



COMMENTATOR

PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION >>>>>>>>>> SPRING 2009



DENIMATRIX

New Venture for PCCA in
Apparel Manufacturing

TACC TURNS 75!

The Texas Agricultural Cooperative
Council Celebrates Accordingly

ENDANGERED?

Concerns About the Lesser Prairie Chicken

COMMENTATOR

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On the cover...

PCCA Directors Dean Vardeman (third from left), David Pearson (second from left), and Chairman Eddie Smith (third from right) inspected the former Koramsa facility in Guatemala City and met with staff there as the cooperative's Board studied the feasibility of entering the apparel business. Today, Denimatrix is open for business and delivering high-fashion jeans made from ACG denim.



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PCCA Board Chairman to Lead Cotton Industry in 2010

By Emma Matkin and Mica Graybill

PCCA Board Chairman Eddie Smith, a Floydada, Texas, cotton producer, was elected vice chairman of the National Cotton Council (NCC) for 2009. In 2010, Smith will lead the cotton industry as chairman for NCC.

NCC serves as a central forum for collaboration among producers, ginners, warehouses, merchants, cottonseed processors, cooperatives, and textile manufacturers.

The council also is a united force working to represent cotton's interests in Washington, D.C. In his NCC leadership position, Smith will have the opportunity to work with government officials in establishing positive policies to benefit the cotton industry.

Smith graduated from Texas Tech University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics in 1973. Since then, he has maintained a

farm near Floydada, Texas, for 36 years.

In previous years, Smith served as a delegate to NCC where he was appointed to numerous committees including the council's Environmental Task Force.

Smith also was recognized by the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC). On February 5, 2009, at the organization's 80th Annual Meeting, Smith was named Director of the Year, one of NCFC's most esteemed awards.

NCFC is a national association representing America's farmer cooperatives. Its Farmer Cooperative Director of the Year Award recognizes the exceptional accomplishments of a director who is an outstanding leader that successfully guides his board of directors. Smith also was a member of the Blue Ribbon Farm Bill Committee of NCFC and has served as vice chairman of

its trade working group.

"Eddie has provided strong and able leadership to PCCA in his nearly 25 years on the cooperative's board," said Charles F. Conner, president and CEO of NCFC. "He is truly dedicated to the principles of farmer-ownership and innovation, and I congratulate him on being named Director of the Year."

Outside of the cotton industry, Smith is an active citizen within his community. He has served as a director of Floydada Cooperative Gin for numerous years and is a deacon at the Floydada Baptist Church. Smith and his wife, JenniSu, have one son, Eric, daughter-in-law, Leigh, and two grandsons, Ethan and Logan. Today, Smith manages a cotton, cattle and row crop operation near Floydada, Texas, with his son and father. ☺



PCCA
Becomes
Apparel Manufacturer



DENIMATRIX

Creates New Company to Produce Denim Jeans

by John Johnson

PCCA extended its reach into the apparel industry recently with the acquisition of key assets of Guatemala-based Koramsa Corporation and the formation of a new company, Denimatrix, to produce fashion jeans. It is the first fully-integrated vertical supply chain from raw cotton to finished jeans in the Western Hemisphere.

Almost from the moment PCCA entered the textile industry with its purchase of the American Cotton Growers (ACG) denim mill in 1987, some of the cooperative's members and other observers expressed a desire to go one step further and manufacture jeans. At the time, it was not feasible for a number of reasons, but as they say, "times have changed."

"Denimatrix will offer important synergies resulting in new opportunities for our ACG operation," said PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille. "We have changed the rules of the game and redefined ACG as a full-package supplier," he added. "These synergies will give us the flexibility to offer a broad range of quick-response fashion jeans and other apparel to our customers." Denimatrix will have the finest combination of facilities and capabilities in the Western Hemisphere, and the former Koramsa management team, long known for their strategic market leadership, will oversee the new operation.

"These assets, along with PCCA's access to raw cotton, ACG's 34 years of experience in producing denim fabrics for a wide variety of customers, and the creative and experienced management team will make Denimatrix a truly unique operation," Darneille said. "We are very pleased that we were able to form the company quickly so that we can effectively continue business programs with current customers of ACG and Koramsa," he added. "We will continue to produce denim at ACG and deliver the fabric to Guatemala which should further shorten the supply chain. Given today's retail environment, the 60- to 90-day advantage we will have over Asian and Middle Eastern supply chains will provide tangible, measurable value for apparel brands and retailers."

