Social media and a look at its growing use in production agriculture;

--Effective use of fertilizer stabilizers; and

--"New Developments From Industry," including new varieties, new products for pest and disease management, equipment updates, and emerging technologies, including software applications for producers and consultants.

The 2013 Beltwide Cotton Conferences opens with the 6th annual Cotton Consultants Conference, which will focus on weed resistance, irrigation and an insecticide update, including a review of how various insecticides performed during the 2012 season. Also included will be the 11 cotton technical conferences and The Cotton Foundation Technical Exhibits.

Housing/registration instructions, a schedule of events, and general information for the 2013 Beltwide Cotton Conferences are at <http://www.cotton.org/beltwide>.

### NCC Launches Emerging Leaders Program

Friday, October 12, 2012 From the National Cotton Council  
 The National Cotton Council has launched the Emerging Leaders Program, an effort aimed at ensuring the U.S. cotton industry benefits from a continuity of sound leadership.

The project, sponsored by a grant to The Cotton Foundation from Monsanto, not only will provide participants with an in-depth look at the U.S. cotton industry infrastructure and the business and political arenas in which it operates but give them intense professional development training, including communication skills improvement.

"We are grateful to Monsanto for agreeing to provide financial support for this important endeavor," NCC Chairman Chuck Coley said. "This program will help identify and train those who are committed to taking on the challenges of guiding this great industry in the future. The Council relies on highly effective industry leadership to communicate cotton policy and issues to Congress, the media and other agricultural groups. That's why we need industry members who are willing to step up and assume greater responsibilities."

Among Emerging Leaders Program objectives will be to help participants gain a better understanding of: 1) the NCC's role, including its programs, policy development and implementation process; 2) Cotton Council International's role in developing and maintaining export markets for U.S. cotton, manufactured cotton products and cottonseed products; 3) the broad spectrum of issues that affect U.S. cotton's economic well-being; and 4) the U.S. political process. The program also will encourage participants to increase their involvement in these and other NCC activities.

This leadership initiative also will focus on helping participants improve their communications skills, including presentation and business etiquette, instruction for engaging with the news media, and utilizing social media tools and tactics.

Each class will consist of eight to 10 industry members and class members will participate in three sessions during the year.

The first session will provide a NCC orientation, professional development/communication skills and a briefing on agribusiness. The second session will enable participants to see policy development at the NCC's Annual Meeting while the third session in Washington, D.C., will focus on policy implementation and international market development.

There is no age limit for program candidates whose primary livelihood must be derived from at least one of the seven raw cotton industry segments. Nominations will be made by one of the following: a certified interest organization, NCC officer or NCC director. Selections will be made by the NCC chairman in consultation with the NCC President's office and NCC Member Services.

PCG EDITOR'S NOTE: If you are interested in participating, or know someone who would be a good candidate, please call PCG at (806) 792-4904.

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