



Arkansas Cotton Update

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UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

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Tom Barber - Editor

Number 7

Special Interest Articles: - [Cotton Status](#) - [PGR'S](#) - [Market Update](#) - [CRVP Report](#) - [IPM Meetings](#)

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Cotton Status (Tom Barber – Cotton Specialist)

The 2010 Arkansas cotton crop continues to be ahead of the five-year average in regards to development. Cotton stages range from cotyledons to 12-plus nodes. Increased temperatures have provided for rapid heat unit accumulation, and most struggling cotton has turned the corner and looks much better this week. According to the Agricultural Statistics Service, 14 percent of the Arkansas cotton crop is squaring compared to the five-year average of 9 percent, and the majority (63 percent) of the crop is in good to excellent condition. Thrips and plant bug populations in cotton have been relatively low so far, but plant bug populations are expected to increase once corn silks begin to turn. One problem that has been very common this year has been herbicide damage. Several scenarios exist, but most deal with either residue in herbicide tanks, tank contamination or herbicide drift. As a whole, Arkansas cotton producers have applied more residual herbicides this season than any in recent memory. Many of these residual herbicides will settle out in spray tanks, hoses, nozzle bodies and screens. Follow label instructions for cleaning spray tanks and hoses before moving back to your cotton fields. Cotton irrigation started this week on several older fields throughout the state, especially southeast Arkansas.

Plant Growth Regulators

Several questions have come in this week concerning growth regulator (pix) applications on 8 to 10 node cotton. Growth regulation is extremely important for maintaining earliness and preventing late season issues. Stresses from dry conditions, high winds, hail and sand damage have injured some of the younger cotton and it is still recovering. I would be extremely cautious in making growth regulator applications right now on any cotton that is catching up from physical or chemical injury. Previous data from many years shows that applications made at the pin-head square stage are more likely to stunt the cotton and may result in premature cutout.

Moisture supply, high nitrogen availability and heat generally result in vigorous growth conditions early season (plant on right). What does all this mean? Applications need to be made on a field-by-field basis. On cotton that is 10 nodes, take a look at the internodes; the fourth internode down from the terminal will give you a good



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indication of development, vigor and horsepower. If the fourth internode is three fingers long, then the cotton will most likely need an application of a plant growth regulator. Monitoring fruit retention is going to be very important this season. Eighty percent or higher square retention is optimal going into bloom. If fruit retention decreases, growth regulator applications will be necessary. Variety, history of vigorous growth and the current moisture and crop condition are the major factors in helping to select the proper growth regulator program, or if it is needed at all.

In Arkansas the mid-maturing to early maturing varieties such as DP 0912 B2RF, DP 0924 B2RF, FM 1740 B2RF, PHY 375 WRF ST 4554 B2RF, and ST 4288 B2RF respond fairly well to plant growth regulators. Out of these listed, the FM 1740 B2RF probably responds the best. In most cases, the low-multiple rate strategy works very well on these varieties under irrigated conditions. Applications should be delayed until bloom if you have planted these varieties on dryland fields. Later-maturing varieties such as ST 5458 B2RF, ST 5288 B2RF and DP 0935 B2RF may require more plant growth regulator to maintain a manageable canopy height during the season. Irrigated fields containing these varieties should be monitored closely, and most likely initial applications will be needed at the 10 node stage. The low-multiple strategy will work well in this case as well. Keep in mind as plant heights and biomass increase, plant growth regulator rates will also need to be increased to manage growth. Early applications should not exceed 8 ounces of mepiquat chloride product such as Mepex and Pentia or 2 ounces of Stance. Mepiquat products at 6-8 ounces/A or Stance at 2 ounces/A is the most common recommendation for 10 node cotton. Initial applications in the low-multiple rate scenario should be followed by a second application 10 to 14 days after the initial application. Rates on the second application should be 6 to 8 oz/A of a mepiquat product or 2 oz/A of Stance.

