



Arkansas Cotton Update



July 18, 2008

Tom Barber - Editor

Number 14

Special Interest Articles: - [Cotton Status](#) - [Cotton Verification](#) - [Market Update](#)

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Cotton Status (Tom Barber - Cotton Specialist)

The Arkansas Statistical Service indicated that as of Monday, June 14, the majority of the cotton crop (64%) is in good to excellent condition—32% fair and 4% in poor condition. The progress report, also released on June 14th, indicated that 100% of the crop was squaring and 44% was setting bolls. The boll set rate continues to be behind last year's 63% and the five-year average of 58%; however, the crop continues to mature quickly, and we seem to be making up some lost time in many fields.

NAWF counts in most irrigated fields range from 6 to 9 depending on the age of the cotton and irrigation timing and scheduling. This past week of high temperatures has really depleted soil moisture rapidly. Staying on top of irrigation is probably the most critical application at this time with little rain in the forecast and daytime temperatures in the high 90s with lows in the high 70s. Average nighttime temperatures over 75 degrees can prevent the plant from actively cooling itself, resulting in reduced photosynthesis rates, which will ultimately lead to small boll shed. The only way to help the plant in the cooling process so photosynthesis can be maximized is by irrigating on a timely schedule.

Plant Growth Regulators – Many fields across the state are finally beginning to grow at a rapid pace. Terminals can be seen extending from the highways and turnrows. It is not uncommon to see internodes that are 3.5 to 4 inches long at four nodes down from the terminal. We have used very little plant growth regulator up to this point. Many fields will need a plant growth regulator application soon, especially in fields where none has been applied to date. Several calls have come in concerning the rate of plant growth regulator that should be used. It has been my experience that after bloom if plants are getting rank, it will take at least 14 to 16 oz of a mepiquat chloride product (Mepex, Mepex Ginout, Pentia etc.) to slow growth. Will all fields need this high rate? No, it will need to be a field by field call. In fields where prior PGR applications are made, rates around 12 oz/A should be fine. It is important to monitor your fields and look at fruit retention and internode lengths 4 to 5 nodes down from the terminal. If internodes are close to 4 inches apart, the higher rates will be warranted. If Stance is used, rates will be different; however, with rank cotton, the high end of the rate range (3-4 oz) will need to be utilized. Remember, rank cotton growth can be hard to control and multiple applications may be warranted.

Verification Program Update - (Frank Groves – Area Agronomist)

The combination of continued irrigation and the rainfall of last week has allowed for much needed stress relief across the CRVP. The stress relief allowed the Nodes Above White Flower (NAWF) curve of COTMAN to flatten out and extended the season for fields flirting with early cutout. The St. Francis CRVP field reached first flower on July 7 with a value of 6.1 NAWF (Table 1) and has remained there through July 17 (Figure 1). Since

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apogee, the curve had some ups and downs due to variability within the field but basically flattened out, allowing the field to get back on track with the target development curve.

Most CRVP fields have followed the target development curve a more traditional method. These fields have begun to show excessive vegetative growth and received a PGR recommendation this week of 10 to 14 oz/A. The exceptions were the St. Francis and Phillips County fields where Mother Nature has limited internode elongation.

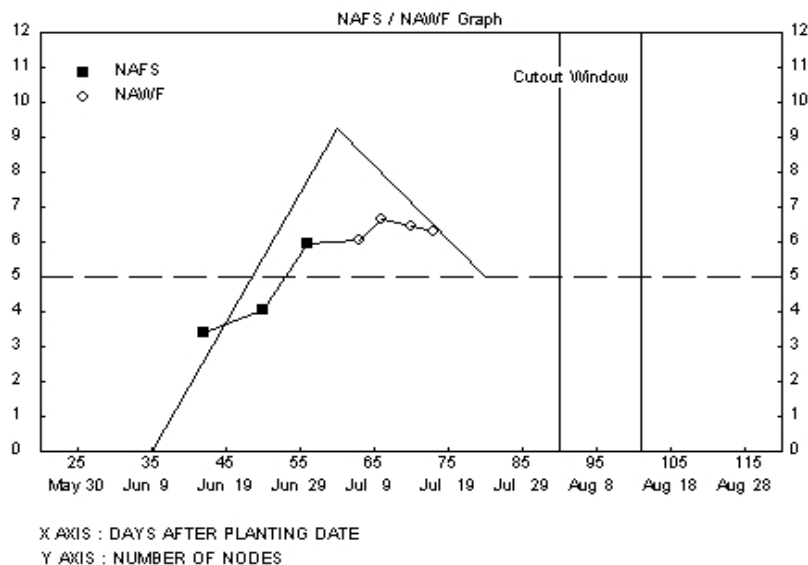
Plant bugs reached threshold and were treated with 2 oz/A of Centric in the Drew and Greene County fields. This would be the second plant bug treatment for each of these fields. Overall, small square retention is above 90% except the Drew County field where retention values continued to hang out around 83%.

