



National Cotton Council Representative Speaks to Oklahoma Cotton Council Members

Altus, Ok. -- Members of the Oklahoma Cotton Council were told this week the National Cotton Council supports the current Farm Bill and believes it should serve as the foundation for the next farm bill.

Craig Brown, NCC representative, told a group of approximately 80 cotton farmers meeting in Altus the NCC will work diligently to assure the farm bill remains unchanged for the rest of its term which would be through the 2007 cotton crop.

"We would support the extension of this bill," Brown said. He explained several factors will affect the making of the next farm bill. For instance, the next farm bill will be written under federal budget deficit conditions as opposed to the previous farm bill which was written during a budget surplus.

"The status of the World Trade Organization will impact the next farm bill," Brown told the group. "If there is an agreement reached, new disciplines on farm program delivery systems could alter spending levels in different provisions such as marketing loans, counter-cyclical and direct payments.

"The USDA will be an active participant in the next farm bill debate," he said. "Sec. Johanns has conducted many 'listening sessions' and will make recommendations to Congress. It is clear the USDA has concerns about current programs."

Brown pointed out some of the future developments NCC believes will be talking place in future farm bill negotiations:

Specialty crops will want to be included in the next farm bill. If no additional funding is designated for commodity programs, this could cause reductions in current program crop spending.

There will be the traditional battle between commodity, conservation and nutrition programs within the Farm Bill for level to reduced spending authority.

Emphasis will not only focus on good structure for farm program delivery as in marketing loans, CCP and DP, but also to maintain adequate eligibility and payment limit provisions.

"We just maintain eligibility for commercial-size operations including full access to the marketing loan for all production," Brown said. He stressed that the Oklahoma Cotton Council will play an important role in representing the interests of Oklahoma producers and ginnerers.