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“We are open for business,” said Denimatrix President Carlos Arias. “We have received substantial orders from two large brands, and we are actively negotiating styles and deliveries with several others,” he added. “We expect to deliver our first units in early May and expect Denimatrix to continue to rely on a well established supply chain for jeans in the Americas.”

“Denimatrix should be a profitable, stand-alone business in addition to helping ACG,” Darneille continued. “We will be able to move excess inventory from ACG to Guatemala and smooth out the peaks and valleys in both operations by making jeans for outlet stores when orders from our traditional customers slow down.” In recent years, ACG has struggled against competition from Asian and other countries as well as a difficult economy.

“We have cut our production costs significantly and may have reached the point of diminishing returns,” Darneille explained. “We have improved efficiencies throughout the denim mill without investing in modernization, and we have worked with existing customers to increase our market share with them while adding new customers,” he said. “Yet, the mill has continued to struggle, financially. Denimatrix will provide an opportunity to move the fabrics we make at ACG.”

By expanding into apparel manufacturing, PCCA is continuing its tradition of innovation, leadership and forward thinking. 🌐



Using a double-needle sewing machine, employees take great care in stitching all garments to meet quality standards.



Garments are placed on inflatable jean mannequins allowing a flat surface for workers to use sand paper to distress the fabric, creating “worn patches,” before the newly sewn product is washed.



A quick visit to www.safedenim.com allows PCCA member/owners and stakeholders the opportunity to own denim jeans woven from the cotton they produce. Designed with PCCA members in mind, SAFEDENIM jeans are available exclusively through the cooperative's website.

Delivered straight to their door, shoppers will receive the made-to-order jeans in six to eight weeks. To satisfy the largest number of buyers, SAFEDENIM jeans are offered in three washes, and a large range of sizes are available for both men and women.

Men's Classic and Relaxed Bootfit SAFEDENIM jeans are made from a heavy-weight fabric dyed Texas Blue. Available in a dark, medium or light wash, the jeans can be ordered in even-numbered waist sizes from 30 to 46 inches and in even-numbered lengths from 30 to 36 inches.

Ladies' SAFEDENIM jeans are made from a light-weight stretch fabric dyed in a dark indigo and are available in a dark, medium or light wash. Women's MidRise Bootcut jeans are available in even-numbered sizes from 0-22 while Junior's LowRise Bootcut jeans are available in odd-numbered sizes from 1-11.

PCCA is honored to offer SAFEDENIM jeans knowing they are produced through the perseverance of the American farmer. We feel sure they will be worn with pride. 🌱

Meetings Scheduled to Explain New Textile Division Structure

The addition of Denimatrix will require a re-structuring of PCCA's Textile Division effective July 1, 2009. To help explain the new structure and how PCCA members can participate, a series of producer meetings have been scheduled throughout Texas and Oklahoma. The dates and locations of the meetings are:

June 3 - 9:00 a.m. Muncy, Texas - Floyd County Community Facility
1:00 p.m. Plainview, Texas - Ollie Liner Center

June 4 - 9:00 a.m. Lubbock, Texas - PCCA Delegate Body Room
1:00 p.m. Lubbock, Texas - PCCA Delegate Body Room

June 5 - 9:00 a.m. Littlefield, Texas - Lamb County Ag and Community Center

June 9 - 9:30 a.m. Altus, Oklahoma - PCCA Warehouse Division Conference Room

June 10 - 9:00 a.m. Brownfield, Texas - The Party House at Coleman Park

June 11 - 9:00 a.m. Sweetwater, Texas - Texas State Technical College Auditorium
1:00 p.m. St. Lawrence, Texas - St. Lawrence Parish Hall

Any additional meetings will be scheduled by gin request.



Photo by Lynette Wilson

Alexander Was the First But Not the Last...

By Mica Graybill

Mike Alexander was thrilled when Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA) introduced its line of SAFEDENIM jeans, and he rushed to be the first PCCA member to order the new jeans produced by ACG and Denimatrix.

Alexander thought the new jeans fit his lifestyle. Farming always has played a prominent role in Alexander's life. A third-generation farmer, Alexander was raised on a farm south of Roscoe in Nolan County. His agricultural background led him to a career in farming.

"During my high school years, I began to feel the call toward a life of stewardship of the land," said Alexander.

