



# Arkansas Cotton Update



April 16, 2008

Tom Barber - Editor

Number 1

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## Planting Forecast (Tom Barber - Extension Agronomist, Cotton)

The comments in this planting forecast are meant to be used as a guide. Weather forecasts are subject to change and errors. The comments included below provide no guarantee and are meant only as a guide.

### **Five-Day Heat Unit Accumulations (DD60) and Rainfall Outlook (April 17 – April 21)**

Predicted DD60 accumulation for five days following planting	Outlook for planting
< 10	Very Poor
11– 15	Poor
16 – 25	Marginal
25 – 50	Good
> 50	Very Good

#### Northeast Arkansas

Historic DD60s – 15

Predicted DD60s – 19

Precipitation – 60 percent chance Thursday night into Friday,

Planting Forecast – Marginal

#### Central Arkansas

Historic DD60s – 20.5

Predicted DD60s – 27.5

Precipitation – 60 percent Thursday night to Friday morning.

Planting Forecast – Good

#### Southeast Arkansas

Historic DD60s – 24

Predicted DD60s – 35

Precipitation – 50 percent Thursday night into Friday. Slight chance in the first part of next week.

Planting Forecast – Good

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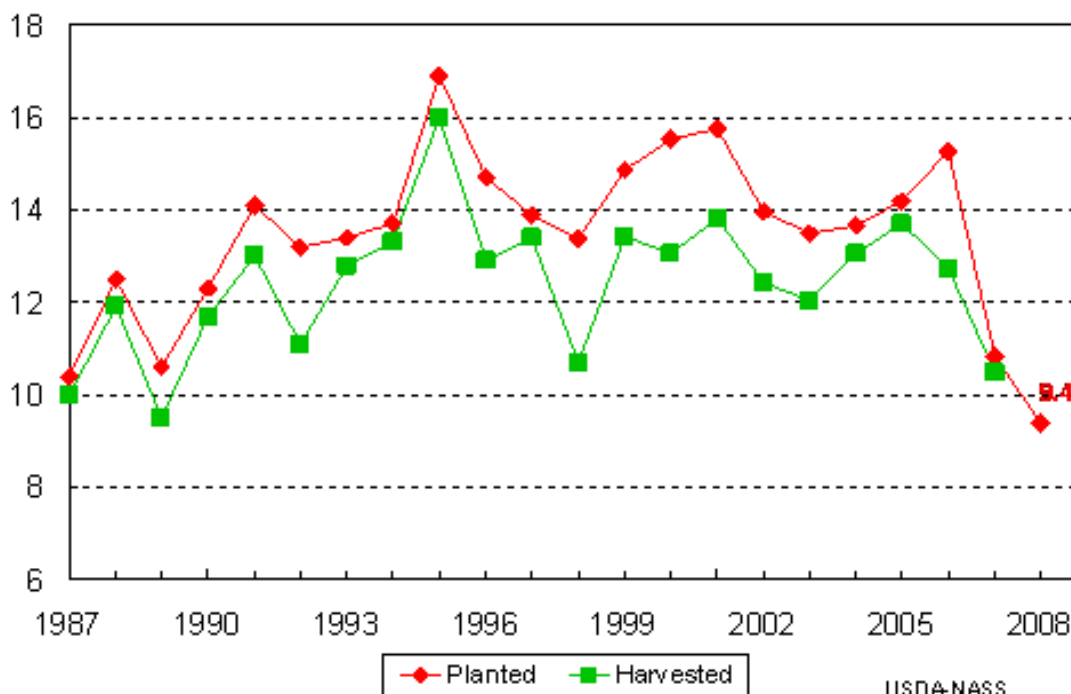
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### Cotton Update (Tom Barber - Extension Agronomist, Cotton)

