

Talkin Cotton

by Vic Schoonover

Humphreys, Ok.-"I have a lot of happy farmers in my office right now," said Jantz Bain, manager of the Humphreys Cooperative near Altus in Jackson County.

The reason they are happy is due to wide-spread rain falling throughout southwestern Oklahoma last night where a severe drought exists.

"We received 1.7 inches of rain at the gin here last night," Bain said. "This rain is very important to us. Not only will it help cotton farmers plant cotton, but we have a lot of cotton already planted. We need the rain to get the crop up and get it growing."

Big rains fell in Tillman County, one of the most severely drought-blighted counties in southwestern Oklahoma. Between three and six inches are reported by David Lingle, gin manager of the Tillman Producers Cooperative southwest of Frederick.

"The rain will give us a big turnaround," Lingle said. "There are a lot of farmers here who had decided not to plant cotton due to the dry weather. This rain will help farmers plant their cotton and get a stand. There is no subsurface moisture like there was in 2010 when we were able to plant and get a crop started. We will need more rain to replanish that moisture."

A total of 4.2 inches fell at the Tri-County Gin east of Chattanooga in Tillman County, according to Craig Bolton, gin manager. "An inch of rain fell at Grandfield where I live," Bolton said.

"This will help us a lot. It has been really dry."

Rainfall ranging from two and a half to six inches fell in the Carnegie area in Caddo County, according to a spokesman at the Farmers Cooperative gin.

At the Midwest Farmers, Inc. gin in Clinton, a half inch of rain was received.

At Butler in Custer County north of I40, a spokesman at the Farmers Cooperative Assn. gin reported receiving four-tenths of an inch.

Harvey Schroeder, Frederick farmer and exec. director of the Oklahoma Cotton Council, reported receiving two inches of rain in the Frederick area.

A spokesman at the Cotton Growers Cooperative gin at Altus reported one and half inches of rain fell at the gin west of Altus. He also reported finding 3.6 inches of rain in his rain guage at Martha, north of Altus.

A spokesman at the Farmers Cooperative Assn. in Eldorado in extreme southwest Jackson County reported receiving 1.7 inches of rain there.

Dr. Randy Boman, director of the Oklahoma State University Southwest Research and Extension Center south of Altus, reported, "We received two inches of rain at my mother's house at Tipton and there is water running out of the fields." Tipton is located in western Tillman County., "This is what we have been needing," Boman, who directs the OSU cotton research and extension programs, said.. "I have really been concerned about the drought. We will need this rain and more to get the cotton crop planted and growing well."

Top prices being paid for cotton caused a lot of interest in growing more acres of the crop this year. Boman estimated that most of new cotton was originally planned to be planted mainly on dryland acres.

"With that many new acres of cotton scheduled to be planted, the drought would really strike a serious blow to the industry," he said.

A spokesman at the Harmon County Cooperative in Hollis, located in extreme southwestern Oklahoma, reported receiving two inches of rain there.

In southern Kiowa County, a spokesman at the Snyder Farmers Cooperative reported receiving two inches of rain.

At Lone Wolf in western Kiowa County, a spokesman reported receiving two and a half to three inches of rain in the Lone Wolf area. She reported Hobart, located in northern Kiowa County, received five inches of rain.