He obtained a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from McMurry University in Abilene, Texas, because he thought it would be helpful to prepare him for managing a farm/ranch operation. After graduation in 1976, he returned to Nolan County where he and his

brother, Kim, began farming as tenants on land his father rented. Alexander's oldest son, Justin, now operates this farm, located about a mile from where Alexander grew up.

Alexander and his family currently live in Colorado City, Texas, where his wife, Melinda, is the principal at Wallace Accelerated High School. They have six children, three of whom are married and have children of their own. The other three children still are in school and attend Colorado City ISD.

Alexander and his wife are partners in Alexander Farms which is mostly a crop-share operation. Dryland cotton is their principal crop, but they also raise wheat, milo, hay, rye, and triticale.

"I believe being a caretaker of land and animals is one of my God-given purposes in life," said Alexander. "It is fulfilling to serve my Creator by caring for the land and by providing food and fiber to make life better for others."

At the end of February 2009, PCCA introduced SAFEDENIM jeans to its members. Alexander first caught word of the message through a flyer sent to the gins advertising the jeans.

When asked how he felt about PCCA's new investment in Guatemala, Alexander said he believes Denimatrix is a good way to boost demand for cotton that is grown in this country and denim that is manufactured at ACG in Littlefield, Texas.

Alexander may have been the first person to purchase SAFEDENIM jeans, but he certainly is not the last. As word spreads about SAFEDENIM jeans, members are gaining interest in owning apparel made from their cotton and sewn by their cooperative.

"By purchasing and wearing the jeans, I thought it would be a great way to advertise apparel from cotton grown in my area and produced by a company in which I own an interest," said Alexander. ☺

TACC Honors Cooperative Leaders

By Mica Graybill



Greg Taylor



Gary McLaren

The Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council (TACC) is a voluntary organization that works in unity with cooperatives in Texas. Each year, TACC recognizes its exceptional members who exhibit leadership skills and offer guidance to the Council. TACC awarded two men for their outstanding dedication and allegiance to the cotton and cooperative industries at its annual meeting in Galveston, Texas.

Greg Taylor of Lubbock, Texas, was chosen for the TACC Distinguished Service Award. Taylor has shown tremendous commitment to his profession in finance and accounting and has devoted endless hours to the Council throughout the years.

Taylor received both his BBA and MBA in finance and accounting from West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas. Taylor joined D. Williams and Company CPA firm in Lubbock, Texas, in 1989 and became a partner in 1994. He has helped make this firm one of the largest cooperative accounting firms in Texas and the Southwest.

TACC honored Taylor not only for his strong work ethic and dedication to his career, cooperatives, and the Council, but also for his outstanding leadership skills. Last year he was elected national president of the National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives.

"My profession is now a 'helping' profession," said Taylor. "I enjoy working with farmers every day, the cooperatives, and the businesses down the process chain from the field, to the gin, to the warehouses, the merchants, and the distributors," he explained.

Gary McLaren of Lubbock, Texas, also was a recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. McLaren has made an impact on his family, community and the agricultural industry.

McLaren graduated from Texas Tech University with an undergraduate degree in finance. He then spent eight years in agriculture banking at Republic Bank Lubbock before attending and graduating from the Southwest Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University. Though he enjoyed agriculture banking, he decided to further pursue his education and later graduated from the Texas College of Law in Houston, Texas.

He had several opportunities to join law firms in Houston, but his calling was in West Texas. Over the years, he has concentrated on cooperative and general commercial litigation. This led McLaren to speak on the behalf of agribusiness groups for the past 15 years. He now is a partner of Philips and McLaren law firm in Lubbock, Texas.

McLaren was recognized for the time he dedicates to the Council and cooperatives and his dedication to his family and community. When he is not working or spending time with his family, he is busy serving as an elder at Westminister Presbyterian Church in Lubbock or serving on the advisory board of First Bank and Trust in Lubbock.

These two men have given a substantial amount of time and dedication to the agricultural industry and are very deserving of this prestigious honor. 🍷



Tommy Engelke

The “Voice” of Texas Cooperatives Celebrates its 75th Anniversary

By Emma Matkin



The Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council (TACC) is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Since 1934, TACC has become an association that serves as a voluntary, statewide organization created by Texas cooperatives. It serves as a collective voice, catalyst and clearing house on all cooperative activities in the state.

