



Arkansas Cotton Update



June 20, 2008

Tom Barber - Editor

Number 10

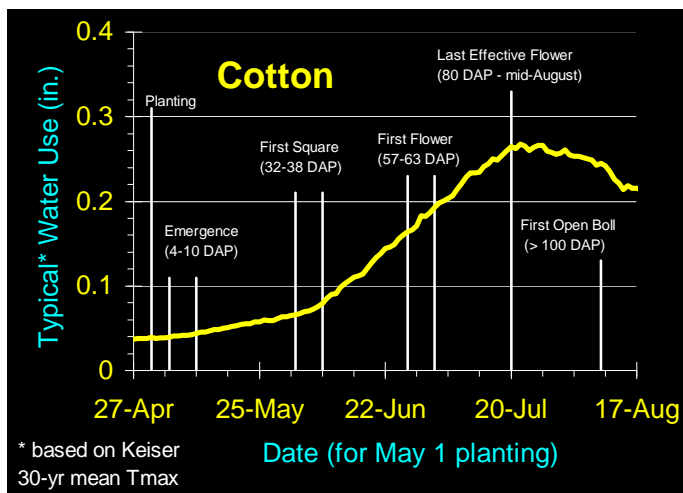
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Cotton Status, (Tom Barber - Cotton Specialist)

The crop progress report released on June 16 by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Service reported that Arkansas cotton was 61% good to excellent, 33% fair with only 6% being reported in poor or very poor condition. As of last Monday, approximately 24% of the crop was squaring. As this is written, that percentage has probably increased to close to 35%. This year's cotton crop continues to be behind schedule when compared to last year and the 5-year average. Last year at this time, 54% of the crop was squaring and according to the 5-year average, about 45% of the crop should be squaring at this time. Rainfall has been limited to localized showers, and fields are starting to dry out quickly. Last year at this time, we were starting to bloom in some areas. The oldest cotton that survived April and early May conditions should be blooming by next week in southeast Arkansas. Calls continue to come in regarding Palmer pigweed that survives applications of glyphosate (Roundup). These spots or resistant pigweed in problem fields will get bigger next year and should be taken out by mechanical tillage (chopping crews) or any other means necessary, to prevent further resistant seed production. Take note of problem fields, this year, to better manage this problem in future crop seasons.

This is a very important time for irrigation. With the temperatures rising into the upper 90's every day, irrigation scheduling and timeliness will become more and more important. The following chart is a reminder of when the peak water demands are for cotton. As you might guess we are quickly approaching the peak demand periods once cotton begins to bloom. If you will read through Frank Grove's comments on the Cotton Verification Program, some fields in the program were watered this week. Many growers choose to wait until layby applications have been made before they roll out the pipe to begin irrigation. Waiting this long will result in lost time and yield, especially in extremely dry areas. I have spoken to several consultants this week that tell me, the growers that have been irrigating are gaining a new node every 2.5 to 3 days. On growers that are waiting to irrigate, it is taking 5 days for one node of growth. If your cotton is not growing off well, you will notice that the squares



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in the top of the plant will begin to look larger than normal. By delaying node growth we are further delaying an already late crop.

Market Update (Scott Stiles – Extension Economist)

“A Rising Tide.....”