According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) Arkansas cotton acreage will decrease once again from last year's 860,000 acres. Initial acreage estimates indicate that cotton acreage in Arkansas will be down 24 percent to 650,000 acres. However, acreage could potentially increase towards the range of 680,000 – 690,000, if corn planting is delayed much longer from recent heavy rainfall. Some corn acres could potentially shift back to cotton. Another potential increase in cotton acres could come from the lack of soybean seed availability, especially behind wheat. Arkansas was not the only Mid-South state that indicated a decrease in cotton acres for 2008. The following is the expected acreage planted in other Mid-South states: Louisiana – 280,000 acres, Mississippi – 420,000 acres, Missouri – 300,000 acres and Tennessee acreage reduced to 310,000. The chart below displays U.S. cotton acreage from 1987 to 2008. The total U.S. cotton acreage will be approximately 9.4 million acres. According to the NASS, the U.S. total planted crop will be the lowest since 1983. Arkansas will plant the lowest cotton acreage since 1989.

### U.S. All Cotton Acres

Million Acres



USDA-NASS  
03-31-08

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### Cotton Update Cont'd

The Arkansas Agriculture Statistics Service reports zero cotton acres planted across the state. As of today, I have heard of only a couple of cotton planters rolling in Southeastern Arkansas. Looking at the five day forecast, the temperatures will start warming up across the state by early next week. The only hurdle that we have to cross, right now, is the chance of rain Thursday night into Friday. If little to no rain is received, there will be many growers planting cotton in the first part of next week.

### Final Checklist before Planting Cotton:

- 1) Seed Quality: Minimum 80 percent warm germ and 60 percent cool germ.
- 2) Planter Calibration: Will vary with soil type and seed size.
- 3) Soil Moisture: Place seed in moisture, but not too deep.
- 4) Soil Temperature: 65 F at two-inch depth
- 5) Seed Protection: Protection against diseases and insect pests.
- 6) Five Day Weather Forecast: Minimum of 25 DD60's in five days with no cool fronts in sight.



The cotton growers in business today know these fundamentals well, but there may still be a few that are overlooked, or not concentrated on enough. Proper planter calibration is one thing that needs to be looked at a little harder. Consistent seed placement depth is crucial for timely, even cotton emergence or stand. Operating planters at 8 – 10 mph will in most cases negate the trouble you took setting the planter in the first place. The planters utilized today should not be operated at more than 5 – 6 mph. The faster the planter speed the less precision in placement and population. Seeds should be placed in moisture, but not too deep. Deep planted cotton in most cases will struggle more to make a stand, and most of the time will have to be replanted. The planter should also be checked or re-calibrated, if varieties are switched due to differences in seed size. Seeding rates continue to be a high point of discussion because it is a fairly easy way to reduce costs on the front end of the season. **Plant enough seed to get a stand.** High yields can be achieved with plant populations as low as 20,000 plants per acre; however in lower populations, long skips are prevalent in most cases. Plant at least three to three and one-half seed per row foot to obtain an even stand of cotton and optimize yields.

It is so costly this day and time to re-plant, especially if the technology fees and seed costs are not covered. With the reduction of seeding rates becoming more and more popular, insecticide and fungicide seed protection is crucial. These practices may cost more money and take a little more time, but it is cheap insurance to get a good stand of cotton.

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**Table 1. Relationship of plants per row foot to seeding rate per acre and seed per row foot.**

Plants per row foot	Seeds per row foot	Row Spacing	
		38-inch	40-inch
		Seeds per Acre	
1	1.3	17,195	16,335
1.5	1.9	25,792	24,503
2	2.5	34,389	32,670
2.25	2.8	38,688	36,754
2.50	3.1	42,987	40,838
2.75	3.4	47,286	44,921
3	3.8	51,584	49,005
3.25	4.1	55,883	53,089
3.5	4.4	60,182	57,173
3.75	4.7	64,480	61,256
4	5.0	68,779	65,340
4.5	5.6	77,376	73,508
5	6.3	85,974	81,675