TACC's primary mission is to “promote, support, and advance the interests, understanding, and viability of agricultural, utility and credit cooperatives and their members through legislative and regulatory efforts, education and public relations.”

The Council has seen many positive changes throughout its history. From new headquarters and name changes, to new administration and advanced programs, TACC has positively progressed over the years.

For the first 50 years, TACC was heavily dedicated to governmental and legislative affairs. Today, the Council still encompasses these things, but it has expanded into organizing specialized programs, developing strategic plans for coops, and enhancing member relations.

In 1934, the Texas Cooperative Ginners Association was chartered and headquartered in Dallas, Texas. Eight years later, the Texas

Federation of Cooperatives was added to the organization to encompass cooperatives other than gins. The two associations, still managed by one administrative team, moved their offices from Dallas to Austin, Texas, in 1952. Today, the organization's headquarters is still located in Austin, Texas.

From 1954 to 1972, awards of recognition such as the Cooperator of the Year, The Cooperative Ginner of the Year, and the Distinguished Service Award were established. An Honorary Director category was added to the association during this time as well. With the hiring of Billy Conner in 1977, educational programs became a priority for the organization.

On February 9, 1984, the 50th Anniversary of the association, the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council was chartered as the result of the consolidation of the Texas Federation of Cooperatives and the Texas Cooperative Ginners Association.

Current TACC Executive Vice President Tommy Engelke has been involved with the association for 20 years. Engelke joined TACC in April of 1989 and became executive vice president in May of 1996. With the hiring of Engelke, member relations in TACC became a

large portion of the program of work.

“Most associations include education and government relations,” Engelke said. “We took it a step further and implemented member relations.” He explained how these positive changes have helped the association become a more viable and instructive organization.

“We have a very influential board that always has the needs of our members at heart and have influenced our changing needs,” Engelke said. “Over time, as needs and priorities have changed, TACC has tried to change as well,” he explained.

TACC has reached a milestone in its history with the 75th anniversary. The council produced a documentary DVD explaining its history. This DVD was produced so TACC's member coops can present it at their upcoming local annual meetings.

“TACC is a collection of voices that is centered into one for the cooperatives in Texas,” Engelke said. “We are united in one focus and one thought on behalf of our members. TACC is the one common voice to protect our interests, and it has been doing so for the past 75 years.”

Cotton Day AT THE CAPITOL

Promoting Texas Cotton
Story and Photos By Lynette Wilson



Back row L-R: Shawn Wade, Amanda Butchee, Wesley Butchee, Lloyd Arthur, Mike Hughes, Al Spinks, Roger Haldenby
Front row L-R: Kandi Poteet, Scott Harmon



Lloyd Arthur

The global importance of Texas cotton was proudly publicized during Cotton Day at the Capitol. Cotton ambassadors showcased their industry during the 2009 Texas legislative session while visiting elected officials and learning more about the legislative process.

Now celebrating its ninth anniversary, Cotton Day at the Capitol is sponsored by Texas Cotton Producers, a statewide organization comprised of nine regional organizations actively representing cotton growers. As the promotion of cotton becomes more important with each new legislative session, the one-day gathering in Austin steadily grows larger.

This year, more than 70 cotton producers, ginners, and allied industry representatives from across Texas arrived at the Capitol on March 3, 2009, to help spread cotton's message to each legislator's office. In addition to thanking elected officials for their continued support of the cotton industry, other key topics raised by the cotton delegation were the continuation of cotton research and boll weevil eradication funding, and the significance of the state's top agricultural commodity to the Texas economy.

Wesley Butchee, a Seagraves, Texas, cotton producer and long-time Cotton Day participant,

feels it is important to educate the next generation about cotton issues and to expose them to the world of agricultural business. This year, he brought his daughter with him to the Cotton Day. Amanda Butchee, a senior Environmental Crop and Soil Science major at Texas Tech University, was excited to attend.

"It's important for us to get out and visit with our representatives so they'll be well informed to make decisions regarding agricultural issues," Amanda said. "Agriculture is important to our livelihood, and it's imperative that we keep it in their thoughts." Crosby county cotton farmer Lloyd Arthur echoed her sentiments.

"You can write letters, make phone calls, send emails, but the time you take to go visit your elected officials will have the most positive effect," Arthur explained. "Sometimes it's hard to leave your farming operation, but a face to face meeting definitely shows that you're passionate about what you stand for and you care about your industry." ☺



Amanda and Wesley Butchee

The RESULTS are in...

Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA) received several awards for its entries in the 2008 Cooperative Information Fair facilitated by the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC).

The fair encourages cooperatives to improve the techniques by which they promote their business, inform their members, and disseminate information to the general public.

By Emma Matkin

PCCA received First Place for the *COMMENTATOR* in the Membership Magazine division. Bill Curnow's design of "SAFEDenim by American Cotton Growers Web Site" received First Place for best Web Site/Intranet Pages as well. PCCA's Cotton Outlook advertisement entitled "We're In the Very Weave of Your Fabric" received Second

Place in the Color Advertisement division, and Lynette Wilson's photograph entitled "8 seconds of Stardom" was awarded honorable mention for color photography.

Vice President of Administration and Human Resources Jim Taylor said it is very rewarding to see PCCA employees being recognized for their hard work.

"I have received so many positive comments from our members about the quality of the *COMMENTATOR* as well as our other publications and Web sites," Taylor said. "It's also great when people outside of our company recognize the quality of all the work our employees produce. These awards are well-deserved, and I am proud to be associated with such a dedicated and talented group of employees." 🌱

COTTON'S PAST
Take a Step Back in Time at
Burton's Cotton Gin Museum

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FOR AMERICAN HEROES**
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3301 East 50th Street • Lubbock, Texas 79404
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GOING GOING GONE?

Saving the Lesser Prairie-Chicken from the Endangered Species List

By Lynette Wilson

An extraordinary little bird recently found itself in big trouble. Once present in large numbers, the Lesser Prairie-Chicken (LPC) population has declined significantly since and now is a candidate for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Listing the bird would allow the federal government to modify ranching and farming activities in areas containing critical LPC habitat, prompting stake-holders to work toward increasing the population.

A ground-nesting bird native to the mixed grass prairies of the Texas Panhandle, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico and Oklahoma, LPC numbers have plummeted by approximately 90 percent since the early 1900s. While Kansas currently harbors the most extensive remaining range and largest population of LPC, Texas biologists now estimate the birds occupy less than 50 percent of their former range in the Lone Star State.

Loss, degradation, and fragmentation of grassland habitats due to drought, improper grazing practices, land development, and conversion of native grasslands to cropland have contributed to the LPC decline. The already limited habitat is expected to be splintered further by wind industry and farm expansion, pushing the birds into small groups with low chances for survival, according to biologists and wildlife specialists.

The situation has perplexed experts as they wrestle with their desire to protect a vulnerable species while promoting renewable energy and co-existence with farmers and ranchers.

“A healthy population of prairie chickens requires about 25,000 acres of mostly native range to survive and be healthy,” said Heather Whitlaw, a Wildlife Diversity Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife. “Lesser Prairie Chickens are a fragile and kind of selfish bird



species from the habitat end of things, and any change in their habitat can be devastating to the population,” she explained.

While the LPC refuses to adapt, land use practices continue to alter its habitat. The birds are wary of tall structures where predators can perch to see their nests. Recent studies conducted by Kansas State University showed a distinct avoidance of man-made structures by LPC. Generally, most hens avoided nesting or rearing their broods within a quarter of a mile of power lines and within a third of a mile of improved roads. Buildings, communication towers, tall trees and suburban homes also are LPC deterrents. More recently, wind energy development has become a major concern for conservationists.

Much of the current LPC occupied habitat in the Texas Panhandle and Oklahoma overlaps with land suitable for wind turbines. In fact, 87 of the 96 known LPC breeding areas in Oklahoma are within five miles of “excellent” wind farm territory, according to a federal report. Whitlaw feels the situation presents a need for proactive cooperation between wildlife managers and wind energy developers to prevent ecological or regulatory hazards to all stakeholders.

Grassland preservation also is of the utmost importance to the LPC population. Whitlaw cited that almost 80 percent of the land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will be up for re-enrollment in the next two years.

CRP grass cover supports a significant number of LPC populations, particularly in Kansas where expansion of the LPC is directly related to the amount of land enrolled in CRP planted to a mixture of native grasses. Wildlife biologists have identified the direct conversion of grassland to other land uses as the most common cause of LPC habitat fragmentation.

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Lacy Vardeman

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While efforts have been undertaken by state wildlife agencies, federal conservation agencies, non-governmental conservation groups, and private land owners, experts say conservation will be complicated since no regulations currently protect the bird. Although the Endangered Species Act would offer federal protection, the LPC currently is only a “candidate species” for listing.

