



COMMENTATOR

PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION >>>>>>>>> SUMMER 2008

QUALITY SERVICE

is the First Priority at
PCCA's South Texas Office

THE END OF AN ERA

Warehouse Divisions Consolidate

SAFE DENIM

Sustainable, American and
Friendly to the Environment



COMMENTATOR

VOLUME 41, NO 2 >>>> SUMMER 2008



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Southern Comfort

Quality Service is the First Priority at PCCA's South Texas Office



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On the cover...

Adverse weather in Texas and other major cotton producing countries this season has added off-and-on support to the market as observers watch with interest to see what will happen next. Traders will wait to see if the summer and fall will bring additional lost acreage or a pot of "white gold" at the end of the rainbow.

Photo by Lynette Cockerell Wilson



COMMENTATOR is published three times per year as information for its farmer-members by Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA), a cotton marketing cooperative with headquarters at 3301 East 50th Street, Lubbock, Texas. Eligibility to participate in programs administered by PCCA is established by law without regard to race, color, creed, sex, religion, age, national origin or handicap.

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Editor's Note: A letter from PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille was mailed July 15, 2008, to PCCA members. The letter announced several important developments, and it is re-printed below in its entirety.



PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION □ P. O. BOX 2827 □ LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79408 □ FAX: (806) 762-7335 □ PHONE (806) 763-8011

July 15, 2008

Dear PCCA Members:

We are writing to inform you of positive and proactive changes at PCCA. Recent years of large crops and successful marketing efforts have enhanced our financial strength, and have allowed us the flexibility to consider re-balancing our capital structure to better match current activities. Marketing of the 2007/2008 pools is now complete, and further cash payments and book credits will be distributed in September as usual.

Our pools achieved returns of more than two cents per pound over Seam sales on a weighted average basis. The warehouse and marketing divisions were both quite profitable. Our textile division achieved positive cash flow despite extremely difficult denim markets, and we are poised to take advantage of shifts in sourcing back to the Western Hemisphere. Unlike most of our competitors, we weathered the upheaval in the futures market during the spring with zero losses, and we made good sales for current and new crop during those times. We have continued to make progress payments while others did not, and we believe our pool results will compare very positively to other alternatives for the season.

We have just completed our annual Strategic Planning Meeting with the Board of Directors and Management Team, during which we re-examine our long-term goals and objectives. For several years, we have felt it would be proper to re-balance our capital to better reflect the dollar volume and profitability of our various divisions, particularly since we now have no long-term debt.

The Board has therefore approved a reduction in the textile mill capital retains of 50% to \$2.50 per bale per year with the same five-year rotating payback. This does not affect previous \$5.00 retains, which will be retired as scheduled. It just means that participation in the mill option will cost less in the future. Since the mill option closed on June 30th, we will re-open in the sign-in / sign-out period until August 15th at the new rate. All current members of the mill option will automatically have their retains reduced to \$2.50 for the 2008/2009 crop, so no action is necessary. Our other divisions will continue to be funded by book credits determined by the Board of Directors on an annual basis, depending on volume and results as is customary.

We are pleased to announce these positive changes following another year of healthy financial results, and we thank our members for their continued support.

Sincerely,

Wallace L. Darneille
President & CEO

SOUTHERN

Comfort

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LYNETTE COCKERELL WILSON

❧ QUALITY SERVICE IS THE FIRST PRIORITY AT PCCA'S SOUTH TEXAS OFFICE ❧

Four talented and committed individuals act as personal liaisons between Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA), gin personnel, and more than five thousand South Texas members and cotton producers. Serving such a large number of people, while keeping the focus on quality service, may seem like an overwhelming task.

"Quality service is our first priority as we constantly try to find new ways to improve how we do business," says Cris Gwinn, South Texas Division manager. "Whether it's embracing the newest technology and implementing new programs, or striving to find new ways to do our old tasks better, our staff always is ready to assist our South Texas members and gins."

The South Texas Division, with offices in Corpus Christi and Taylor, Texas, provides an array of services to PCCA members and gins. The staff offers direct support for all gin bookkeeping needs and helps troubleshoot scale ticket problems during ginning season. In addition, the division is responsible for supporting gin services and assisting with government farm programs. The office staff also provides support for gin personnel in the marketing and invoicing of members' cotton and sponsors gin training workshops in Corpus Christi and Taylor each year.