Table 1. 2008 CRVP apogee dates

County	Grower	Apogee	Date
Drew	Appleberry	8.3	July 11, 2008
Greene	Reddick	7.6	July 14, 2008
Lee	Parten	8.0	July 16, 2008
Lincoln	Keeter	8.3	July 3, 2008
Mississippi	Edwards	8.2	July 3, 2008
Monroe	Hall	7.8	July 17, 2008
Phillips	Jackson	7.9	July 16, 2008
St. Francis	McDaniel	6.1	July 7, 2008

*N/A represents a field where apogee has not occurred

Figure 1. St. Francis CRVP COTMAN graph



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U.S. Cotton Supply & Demand - (Scott Stiles – Extension Economist)

The bottom-line number in last Friday's USDA Supply and Demand report was virtually the same as last month's. But, the new estimate did reveal a 2008 cotton crop in decline. The production estimate for 2008 was reduced by 500,000 bales to a projected total of 14.0 million. This was based on the June 30 Planted Acreage report, 10-year average abandonment (12.4%) and 3-year average yields (830 lbs/acre).

Domestic mill use was increased by 100,000 bales. Exports were reduced by 500,000 bales. The net result was a reduction in ending stocks of 100,000 bales. Below is USDA's 2008/09 July Supply and Demand estimate, compared to last month and the two previous marketing years.

480# bales	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09 June	2008/09 July
Beginning Stocks	6.07	9.48	10.20	10.20
Production	21.59	19.21	14.5	14
Mill Use	4.94	4.6	4.3	4.4
Exports	13.01	13.9	15	14.5
Ending Stocks	9.48	10.2	5.4	5.3



U.S. Crop Condition Ratings:

USDA's Crop Condition report for the week ending 7/13/2008 indicated that the U.S. cotton crop was 21% very poor to poor, 33% fair, and 46% good to excellent. The previous week's respective numbers were 19%, 36% and 45%. One-third of the Texas crop was rated at very poor to poor. Most of Texas' remaining acreage is rated fair to good.



Price Activity and Outlook:

December '08 futures appear to have made a double-bottom technical formation at the 71.60-70 price level. A double bottom indicates the market has found a support level. This could be validated by Tuesday's trading activity with December closing up 168 points. For a change, cotton was out of sync with the Chicago commodities. It appears cotton has established a trading range between 70 and 80 cents.

For 2008 crop prices, the market situation remains one of declining domestic mill use and slow export demand, which equals too much cotton in inventory. With over 10 million bales on hand, demand falters at prices much above 70 cents. With reduced acreage and production in 2008 and indications of increasing exports in 2009, the outlook reveals much higher prices for next year. Below are the closing December cotton prices for July 15, 2008.

Contract	High	Low	Previous	Close	Change
Dec '08	74.18	71.58	72.03	73.71	+168
Dec '09	86.70	84.54	84.63	86.70	+207
Dec '10	----	----	92.10	94.20	+210

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Upcoming Meetings and Field Days

**July 24, 2008 – Crops Field Day - S. E. Research & Extension Center – Rohwer Division
Rohwer, AR - 8:00 a.m.**

August 7, 2008 – Row Crop Field Day – Lon Mann Cotton Research Station – Marianna, AR

August 8, 2008 – Clay County Field Day

August 28, 2008 – Judd Hill Cotton Technology Field Day – Judd Hill Plantation

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