“Classification as a candidate species basically means that the time and financial resources required to protect the lesser prairie chicken as an endangered species are currently being utilized for animals in more dire need,” said Whitlaw. “It’s important to rebuild the lesser prairie chicken population before the bird is listed to avoid the inevitable obstacles a federally mandated conservation program would cause for landowners.”

If the LPC is classified as an endangered species, the federal government would be responsible for LPC population management. Whitlaw explained that any landowner in a county containing the birds or any counties adjacent to LPC habitats will be required to consult with governmental agencies to ensure their land use practices do not harm the LPC. All federal agencies would be prohibited from authorizing, funding, or carrying out any program that would jeopardize a listed species or destroy or modify its “critical habitat,” the limited area where an endangered species lives.

The plight of the LPC and its impact on agriculture has captured the attention of a large cross-section of the industry. As a rancher’s daughter, a farmer’s wife, a mother of three, and an active conservationist, Lacy Vardeman has a unique perspective into all sides of the LPC predicament.

Vardeman has a strong love for agriculture as her father’s family has been ranchers in Colorado and New Mexico since the 1850s, and her husband, Dean, farms cotton south of Lubbock, Texas. Interested in conservation, she helped organize the Sand Hills Area Recreation Association (SARA) which concentrates on conservation and eco-tourism in the Texas Sandhills area of Bailey and Cochran counties. SARA operates in the heart of Texas LPC country.

The situation has perplexed experts as they wrestle with their desire to protect a vulnerable species while promoting renewable energy and co-existence with farmers and ranchers.

Photo Courtesy of Heather Whitlaw



“Anyone involved in ranching and farming is a conservationist,” Vardeman explained. “When you make a living from the land, you try your best to be a good steward and care for it without plundering and ruining it. I have been raised by my parents to take care of what we have been entrusted with in this world whether it be animals, land or water,” she concluded.

The success of conservation efforts relies on the cooperation and coordination of private landowners, land users, and public agencies to manage and conserve habitats for LPC. There are many opportunities for private landowners who want to manage their rangeland habitats, even CRP land, for the birds. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of USDA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all provide confidential, voluntary, and non-binding technical assistance to landowners who want to manage for wildlife values.

These agencies can provide information on cost-share and incentive programs to help defray some of the costs of habitat improvements. There also are many qualified people who are willing to help landowners determine if they have LPC on their property. (See sidebar)

“If you have Lesser Prairie Chickens on your land, you obviously are doing good things,” Whitlaw said. Vardeman agrees the management of LPC habitat is compatible with good farming and ranching practices and believes conservation is a landowner’s responsibility.

“In Texas, over 90 percent of the land is privately owned,” Vardeman said. “We literally own our state and the minerals and water under our property; therefore, we must be proactive in protecting and caring for our resources. It is not necessary for the government or any organization to care for our water and land if landowners step up to the plate,” she explained. 🌱

Do you have Lesser Prairie Chickens on your land?

A member of the grouse species, the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) is approximately the size of a domestic chicken. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, the LPC is mostly brown in color with darker, extensive horizontal barring on its breast, back, wings and belly. The adult male boasts a yellow-orange comb, dark, elongated head feathers, and a circular, pinkish-orange unfeathered neck patch that is inflated during displaying. Females are similar, but lack the yellow comb and neck patch.

The rare birds are best known for their unique mating ritual that begins in March and continues into May. Groups of males assemble on communal mating grounds, known to biologists as leks, to perform a colorful courtship ritual that includes strutting, stomping, cackling, jumping and bowing. The intricate mating dance is accompanied by a deep booming sound which occurs as the male inflates and deflates the orange air sacs on his neck. On a quiet spring morning, these sounds can carry as much as two miles across the open prairie, serving as an audible beacon to LPC hens.

The females generally begin nesting activities during the peak of mating displays, usually during the second and third weeks in April. Nest sites, which consist of shallow depressions lined with dried grass and feathers, occur on the ground in areas of tall grass. The females lay between 9 to 13 olive, buff colored or speckled eggs which hatch within 21 to 23 days. The chicks are able to run when they leave the shell, and can leave the nest within a few hours after hatching. By September, they appear full grown.

