



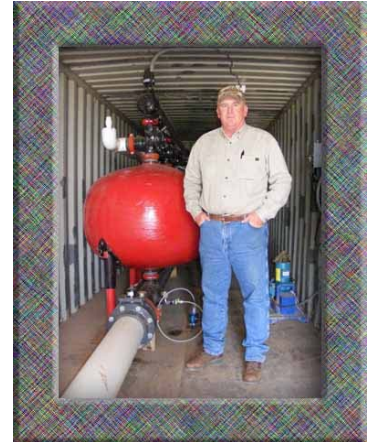
## Clint Abernathy - Altus, Oklahoma

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ALTUS, Ok. May 5, 2008,-- Clint Abernathy, who produces both irrigated and dryland cotton here, has received national recognition not only for top cotton production but also for maintaining and improving the environmental quality of his farms.

Using a ripper and plastic tape that is placed 12 to 16 inches in each incision in the ground, Abernathy is busy setting up drip irrigation for all of his cotton fields.

He irrigated 530 acres with the new process in 2007 and is adding 360 more acres for the 2008 crop.



Placed with GPS models in each field, Abernathy has computer-generated maps of each of his fields showing where the irrigation tapes have been placed underground, where the highest and lowest portions of each field are located and where pumps are located to move water from ditches into the fields.

The EQIP program sponsored by the Natural Resources and Conservation Service of the USDA provides Abernathy with a cost-sharing program where the federal program provides a \$500 per acre cost share.

"So far, our per acre cost in installing the drip irrigation has been around \$600 per acre," he said. "That is in a do it yourself situation. Where a company comes in and installs it by themselves, it could cost between \$800 to \$1,000 per acre."

At each pump, there is a set of tanks containing gravel and seen to filter out anything from the water as it moves from the ditch through the pump and underground into the drip tapes. Abernathy said.

Abernathy relies on the expertise of a consultant who stops at his farm periodically during the growing season. He also depends on the knowledge and help of Dr. J. C. Banks, Oklahoma State University Extension cotton specialist.

Abernathy started installing the drip irrigation three years ago, beginning with an 80 acre field. His objective is to install the system on all his irrigated land within the next two or three years, he said.

Abernathy has found drip irrigation to be the most efficient type of irrigation he has used. Since plants are watered at the root, there is little or no evaporation of water into the atmosphere. The ground surface stays dry, allowing any necessary field work to be done.

Abernathy's farming is almost entirely no-till now. He moved from minimum tillage to no-till gradually, but he is hopeful to go all the way soon. His farming program calls for wheat and cotton rotation.

This practice allows him to clean up weeds in the wheat. "We do a lot of double cropping," he said. "In our dryland wheat, we will plant cotton right behind the wheat harvester."

Abernathy is in a constant decision-making process as to what cotton varieties he will be using each year. "We are using all BGII flex varieties," he said. "We get all the advantages of weed control and keeping down any plant or soil diseases affecting the cotton.

"Really, we need about three consecutive crops to really evaluate a cotton variety to see if it is the right one for us in different cropping systems and soils, but there are so many new ones coming out each year, we are always testing a few new ones on limited acreage."

Abernathy and his two sons who farm with him will harvest in excess of 7,000 acres of wheat this spring. They are excited and a little nervous about weather and market conditions, to say the least. Most of their wheat acreage this year is planted to the Jagger variety, he says.

Equally important, he is watching the cotton market situation. Ag economists earlier this year predicted cotton may bring 95 cents or better in the fall and they also say 2009 could see \$1 per pound cotton.

Abernathy is ready to take advantage of better prices, he says. His farming program is evidence of his ability to farm in the southern plains.

This story is disseminated by NTOK Cotton, a cotton industry partnership which supports and encourages cotton production in North Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. For more information on the cotton scene, see [okiecotton.org](http://okiecotton.org) and [ntokcotton.org](http://ntokcotton.org).