Timely Irrigation

Much of this crop is developing well; however, 90 degree-plus temperatures the last couple of weeks have increased evapotranspiration, resulting in a fairly rapid decrease in available soil moisture. Rainfall across the state has relieved the water stress in many areas; however, irrigation is needed in many others. Remember, we are trying to speed this crop up to maturity and remove stresses that will lead to further delays. Last year in our irrigation study, we were able to gain an extra node at flowering by watering one week earlier. The cotton was approximately 9-10 nodes when we initiated the early irrigation treatment, and by flowering the early irrigated cotton was 10 in taller and bloomed with 8.5 NAWF (nodes above white flower), while the cotton where irrigation was delayed for one week bloomed with only 7 NAWF. The moral of the story is to be prepared to water before cotton growth slows. By watering on time, we were able to prevent drought stress that ultimately delayed the cotton further. Keep in mind that this crop may have a shallow root system from early season stresses. In the fields where the tap roots are permanently damaged, timely irrigation will be critical. The Irrigation Scheduling Program is free, is developed by the University of Arkansas and can be downloaded at http://www.aragriculture.org/computer_programs/irrigation_scheduling/. Do not let a layby herbicide application time your irrigation program.

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Market Update (Scott Stiles – Instructor, Economics)

Cotton Inventories Tighten – More!

Thursday, the USDA released its monthly Supply/Demand report. U.S. cotton ending stocks estimates came in at the very lowest of pre-report guesses. Old crop (2009/10) exports were increased 250,000 bales. This pulled ending stocks down by 200,000 to 2.9 million bales.

The old crop adjustment translated into lower beginning stocks for the 2010/11 marketing year. Production and usage estimates for 2010 were left unchanged from May and ending stocks were revised down to 2.8 million bales. This is the first time since 1995 that ending stocks have fallen below 3 million bales.

U.S. Cotton Supply and Use

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
			May	June
Planted Acres	9.47	9.15	10.51	10.51
Harvested Acres	7.57	7.53	9.83	9.83
Yield (lbs.)	813	777	815	815
Beginning Stocks	10.05	6.34	3.10	2.90
Production	12.82	12.19	16.70	16.70
Total Supply	22.87	18.53	19.80	19.60
Exports	13.28	12.25	13.50	13.50
Mill Use	3.59	3.40	3.30	3.30
Total Use	16.86	15.65	16.80	16.80
Ending Stocks	6.34	2.90	3.00	2.80
Stocks/Use ratio	37.6%	18.5%		16.7%
Avg. Farm Price (cents/lb)	47.80	61.5—63.5		60—74

Source: USDA-WASDE, June 2010.

The stocks-to-use ratio in 1995 was a little tighter at 14.2 percent, compared to a projected 16.7 percent for 2010. The season average farm price in 1995 was 76.50. The USDA forecast farm price range for the 2010 marketing year held at 60 to 74 cents per pound. The 2009 marketing year price range was lowered by 1 cent on the upper end of previous estimates to 61.50 to 63.50 cents per pound, indicating a small counter-cyclical payment may still be available. A monthly update on the availability of the 2009 cotton counter-cyclical payment can be found at the link below:

<http://www.aragriculture.org/agfoodpolicy/CottonCCP.pdf>

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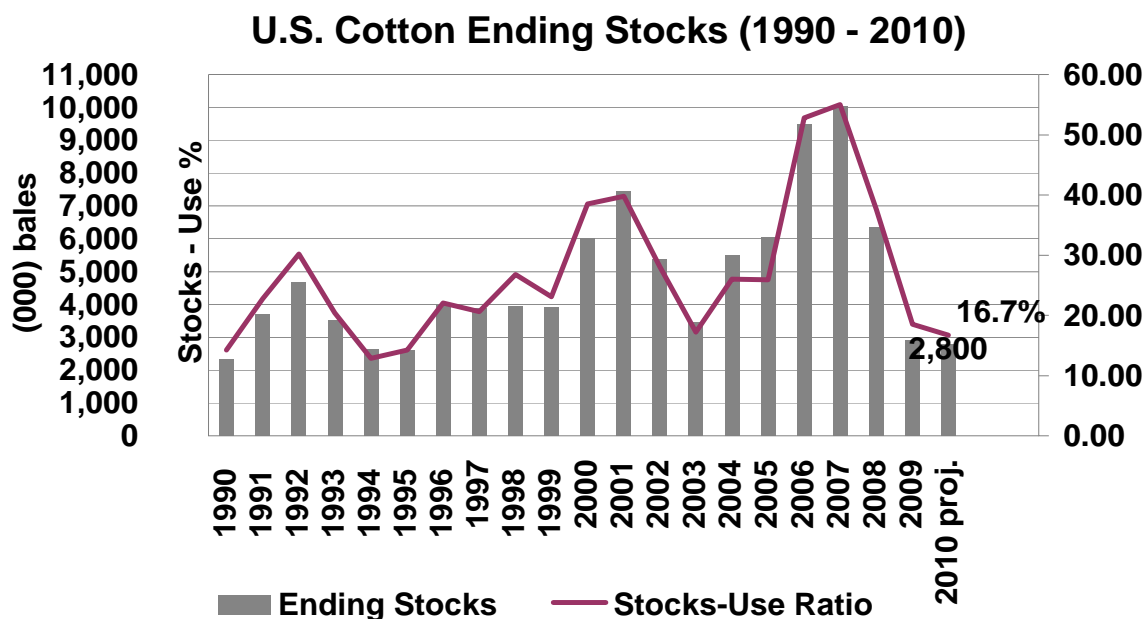
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USDA world cotton projections for 2010/11 included lower beginning and ending stocks compared with last month. Beginning stocks were reduced about 550,000 bales. World ending stocks are now projected to be 49.6 million bales. Ending stocks are 41.5 percent of total use, if realized, would be the smallest stocks-to-use ratio since 1994/95. A link to the full report is below. U.S. cotton supply/demand numbers are on page 17.

