



Channel 4 Reporter Galen Culver Interviewing Fred Wyatt, Tillman County Producer

CHANNEL 4 TELEVISION, Oklahoma City, was in Tillman County this past week talkin' about the record crop of dryland cotton being harvested there and in many other counties in the North Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas plains.



Galen Culver, who ranges across the Sooner State, looking for subjects for his Channel 4 program, "Is This a Great State Or What," was contacted by NTOKCotton.

We invited him to come look at the bale and a half an acre dryland cotton crop and he was gracious enough to accept the invitation.

After touring one of Hollister, Oklahoma farmer, Fred Wyatt's fields of white fiber, he returned with two minutes of air time to tell Oklahomans that cotton is back in business.

Phil Whitworth, field operations manager for the Oklahoma Cooperative Cotton Oil Mill, remembers when cotton farming wasn't nearly as good a deal. In 1997, Whitworth was one of several Tillman County cotton gin managers who came together to try to salvage something from the depredations of the boll weevil that had ruined cotton production in the southern plains.

"Our three farmer cooperatives decided to close six gins and keep one running," he said. "We thought things surely would get better. It didn't and three years later, we ginned only 2,000 bales for the season."

Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas farmers voted by referendum to work to eradicate the weevil. These efforts were extremely successful. This year, that meager 2,000 bale total will be closer to 200,000 bales.

Before the weevil stopped cotton production, Wyatt had farmed as many as 2,800 acres of cotton. He quit the crop completely in 1996 and did not plant an acre for four years. In 2,000, he planted 35 acres as a trial effort. Since then, he has increased his acreage to the 5,000 acres he is harvesting this season.

U. S. COTTON PRODUCTION could exceed the last record. The USDA's fifth forecast of 2005 cotton production, which put US production at 23.1 million bales, was just 89,700 bales shy of the record 23.2 million harvested in 2004.

However, some traders say there is a realistic possibility that final US cotton production could exceed the record. For the second consecutive month, the department made no change to the US area for harvest in its November supply/demand report, leaving the figure at 13.6 million acres. Consequently, the 444,000 bale increase from October's projected crop was attributed to a 16 pound rise in average yield to 813 pounds. Cotton production was raised in all states except Mississippi where cumulative boll counts fell to the lowest level in four years. The cause, of course, for this significant drop was the hurricanes that hit the area.

TALKIN' COTTON is a feature of NTOK Cotton, a cotton industry partnership which encourages increased cotton production on the Rolling Plains of North Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. For more in-depth information on the cotton scene, check out our website, [ntokcotton](http://ntokcotton.com)