If you see this bird, please contact any of the following:

Heather Whitlaw

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Box 42125, TTU
Lubbock, Texas 79409-2125
806-742-4968
heather.whitlaw@tpwd.state.tx.us

John Hughes

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
PO Box 713
Canadian, Texas 79014
806-323-6636
john_p_hughes@fws.gov

Charles Coffman

Natural Resources Conservation Service
4609 W. Loop 289
Lubbock, Texas 79414-1403
806-791-0581
Charles.coffman@tx.usda.gov

Farm Service Agency

www.fsa.usda.gov/TX.find_your_local_office.htm



MARKET UPDATE

Cotton Demand Prospects Positive

in Upcoming Crop Year

By Lynette Wilson

The beginning of each new cotton season brings a renewed market interest in governmental reports, planting intentions, and weather-related issues. With a recent renewal in cotton demand and hopes that the economy is headed for a global recovery in 2009-10, producers make preparations for another year.

Although the industry anxiously awaited USDA's recent supply/demand report, the department's figures were met with little reaction. Released on April 9, USDA's 2008-09 U.S. cotton forecast included slightly lower production combined with increased exports, resulting in a 600,000-bale reduction in estimated U.S. ending stocks.

Based on USDA's final Cotton Ginnings report, the department's U.S. production estimate was lowered 206,000 bales from its March figure. Additionally, domestic mill use was lowered 100,000 bales to 3.65 million as February mill use fell sharply. However, recent strong export sales and shipments prompted USDA to raise its export forecast by 500,000 bales which resulted in a 6.7 million-bale ending stocks figure.

USDA's global picture for 2008-09 included lower consumption and higher ending stocks compared with the previous month. World production was reduced marginally due mainly to adjustments for the United States and Iran.

Sparked primarily by lower cotton use in China, world consumption was reduced 1.2 percent. China's consumption was lowered 1.0 million bales, accounting for three-fourths of the drop in world consumption, based on a sharp slowdown

in net textile exports beginning in January.

World trade showed marginal decreases as imports were reduced for Pakistan and Thailand. World exports also were reduced slightly as a sharply lower export forecast for India was partially offset by increases for the United States and Brazil. World ending stocks of 63.4 million bales were slightly above both last month's estimate and one million bales higher than the beginning stocks level.

Meanwhile, as the clock ticks for South Texas cotton producers to get seed in the ground, the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) remained dry as April showers fell across most of the other cotton growing regions of Texas. Local analysts said many producers in the drought-stricken areas surrounding Corpus Christi, Texas, and south to the LRGV may not plant a single cotton seed this year. In fact, observers now expect the 2009-10 LRGV crop to come in as the smallest crop on record.

Beneficial precipitation in most areas of northern Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, coupled with soaking rains last September, have provided satisfactory sub-soil moisture for planting, according to analysts. Based on data compiled by the National Cotton Council (NCC), cotton plantings in Texas and Oklahoma in the upcoming season are expected to be marginally lower with decreases of 9.2 and 1.7 percent, respectively. Conversely, Kansas cotton producers are expected to boost cotton acreage by seven percent. However, some in the industry feel cotton plantings in all three states could increase.

"A lack of timely rainfall and an unexpected late freeze caused considerable damage to the dryland wheat crops in Oklahoma, Kansas, and northern Texas, and it's highly possible that a great number of those acres will be replanted to cotton," said Lonnie Winters, PCCA's Vice President of Marketing. "The three states combined could easily account for roughly 55 percent of the cotton acreage in the United States in 2009-10." Due to the quality of the Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas crops, demand for cotton from PCCA's trade area continues to grow.

"Our cotton has started to gain more recognition for its quality, so we are able to continually increase our market share in the export market," Winters said. "We are finding new countries to sell our cotton to and are expanding our presence in traditional export markets."

Although demand prospects are positive, Winters expects larger-than-expected world carryover stocks in 2009-10 to weigh heavily on the market and, along with everyone else in the industry, wonders exactly how much cotton will be consumed in the world next year as the global recession continues to affect retail sales.

"We have a large number of carryover stocks to work through before the market will rebound to the levels cotton producers need to recover input costs," Winters explained. "However, the healthy demand for cotton from this region has made us very optimistic about the upcoming season, and we are constantly working to foster new relationships that will result in even more sales for our members," he concluded. 🌱



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Henry Marshall	Tarzan
Darwin Robertson	Yoakum County
Jackie Woodall	Dill City/Rocky

