

TALKIN' COTTON

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Cotton planting is almost complete in the irrigated areas, and is progressing rapidly in the southern part of the state. Moisture has been limited in the areas around I-40 and north, but hopefully by the time this is published, rainfall has been received. Some producers are starting dry planting in some areas with the hope that when rainfall is received, it will be enough to not only germinate the seed, but allow the moisture to meet. This will ensure good taproot growth that will be critical later in the summer. If not enough rainfall is received to allow moisture to meet, the root system will be shallow and more sensitive to drought. A root cannot grow into dry soil, but will stop growth and the root tip will be terminated. Any new growth after moisture is received will be branched out at the point where growth was stopped by the dry soil, resulting in a more shallow root system.

Southern parts of the state have had a good planting season, moisture has been good, and not much soil has needed to be moved to place the seed into good moisture conditions. Some small rains have occurred in some areas, and these have been very beneficial. No-till cotton that has wind protection has really started growing rapidly. Every year I become more convinced that planting into some residue is the best way to produce cotton in this area. Nearly all of the cotton planted has been Roundup Flex, so weeds can be controlled throughout the season instead of relying on hand labor later.