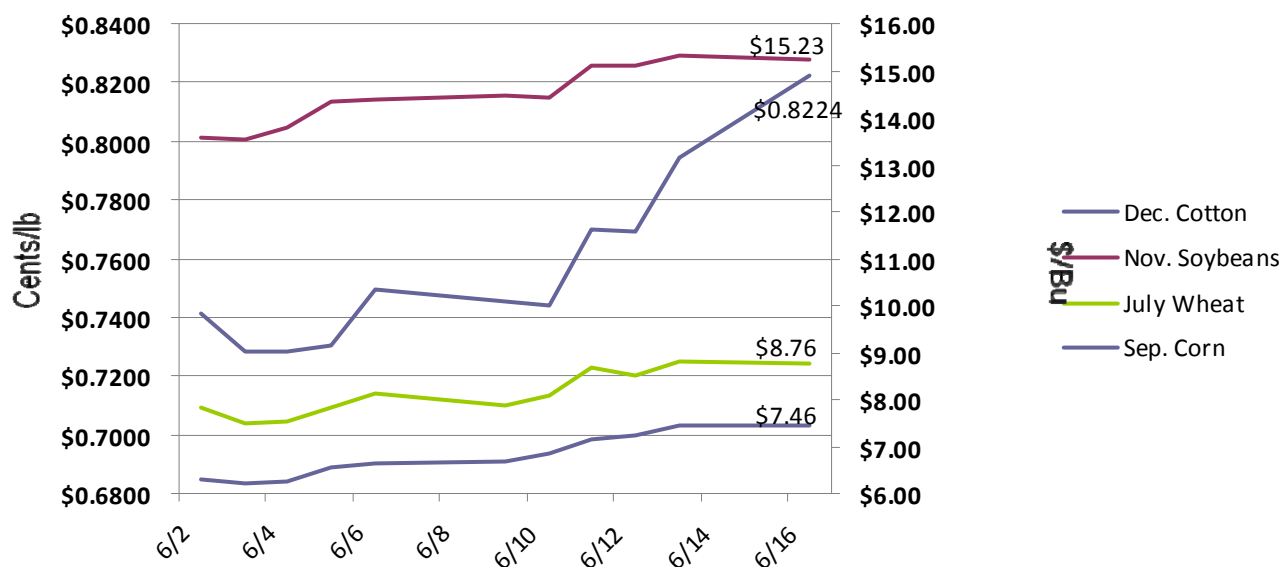
June 17, 2008

December '08 cotton has come to life over the past two weeks. As I write this, the contract is trading at 81.70. That's up over 750 points since the first trading day of June.



There are a few factors at work moving cotton prices higher. Certainly, price activity in outside commodity markets is one. See the graph below. The Midwest flooding has dominated commodity news lately. In Iowa, estimates of corn acreage loss run from 1 to 3 million acres. An unscientific Web poll done by Farm Futures magazine indicated that 3.3 million acres of corn had been lost to flooding. The grain complex has moved higher in unison. As of Monday, November soybeans had climbed to \$15.23, September corn to \$7.46 and July wheat was back up to \$8.76 (with a wide basis of over \$2.00 under). Rice has been moving higher too. Though off its highs now, the crude oil market has been supportive to corn and soybeans as well.

New Crop Futures (June 2 - June 16)



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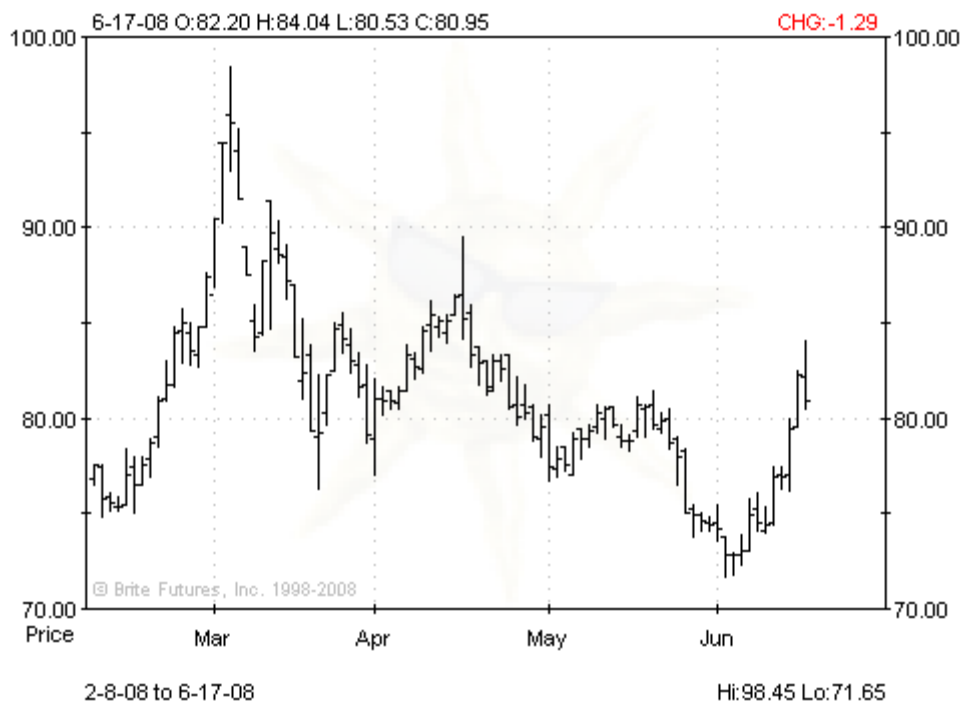
Market Update - cont'd

Production problems in west Texas is another factor supporting new crop cotton prices. With such a large percentage of the U.S. crop in Texas, the weather there will hold the cotton market's interest. This is a big deal since U.S. planted acreage was already down over 13% to a projected 9.4 million acres this year.

After a relatively wet May in the Lubbock area (receiving about 5 inches of rain), it has since turned very hot, dry and windy. The last measurable rain fell on May 27 and there have been six days over 100 degrees so far. At this point, it appears that some dryland acreage will be lost and not replanted. The weather conditions have not allowed for replanting, and the forecast looks dry for the remainder of the week with highs in the mid-90's.