Working closely with the Grower Services department at PCCA headquarters in Lubbock, Texas, the staff processes paperwork for PCCA members including pool contracts, account authorizations, loan paperwork, mill option agreements and crop contracts. Each time information changes are made, PCCA's computer system must be updated and the corresponding paperwork filed in a long line of filing cabinets holding scores of legal documents. It is cru-

cial that all paperwork is correct since many of the documents dictate check amounts and payees.

Due to the distance from PCCA's headquarters, the South Texas Division helps PCCA's Network department by installing, removing, providing technical support and trouble-shooting computer equipment in the area's gin offices.

"The staff members in South Texas really have to be a 'jack of all trades' because of the variety of work that has to be done," Dean Church, PCCA's vice president of Grower Service says. "Interaction with our producers is obviously a huge part of the services they provide."

Gwinn does not take the importance of quality service lightly. He has ample experience working in all aspects of the cotton industry and believes good customer service is the key to any successful business. Service is especially important in the case of cooperatives as the business' customers also are its owners.

Gwinn, a Matador, Texas, native, received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics at Texas Tech University before working as a research assistant at the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. He then became familiar with the cooperative way of doing business as the office manager at Midland Farmers Cooperative in Midland, Texas. In 1995, Gwinn was hired as a field representative at PCCA's headquarters office.

In the mid-nineties, Gwinn was transferred to PCCA's Taylor, Texas, office to become the Central Texas manager. When the leading post in PCCA's South Texas Division became open in 2006, Gwinn was promoted to his current position as South Texas Division Manager and moved to the office in Corpus Christi.

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CRIS GWINN
SOUTH TEXAS DIVISION MANAGER



CAMERON CHARLES
FIELD REPRESENTATIVE



LINDA WHITE
OFFICE MANAGER, CORPUS CHRISTI



DENA ALDERMAN
OFFICE MANAGER, TAYLOR

...continued from page 2

"Cris took on a huge challenge by moving to our Taylor office where we basically had no market share," Church explains. "From that, he built a great customer base, handling over 130,000 bales per year. His proven success made it an easy decision to promote him to the South Texas Division manager position."

Although Gwinn enjoys the time he spends visiting area gins and producers, his job requires that he spend a large amount of time in the office. Because the South Texas territory is very large, spanning more than 400 miles, Field Representative Cameron Charles finds himself on the road most of the time visiting growers and gins and attending key industry meetings.

Charles was quick to find his way around despite the fact that he has been in the Corpus Christi area less than two years. He left his hometown of Bovina, Texas, to obtain a degree in Finance at Texas Tech University. His first job upon graduation was with PCCA's South

Texas Division where he strives to keep PCCA members and gins informed about their cooperative, its programs, and new developments in the cotton industry. His duties as a field representative also include assisting with gin bookkeeping, producer calls and evaluating computer equipment problems.

"Cameron's ability to learn our system quickly, coupled with his computer knowledge, has allowed our office to provide first-rate customer service," Gwinn says.

The focus on customer service continued with the addition of Linda White, the office manager at PCCA's Corpus Christi office. She usually is the first smiling face people see when they enter the building. White has been a long-time South Texas resident, and her previous experience in business management helped her hit the ground running after accepting a position at PCCA.

With more than a year and a half of experience at PCCA, White's duties include contract

"SERVICE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN THE CASE OF COOPERATIVES AS THE BUSINESS' CUSTOMERS ALSO ARE ITS OWNERS."



PCCA's South Texas Office

THE SOUTH TEXAS DIVISION ALSO ENCOMPASSES CENTRAL TEXAS...

management, data entry, obtaining and entering eligibility information, assisting gin clerks with cotton marketing, and helping to plan the annual South Texas Agent School.

"Linda has been a great asset for our office," Gwinn explains. "Her creativity and communication skills have allowed us to deliver PCCA's message in a more clear and artistic manner."

The South Texas Division also encompasses Central Texas where Dena Alderman serves as an office manager in Taylor. Originally from San Angelo, Texas, she has extensive experience in the cotton industry.

