



AUTAUGA QUALITY COTTON

Your Cotton, Your Choice

The Turnrow Newsletter

*by Jeff Thompson,
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October 11, 2017*

This year's cotton crop has been challenging, to say the least. Confronted with torrential rains, planting delays, sandstorms, replanting, three major hurricanes, and now the fear of an early frost; it's safe to say we've been tested. All things considered, we've weathered these challenges very well. No pun intended! I told someone the other day, we're like the old cowboy who is frantically dancing while dodging bullets aimed at his feet. We are still dancing!

Southeast Crop Conditions

Just as harvest got underway Hurricane Nate temporarily halted progress when making landfall last weekend. Mercifully, it was a fast moving system with little time to gain strength. Consequently, damage was minimal and limited mainly to extreme Southwest Alabama. Even here, early reports indicate fiber quality may account for more losses than yield. Only about 20 percent of the crop has been gathered, therefore, our biggest need is for a return to sunshine and dry weather. Yields have been outstanding in cotton picked prior to the storm. Dryland yields in excess of two bales have been quite common. As for fiber quality, we haven't seen enough classing to really judge. However, considering the varieties predominantly planted, we expect fiber quality to be exceptional. The greatest uncertainty lies with the later cotton. Uneven stands and several more weeks of potential field weathering could extract a toll on it. Though it may be too much to ask, a repeat of last year's harvest conditions

would certainly be welcomed as we work to get the remainder of this crop out of the field.

Southwest Crop Conditions

The Southwest has also been a weather rollercoaster over the past two weeks. Parts of Southwest Oklahoma and West Texas saw anywhere from two to six inches of rain throughout the last week of September. That coupled with cloudy weather and cooler temperatures, it's safe to say we're not seeing the open fall we had last year. With that being said, this crop is hanging in there. While the quality is still uncertain, the yield potential is still good. We've had a lot of cotton defoliated over the past five days and some have even started harvesting. We do have warm weather in the forecast, but we also have a good chance for rain over the weekend. Quality will be very dependent on what happens over the next four to five days.



Five days after Folex & Prep (West Texas)

AQCA News

I am pleased to announce the initial advance payment for the 2017 pool has been established. All AQCA members will be advanced **10 cents** over full government loan when cotton is delivered to the pool. As for our current market position, we have been quite active in taking advantage of the market's numerous rallies over the past few months. The December contract has traded between 75.70 and 66 cents for most of this time. Based on our current yield estimates, the pools are approximately 60 percent priced at an average futures price within the top five percent of this range. You will be kept informed as we continue marketing the remainder of this cotton. In addition, we will be issuing payments to members on a twice per week basis beginning this year. We strive to meet the needs of our members and this is an effort to expedite the payment process by getting proceeds to you in a most timely manner.

Cover Crops for Cotton

Its estimated only 20 percent of row crop land is planted to a winter cover crop each year. This is unfortunate; for research has shown cover crops both reduce inputs and increase yields in crops planted behind them. Granted there are costs involved with winter covers such as time and money. However, these expenses will more than offset from the benefits received. The most obvious of these is improving the soil. Typically, our soils are low in organic matter averaging only a half to one percent. Plant residue from a cover will add OM, thus increasing the water holding capacity of these soils and allowing for better water infiltration. Secondly, erosion is minimized as plant material prevents soils from moving with winter rains and wind. A third benefit we've stumbled onto in recent years concerns early season insect control. It's been documented that thrips pressure on seedling cotton is significantly lighter where planted into heavy plant residue potentially reducing insecticide controls. Lastly, the greatest benefit found with cover crops is weed suppression. Now that resistant pigweed is such

a problem across the cotton belt this benefit alone will far outweigh any added cost. Maintaining a good thick blanket of plant material will suppress light needed for weed seed germination. In turn, this will take a great deal of pressure off your spring applied pre and post herbicides.

So for those not already implementing such a practice I strongly encourage you to do so. The preferred cover crop would be either wheat or rye. Rye usually creates more plant mass enhancing the above benefits but in turn can present problems at planting causing poor seed to soil contact. The choice is yours, but may take a few years of experimenting to determine which works best for you. A good sample program would be a 1 ½ to 2 bushels of wheat sown in anytime from October to early November. This can be done by either planting with a grain drill or for the sake of time can be broadcast and lightly tilled in. No additional fertility is required since the grain will not be carried to harvest. After which, simply kill it three to four weeks prior to planting with herbicides or equipment to roll it down. This is an inexpensive production practice guaranteed to pay huge dividends in the end.

We wish everyone a safe and bountiful harvest!

Until next time,



ATTENTION:

AQCA and Choice Cotton Company have relocated their offices to
169 East Main Street
Prattville, Alabama 36067.

Please note our new mailing address and send all future documents to this location.