

TALKIN' COTTON

WHILE DROUGHT continues to plague the 2011 cotton crop, according to the USDA's June acreage report, there has been a lot more cotton planted this year across the cotton belt. Slightly over 25 percent more, 25.1 percent, acres have been planted this year than last year. The estimated acres are 13.73 million acres in 2011.

Upland planted acres are estimated to have increased 24.8 percent to 13.44 million acres. Extra long staple (ELS) cotton producers planted 289,000 acres, up 41.5 percent from 2010. USDA's June number is up 1.16 million acres from their initial 2011 estimate released in March, 2011.

In the three southwestern cotton-producing states of Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, estimated upland cotton area is up 26.9 percent to 7.47 million acres. USDA estimates the largest increase in actual cotton acres will occur in Texas, up 1.55 million acres, 27.9 percent from the previous year. Kansas will see the largest percentage increase with an estimated 68,000 acres, up 33.3 percent from 2010. Oklahoma is expected to increase 15,000 acres or 5.3 percent, to 300,000 acres.

How many of this dramatic increase in acreage will be successfully harvested at the end of the season will depend mainly on how much rain falls on the dryland cotton as well as irrigated acres. Already reports are being given on estimates on how many acres will be abandoned due to continued hot, dry weather in west Texas as well as across the rest of the cotton-growing area in states west and east of the three southwestern area states usually reported on in Talkin' Cotton.

NATIONAL COTTON GINNERS' ASSN urges gins to carefully review the coverage and possible limitations of their gin stocks insurance policies. Most gins use these policies to protect against loss while seed cotton is being converted into its finished products.

One pressing concern involves both the gin yard configuration and the amount of seed cotton being permitted for storage in the yard--generally limited by a set dollar value and very specific distance requirements between yards. With the increases in cotton values, these yards will need to be carefully planned.

Gin stocks insurance policies also have a total aggregate dollar amount the insurer will pay regardless of the extent of the loss. With the increases in cotton prices and the gin's liability for seed cotton storage, this aggregate amount also may require adjustment to address the higher risk the gin will assume.

Ginners should carefully review these contractual details with their insurance agents or brokers to make sure they understand and comply with all requirements.

In addition, it is crucial gins inform growers of this increased risk and the importance of conforming to the policy's requirements. This information is courtesy of the National Cotton Council.

PREVENTING HEAT PROBLEMS for people working outside in this extreme heat is a real concern for both managers overseeing crews working outside as well as for individuals who are outdoors for extended periods of time.

The southwest is experiencing consistent triple digit temperatures this summer and it is only early July. Agricultural workers frequently work outside during the heat of the day or in enclosed environments that are not climate controlled. Protecting workers from the effects of heat is vital to their health and productivity. Everyone should take advantage of water, rest and shade during the work day outside.

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 and okiecotton.org. For questions or comments on Talkin' Cotton, contact bustersbarn1@yahoo.com.