[World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates](#)



Source: USDA, Univ. of Arkansas, June 2010.

Market Outlook:

After making a 10-week low on Monday and finding support at 74 cents, the December contract turned around and erased its losses seen since May 27. The recent selloff and five-day slide (more like crash) that started on May 28 was likely the result of speculative selling. Liquidating market positions at month-end is commonplace, and this activity gained momentum as technical selling points were triggered in the market.

COTTON (CT Z0)

Last: 79.07 Change: 1.44 (1.85%) ▲



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Explanations for the selloff in cotton futures typically included macroeconomic concerns such as the European debt crisis and the negative U.S. jobs data that was released last Friday. U.S. crop conditions are good and the U.S. dollar remains strong. These are all bearish factors, but relatively short term price influences.

Generally, there are one or two dominant fundamental factors that drive a commodity's price and dictate long-term price trends. For example, nothing has changed the fact that world cotton consumption is rebounding, and for the third straight year world cotton production will not exceed consumption. Supplies are tightening, and as mentioned earlier, world ending stocks are projected to drop to 49.6 million bales—a 16-year low! This is factual and serves as the fundamental basis for cotton prices trending higher over the past 15 months.

Until more is known about 2010 production, the December contract has found support near 74 cents. The contract has since returned to within 1 point of its May 27 close of 79.08. The May 27 high of 79.20 could serve as short-term resistance. A close above 79.20 opens the possibility of a move to 80 or 80.20, but weather concerns will likely provide the incentive for a move to that level.

CRVP Update (Blake McClelland – CRVP Coordinator)

General Information – The verification fields are continuing to grow and most are starting to square. Dry conditions have set in throughout the delta region and all of the verification fields could use a rain; however, most still have enough moisture to continue growing on schedule.

Clay County – The field was at the five-leaf stage this week and is starting to square on a few plants. The farmer applied 100 units of nitrogen in the Urea form and plowed the water furrows. The Sequence was still holding the morning glories in check, but a glyphosate plus Dual application may be made next week to prevent any new weeds from emerging and to keep the morning glories held down.

Desha County – Dry conditions persist in Desha County but the cotton continues to grow; it was at the eight- to nine-leaf stage and is fruiting well. The field was relatively clean and the water furrows had been plowed.

Lincoln County – The Lincoln County field was at the five-leaf stage and match head-size squares could be seen on many plants. Teaweed and morning glory were present in the field, so an application of 2 pints of glyphosate and 1.5 oz. of Staple was recommended. Since no pre-plant nitrogen was applied, an application 100 units of nitrogen was also recommended at the farmer's earliest convenience.

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Mississippi County – Glyphosate plus metolachlor (Parallel was the brand used) was applied last week and the field received three-tenths of an inch of rain later in the day. Most of the pigweed in the field appeared to be glyphosate-resistant, which is shown in the picture on right. Since the pigweed problem was not widespread, the farmer is going to spot-spray the field using Ignite under row hoods, and a hoe crew is going to be sent through to clean out those spots. The glyphosate is holding the morning glories down. The cotton in this field is at the four- to five-leaf stage.



Phillips County – The farmer plowed the field after last week's visit and it looked much better. The cotton was growing well, was at the seven-leaf stage and was squaring. Pre-plant nitrogen was applied earlier in the spring, so the rest of the nitrogen should be applied in the near future.

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