Outlook: Aside from weather concerns, the December contract has some technical or chart obstacles to negotiate as well. December '08 has chart resistance in the 81.50 to 83.75 range. And, the contract is becoming technically overbought. Without further fundamental news to support prices, there could be a brief correction. If this happens, there is chart support in the area of 79 to 79.50.

CTZ08 - December 2008 Cotton No. 2



Insect Situation (Gus Lorenz – Extension Entomologist)

Plant Bugs are starting to roll into cotton fields from adjoining corn fields and in some cases weed hosts such as *Coreopsis*. Unlike last year, this appears to be occurring from northeast to southeast Arkansas. Although its early, I don't think plant bugs are anywhere near as bad as they were last year for the folks in the southeast part of the state and maybe we can get through the season without plant bugs blowing out on us like they did last year. We are seeing treatment level plant bugs on many fields but numbers just aren't terrible. We began sampling trials this week in many fields, and



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most are below threshold; but we sampled one field in Desha County that was running as high as 10 plant bugs in 25 sweeps or just about 4X threshold. Just remember, with this late crop, we need to maintain square retention values at 80% to keep our crop from being too late. In several fields, particularly those next to corn, populations are really spotty and scattered. You can go to one place in the field and see damaged and missing squares and go over a couple of rows and every square is present. This is nothing new; plant bugs are always spotty and clumped in distribution in cotton fields. Just remember to look at the entire field to get a clear picture of what is going on. With spider mites and aphids poised to jump in and cause problems, make good decisions on choosing insecticides. Definitely stay away from pyrethroids prior to bloom, and you may want to save your acephate until after bloom to avoid flaring secondary pests such as aphids and mites.

Spider Mites continue to build over most of the delta. I continue to get calls from the Bootheel of Missouri to southern Arkansas. But like plant bugs, they are not bad everywhere. I am getting a lot of calls on what to use, so I have included some data from last year as we haven't got a test out yet. I think this study pretty well represents what we see from year to year at this point in the season. In this trial, at Keo, Ark., plants were really hit hard. This is 4 days after application. Nothing earth shaking, and nothing I have not told you before. Note that Bifenthrin was not working well in this trial. But later in the year, it began to work well in mid- to late- season.



Crop Variety					5 leaf
Description					cm sq.
Rating Date					6/25/2007
Trt	Treatment	Rate	Rate		
No.	Type	Name	Rate	Unit	1
1	INSE	UTC			52 ab
2	INSE	Comite	0.93	LB A/A	27 b
3	INSE	acramite	0.5	LB A/A	19 b
4	INSE	Comite	0.837	LB A/A	17 b
	INSE	acramite	0.3125	LB A/A	
5	INSE	Zeal	0.67	OZ/A	31 b
6	INSE	Zeal	0.5	OZ/A	31 b
7	INSE	KELTHANE	32	OZ/A	10 b
8	INSE	portal	8	OZ/A	13 b
9	INSE	portal	12	OZ/A	15 b
10	INSE	portal	16	OZ/A	12 b
11	INSE	Brigade	6	OZ/A	70 a
12	INSE	Zephyr	4	OZ/A	38 b
LSD (P=.10)					24

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Cotton Verification Program (Frank Groves – Area Cotton Agronomist)

Figure 1. Irrigation initiation

Irrigation, morningglories and plant bugs seem to be the hot topics of the week in the CRVP. A 50% chance of showers in the forecast has several growers crossing their fingers. We have already initiated irrigation on the Mississippi and Lee County fields with nearly all others calling for irrigation at or around June 22. The exception would be the Monroe County field, due to the later planting date. If we miss the forecasted showers, it will be on the list next week.



Generally speaking, weed control has been and continues to be a challenge. In the Roundup Ready Flex system, pitted morningglory could become a bigger problem than what our growers are accustomed to dealing with. Over-the-top post-emergence applications of glyphosate, at the 7-leaf stage, missed morningglories in the drill row that were shaded by cotton. These weeds are now running and can still be controlled, but the cost of control has increased with the size of the weed. Our 10-leaf cotton has about two inches of bark and appears to be 10 to 14 days from reaching canopy. Staple, Envoke, Cotoran, Caparol or MSMA may be needed to bridge the gap until layby.

This has been one of the lightest insect pressure years of memory. Of course, we all know that could change at any point and should continue to be diligent with scouting. Plant bug numbers remain low across the CRVP. However, square retention values have dropped from 95% a week ago to 85% in Mississippi and St. Francis counties. Observed numbers are very low, 1 per 24-row feet on the shake sheet with no adults observed on the shake or in a sweep. The increased number of blackened squares is likely due to adult plant bugs feeding and moving throughout the day. Our sweep net results may have been different, if taken an hour earlier or later. The point being, simply relying on insect counts could lead to problems.

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