



Farmers in the Carnegie, Ok., area are beginning to harvest their cotton crop. Jeannie Hileman, manager of the Farmers Coop Gin there, says irrigation was all that saved cotton planted in the Carnegie and Caddo County area. Hileman is shown here next to a completed bale of cotton. Next to her are Dalton Skinner, center, and Aaron Hileman, ginners. (NTOK Cotton photo)

## TALKIN' COTTON

"IRRIGATION MADE the difference this year," Jeannie Hileman, manager of the Farmers Coop Gin, Carnegie, Ok., said. "Our customers planted nearly 30,000 acres of cotton, but we will only harvest about 12,000 acres. All of the dryland cotton failed to make a crop. We had hoped to gin more than 20,000 bales this year, but now we will be short of that total."

Caddo County had more soil moisture from early rains than just about any other part of the cotton-growing area in Oklahoma, she said. This, coupled with many farmers using pivot irrigation systems to water their crops, enabled to grow several acres of cotton and corn, she said.

"Most of the pivots in this area each cover 120 acres," she said. "This acreage makes up a quarter section of farmland. When you take away the corners of the quarter section, you have 120 acres under one center pivot system. Many farmers planted 60 acres of corn and 60 acres of cotton under the same pivot. When the corn began to dry down and mature, the farmer simply concentrated on watering the cotton for the rest of the production season. This helped us to keep a lot of the cotton going this year." When interviewed for this report, Hileman's gin had ginned 400 bales, then had to shut down for a few days due to a 2.7 inch rain in early October. Wet ground was keeping farmers from harvesting the cotton.

"We know we are in a bad drought," she said. "but Oklahoma's weather always keeps us guessing."

ELECTRICITY is certainly helpful in agricultural work. It is used in processing, lighting, heating, ventilation, irrigation and many other tasks. But it can be a dangerous resource.

Electrical shock can occur from faulty wiring in buildings and irrigation systems, frayed power cords, machinery and tools and power lines. Water, either weather related or otherwise, can increase the risk for electrical shock. A person does not have to come in direct contact with an electrical source in order to be electrocuted. Currents can move through open space in order to return to the ground. Recommendations to prevent electric shock or electrocution are innumerable.

Be sure to protect wiring from corrosive or abrasive environments. Check wiring in buildings, irrigation systems, power tools and machinery monthly. Only use electric devices with three pronged plugs. Use a GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) plug in moist or outdoor environments. Do not use metal ladders around electrical power lines. Locate overhead and underground power lines. Document their location and tell this information to all workers in the area.

Make sure all equipment is lowered to a safe position before it is moved. Locate irrigation pipe storage away from power lines. Always turn off the electrical power and lock power boxes before performing maintenance. Never touch electrical tools with wet hands. Do not operate machinery or power tools while standing in water or working in moist environments.

For more information on this safety subject, contact SW Ag Center by phone at 903-877-5896 or by email at [agcenter@uthct.edu](mailto:agcenter@uthct.edu).

TALKIN' COTTON is produced by NTOK Cotton, a cotton industry partnership which supports and encourages increased cotton production in the Rolling Plains of North Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. For more information on the cotton scene, see [ntokcotton.org](http://ntokcotton.org) and [okiecotton.org](http://okiecotton.org). For questions or comments on Talkin' Cotton, contact [bustersbarn1@yahoo.com](mailto:bustersbarn1@yahoo.com).