



Oklahoma's Boll Weevil Eradication Program

OKLAHOMAS' BOLL WEEVIL Eradication program, headquartered at Hobart, Ok., continues to keep its promise: eradicating the boll weevil with less cost for the cotton farmer.

"During the 2007 growing season, only 18 boll weevils were caught and these were in three southeastern Oklahoma counties where the eradication program is in its final stages," Joe Harris, OBWEO executive director, said. This compares with 1,010 weevils caught in the same counties in 2006. No weevils were caught in any other area of the state in the 2007 growing season, he said.

Eradication had to wait in the three southeastern Oklahoma counties until the same procedures began in northeastern Texas counties across the state line, Harris said.

Proof that the eradication program has been successful was given in 2007 when, after a cold, wet spring planting, Oklahoma had a statewide average per acre yield of 834 pounds of cotton lint from nearly 164,000 acres harvested. Harris reports the OBWEO board recently voted to set the 2008 crop year assessment at a straight \$4 per acre of harvested cotton. The last two seasons producers have paid an assessment of \$2 per acre and .0065 cent per pound of cotton sold. This equated to \$5.12 per acre on a yield of one bale, Harris said.

Harris reports the USDA, in conjunction with all cotton-growing states, continues to finalize a national post-eradication maintenance and control strategy. Some portions of the strategy, including a national network for positive identification of suspect weevils, are being implemented now. An area of major interest is establishment of a series of storage sites at key locations across the cotton belt from which equipment and material can be drawn in the event of a re-infestation.

By pooling resources, this cooperative effort will, if implemented, significantly reduce individual state program expenses associated with procuring and maintaining items that may be seldom, if ever, used, Harris said.

TALKIN' COTTON is produced 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 and ntokcotton.org. For questions and comments on Talkin' Cotton, contact eventerprise1@hughes.net.