**Plants per row foot assumes 80% emergence**

**Table 2. Relationship of various hill-drop seed placement to plants per row foot to seeding rate per acre and seed per row foot.**

One hill per every	2 seed per hill			3 seed per hill			4 seed per hill		
	Plants per row foot	Seeds per row foot	Seeds per acre	Plants per row foot	Seeds per row foot	Seeds per acre	Plants per row foot	Seeds per row foot	Seeds per acre
6-inches	3.2	4.0	55,023	4.8	6.0	82,535	6.4	8.0	110,046
7-inches	2.7	3.4	47,163	4.1	5.1	70,744	5.5	6.9	94,325
8-inches	2.4	3.0	41,267	3.6	4.5	61,901	4.8	6.0	82,535
9-inches	2.1	2.7	36,682	3.2	4.0	55,023	4.3	5.3	73,364
10-inches	1.9	2.4	33,014	2.9	3.6	49,521	3.8	4.8	66,028
11-inches	1.7	2.2	30,013	2.6	3.3	45,019	3.5	4.4	60,025
12-inches	1.6	2.0	27,512	2.4	3.0	41,267	3.2	4.0	55,023
13-inches	1.5	1.8	25,395	2.2	2.8	38,093	3.0	3.7	50,791
14-inches	1.4	1.7	23,581	2.1	2.6	35,372	2.7	3.4	47,163
15-inches	1.3	1.6	22,009	1.9	2.4	33,014	2.6	3.2	44,019
16-inches	1.2	1.5	20,634	1.8	2.3	30,951	2.4	3.0	41,267
17-inches	1.1	1.4	19,420	1.7	2.1	29,130	2.3	2.8	38,840
18-inches	1.1	1.3	18,341	1.6	2.0	27,512	2.1	2.7	36,682
19-inches	1.0	1.3	17,376	1.5	1.9	26,064	2.0	2.5	34,751
20-inches	1.0	1.2	16,507	1.4	1.8	24,760	1.9	2.4	33,014

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### Plants per row foot assumes 80% emergence

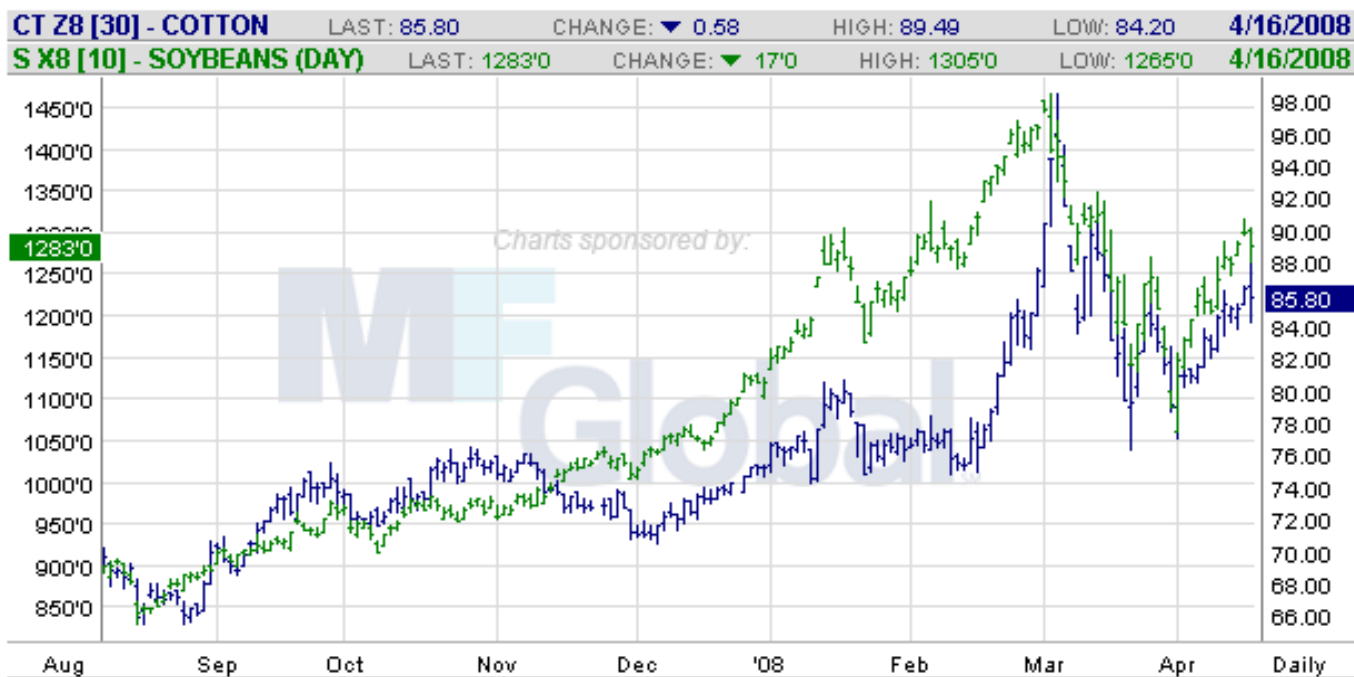
Table 1 provides the necessary information to determine final live plant population and the necessary seeding rate to obtain that population. For example, if you would like to obtain three live plants per foot of row, considering an 80 percent warm germination test, you would need to plant at least 3.8 seeds per row foot. Yields can be maintained at final plant populations of two plants per row foot. If you plant approximately three seed per row foot then you can expect an average final population of two and one-half live plants per foot of row. Keep in mind, the lower the seeding rates are, the more important it is to plant when environmental and field conditions are optimal.

