



## NEWS RELEASE

### Mark Nichols

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MOST COTTON FARMERS can temporarily lay aside their farm responsibilities when they leave the turn row and go home.

Others, like Mark Nichols, Altus, Oklahoma cotton farmer, willingly stay in the harness during the week, over the weekend and during the holidays.



Nichols is the chairman of the new Oklahoma Cotton Council, formed this year to consolidate the efforts of several state organizations representing cotton production and processing.

Throughout 2005, Nichols has attended state and national meetings where he has worked to promote Oklahoma cotton farmers and their product.

When the Oklahoma legislature resumes its work next year, the Council has several projects it intends to pursue, he said. "We will be working to get all state agencies on the same page concerning the application of phenoxy herbicides," he said. "These herbicides can be very harmful to early cotton."

The U.S. Congress is working on a new farm program and there are several areas Nichols is watching closely. "We are particularly interested in creating a new farm program that will encourage farmers to stay in business, rather than make it more difficult for them to be productive," he said.

One of the most successful government programs that have been helpful to cotton farmers has been the boll weevil eradication program, Nichols said.

"When the boll weevils were bad, we were spending \$20 to \$30 per acre spraying for them on dryland cotton," he said. "And in our irrigated cotton, our weevil costs would be \$50 per acre. We didn't stop growing cotton, but the eradication program certainly has made it a lot easier."

Nichols grows both irrigated and dryland cotton. Some of his dryland fields failed to get as much rain as he would have liked, but the irrigated cotton is doing well.

"We are getting two and three quarter bales per acre in our irrigated cotton," he said. Planting Fibermax varieties in his irrigated fields and Stoneville dryland varieties gives him a good selection of cotton to grow.

He had no serious spring planting problems, he said. Stacked gene varieties were helpful in combating bollworms, too. In his dryland cotton, Nichols believes cotton not only is a good money crop, but also helps to control weeds when rotated with winter wheat. He uses both conventional tillage and no-till where needed.

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.org](http://ntokcotton.org). For comments or questions about Talkin' Cotton, contact us at 580-569-4073 or [lventerprise@westok.net](mailto:lventerprise@westok.net).

