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----- COTTON NEWS -----

High Plains Cotton Production Numbers Continue Downward Turn for 2012

By Mary Jane Buerkle
 As expected, the National Agricultural Statistics Service's district estimates for the Texas High Plains dropped from 3.96 million bales in the October report to just more than 3.4 million bales in their report released on Tuesday.

Many gins already have finished their season, and High Plains cotton industry experts believe that the final number will be even lower than that when the 2012 crop year comes to a close.

"Based on cotton ginned and classed to date and remaining cotton to be ginned, I'd be surprised if we hit the three million bale mark," PCG Executive Vice President Steve Verett said. "I think that along with the continued drought, the results of the early freeze are beginning to show up in these production numbers."

According to the NASS report, that 3.4 million bales for the High Plains would be almost 62% of the state's total crop of an estimated 5.5 million bales, down 400,000 from the estimate in the November report, which did not include district numbers. Planted acres and harvested acres are unchanged from the October report – 4.23 million acres planted on the High Plains, and 3.11 million acres expected to be harvested. However, the yield estimates are down for both portions of the Plains Cotton Growers service area, with an average yield of 726 pounds to the acre in the northern half and 458 pounds to the acre in the southern half.

The world's cotton crop for 2012/2013 is estimated to be 116.9 million bales. The U.S. cotton crop production estimate is 17.26 million bales, down 190,000 bales from the November report.

Quality remains good, with 21 being the predominant color for the Lubbock, Lamesa and Abilene classing offices over the last several weeks and for the season. Average staple length for the season is over 35 for the Lubbock and Lamesa offices. Both offices have seen bark content increase over the past couple of weeks.

Watch Your Mail for Census of Agriculture

The 2012 Census of Agriculture forms will be mailed to over 3 million U.S. agricultural producers during the last week of December. In Texas, about 375,000 Census forms are being mailed out. The mailings include all known farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers, plus a large number of potential agricultural producers.

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Texas Field Office has provided responses to some of the most commonly asked questions about the Census of Agriculture.

1. What is the Census of Agriculture?
 The first Census of Agriculture was conducted in 1840, and is now conducted every five years. The Census is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census looks at land use and tenure, operator characteristics, production practices and economic information. The Census serves as a very important "voice" for America's farmers and ranchers.
2. Why is the Census of Agriculture important?
 The Census provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial agricultural data for every county in the nation. Through the Census, producers will show the value and importance of agriculture in their county and can help influence decisions that will shape the future of American agriculture. By responding to the Census, producers are helping themselves and their communities.
3. Who uses the Census of Agriculture data?
 Census data are used by all who serve farmers and rural communities: university research and extension, state and local officials, agribusinesses, farm organizations, commodity groups, and many others.

Companies and cooperatives use the facts and figures to determine future locations of facilities that will serve agricultural producers.

Community planners use the information to target needed services to rural residents.

Legislators use Census statistics when shaping farm policies and programs.

Producers use the information in making plans for their future operations.

Other uses of Census information:
 Used to allocate block grant dollars to states
 Used to allocate funds for beginning farmer, conservation and other programs
 Used to help identify research priorities and to allocate funds accordingly
 Used in rural economic development like broadband Internet expansion

4. I'm retired or I've never farmed, do I need to return the Census form? Yes.

Everyone who receives a Census form is required to return the Census form, even if they no longer farm or have never been involved in agriculture. A simple note of explanation on the front page will suffice. Please note: retired operators who own land enrolled in CRP or WRP are counted as farms and should complete the Census form.

I only have a small operation, do I count? Yes.
 It only takes \$1,000 worth of agricultural production to be counted as a farm. A few cows, several goats, laying hens for local egg sales, some hay production – it doesn't take much to be a farm. Everyone should complete and return their Census form.

Other key points:
 The Census of Agriculture has mandatory reporting authority, just like the population Census. This is due to the tremendous value of the information and because of the large amount of funds and resources targeted and allocated based on Census results.