Table 2 provides the relationship of hill-drop seed placement to plants per row foot and seeding rate per acre. Once again, be sure to double-check the planter calibration for each variety.

### Market Update (Scott Stiles – Extension Economist)

Since the first of April, December '08 Cotton futures have gained 481 points, or about \$23 per bale. The recent USDA supply/demand report could have been viewed as bearish, but December '08 is focused on lost acres and the potential reduction in 2008 – 2009 ending stocks.

Most agricultural commodities have performed well this month. September '08 corn has gained 27 cents; November '08 soybeans have gained a \$1.33, and September '08 rice has surged \$3.25/cwt. higher since April 1. Weather concerns and planting delays along with a bullish USDA acreage report provided a boost for the corn market. Strength in agricultural commodities is also coming from global grain and oilseed shortages. Food riots around the globe are making headlines every day this week.



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July '08 wheat however is a full \$3 off its mid-March high. Given good harvest weather, prices may continue to decline. Corn and rice prices will remain supported by bullish fundamentals. As evidenced over the past two weeks, November soybeans should remain firm in order to hold onto some acreage gains. Thus, competing commodities will provide support for new crop cotton prices. With lower acreage, a weak U.S. dollar, the threat of inflation, and record high crude oil prices facing the synthetics industry, the longer term price outlook is positive for cotton.

There is one potential market disaster looming on the horizon. The cash and futures market disconnect that has been caused by allowing so much money into commodity markets is cause for concern. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) will hold an industry meeting on Tuesday, April 22 at its Washington headquarters. This is an opportunity for the CFTC to get some feedback from market participants and try to determine if the exchanges are functioning properly.

A webcast of this meeting can be watched at [www.cftc.gov](http://www.cftc.gov). Or, participants can listen over the phone by calling 1-866-759-0291 (U.S. toll free). You will need the conference ID: 43214239, as well as the call leader name: CFTC. Call-in participants should be prepared to provide their first name, last name and affiliation.

Skeptics say that little will come from this meeting. But, the CFTC has the power to burst the "commodities bubble," if it enforces certain rules. For example, if the agency were to rescind the exemption on position limits given to the index funds, prices for many commodities would fall and begin to reflect their true supply-demand fundamentals.

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