Individual information is guaranteed complete confidentiality by federal law, Title 7 of the U.S. code. Title 7 prevents NASS from sharing individual information with any other government agency and also gives NASS immunity from any type of mandatory disclosure of individual data, including legal processes and FOIA.

NASS is restricted to publishing only aggregate totals at state and county levels such that the identity of any individual is not discernible in the published totals.

The form is lengthy, but there are many commodity specific sections for which producers will simply check "No", because they do not raise those items.

There is a toll free phone number on the front of the Census form for anyone with questions: (888) 424-7828. NASS will operate calling centers from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays, to respond to incoming calls.

For more information about the Census of Agriculture, please call the USDA's NASS Texas Field Office at (800) 626-3142.

Make Plans to Attend Beltwide Cotton Conferences in January

From the National Cotton Council
 Monday, December 17, is the last day for discounted room rates will be offered by the Marriott Rivercenter/Riverwalk hotels in San Antonio. Those are the headquarter hotels for the 2013 Beltwide Cotton Conferences, set for January 7-10, 2013.

The National Cotton Council urges cotton industry members, university and USDA researchers, Extension personnel, consultants, equipment and service providers – anyone with a stake in a healthy U.S. cotton production sector – to make your housing reservations now for this world-class information forum.

Housing and Conferences registration instructions, along with a schedule of events and general information are at <http://www.cotton.org/beltwide>.

The Conferences will open on the afternoon of January 7 with the Consultants Conference in the Marriott Riverwalk Hotel. That session is open to everyone and includes a noon luncheon. The program begins at 1 p.m., and attendees will get to hear such timely updates as:

--Dr. Jim Bordovsky with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Plainview, discussing many of the issues his group has been involved in for both drip and pivot irrigation.

--Dr. Jeff Gore, Mississippi State University, Stoneville, Miss., reporting on insecticide performance.

--Weed scientists from the Mid-South and Southeast, who will elaborate on various practices that may be described as the "Second Generation of Weed Resistance Management" and that are an important part of an integrated pest management program.

The Production Conference General Session begins on Tuesday January 8, in the Lila Cockrell Theatre (Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center).

Three Texas A&M University faculty members have been invited to address the general session. Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon, Texas State Climatologist will provide his thoughts related to past and current weather patterns and what to expect for the 2013 season. Dr. Gaylon Morgan, State Extension Cotton Specialist, will provide a review of the 2012 season for the entire Cotton Belt. Dr. Paul Baumann, state leader for AgriLife Extension weed science activities, will provide an overview of herbicide resistance in Texas.

John Maguire, National Cotton Council, Washington D.C., will provide a Washington update. Joe Nicosia, Allenberg Cotton Company, Cordova, Tenn., will end the general session with a 2013 market outlook.

Production Conference Workshops will run from 10:30 a.m. January 8 until noon January 9. Topics include:

Varieties: New varieties will be discussed in New Developments From Industry and variety testing will be discussed in the Extension Cotton Specialist Workshop.

Conventional Cotton: Back to the Future II Workshop: Breeders, weed scientists, entomologists, agronomists and economists discuss the use of conventional cotton varieties.

Future Technology and Tools Workshop: Industry updates on 2,4-D and dicamba technology and Dr. Peter Dotray, Weed Scientist – Lubbock will discuss past, present, and future weed management systems. Tolerance of varieties to dicamba and glufosinate will be discussed in the Extension Cotton Specialists Workshop.

Fertility: Cotton Soil Management and Plant Nutrition Special Session – Fertilizer Stabilizers; Sensor-based fertility will be discussed in the Precision Ag Workshop.

Precision Ag: Practical and Profitable Practices for Precision Agriculture Workshop

Social Media: Speakers will discuss how to effectively utilize social media in your business.

Register now at <http://www.cotton.org/beltwide>.

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