Alderman worked for Hutto Cooperative Gin Company as an office manager and later a co-manager for a combined total of 12 years before coming to work for PCCA in 2005. Alderman handles all aspects of cotton marketing and

invoicing for the gins in her area and works closely with the Corpus Christi office.

"When Dena began working at Taylor, it allowed my transition from the Central Texas office to PCCA's South Texas office to go better than I ever could've imagined," Gwinn says. "Her previous experience with a cooperative gin gives her a greater understanding of our customer base."

Whether in the Corpus Christi or the Taylor offices, the division's overall commitment to quality service has not gone unnoticed to the South and Central Texas producers and gins that come into contact with the PCCA employees on a daily basis.

"The South Texas office staff is very pleasant to work with and they are always willing to help get the answers to my questions," says Pam

Chesnutt, office manager at Bayside-Richardson Cooperative Gin in Woodsboro, Texas. "I've really enjoyed working with the PCCA staff for the last 13 years. They've made my job much easier."

Although the division provides Field Services, Grower Services, and computer support, ultimately, the South Texas Division is important to the overall success of PCCA due to the area's early harvest which makes it possible for the cooperative's sales staff to market cotton almost year-round.

"In addition to all of their duties, Cris and his staff always are 'quick out of the blocks' to make sure the flow of cotton is timely for our sales staff to start marketing," Church says. "He has built a great team, and the four of them have poured their heart and soul into serving our producers and gins in that area." 🌱

In Memory of *L. C. Unfred*



Former PCCA Director and Chairman L.C. Unfred passed away July 25, 2008, at the age of 84. He was a respected leader in the cotton and cooperative industries.

A veteran of World War II, Mr. Unfred served on the PCCA Board of Directors from 1973 to 1998 and was chairman for 13 of those years.

Mr. Unfred also served as president of the New Home Cooperative Gin Board for 28 years and was a director on the Cotton Incorporated Board for 20 years.

For 14 years, he was the only chairman of American Cotton Growers and was the first chairman of the Marketing Pool Committee for both ACG and PCCA.

Mr. Unfred was instrumental in the merger of PCCA and ACG in 1987.

Mr. Unfred's devotion to his industry and community will always be remembered, and he will be greatly missed.



Wait and See

Size of the 2008 U.S. and World Crop is Unclear

Story and Photos by Lynette Cockerell Wilson

Adverse weather in Texas and other major cotton producing countries this season has added off-and-on support to the market as observers watch with interest to see what will happen next.

More than half of the projected 9.38-million-acre 2008 U.S. crop is expected to be grown in Texas, and continued concern over cotton development there hinges on the need for additional precipitation and no further damage from heavy storms, hail, or sand and high winds.

With heavy rain and winds up to 100 miles per hour, Hurricane Dolly came ashore on South Padre Island near the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), and moved inland on July 23, marking the first time the Texas coast has been hit directly by a hurricane in almost a decade.



"The size of the world crop will remain a mystery almost until harvest begins."

Due to the storm, the cotton crop in LRGV, where the first cotton of the season is normally harvested, may be a total loss. Observers say approximately 92,000 acres of cotton in the region were awaiting harvest when driving rains and high winds smashed the open cotton bolls to the ground. Even if the bolls had remained on the plants, the quality of the cotton probably would have been severely diminished. In the meantime, analysts said the loss, while devastating for local producers, will have only a short-term effect on the market.

The crop in the LRGV is not the only place where the production figure is somewhat vague at the moment. In fact, most traders are having a hard time coming to grips with an overall U.S. cotton production number. The hindrance circulates around the crop on the Texas High and Rolling Plains, where the bulk of U.S. cotton is grown, as many consider an accurate production figure for the region to be somewhat elusive.

Given the varied interpretations of how beneficial the hit-and-miss West Texas thunderstorms were in July, it is difficult to assess the condition of the crop there. After many days of temperatures over the 100-degree mark, the rain had to bring much needed relief to the crop despite the scattered hail and high winds that accompanied it, an observer explained. The general consensus is that some of the estimated 3.8 million acres planted to cotton in

the region likely will be abandoned while the remaining acreage could finish the season with above-average yields.

"It's such a mixed bag in West Texas that I don't think anyone is going to have a good handle on a crop estimate for the area until September's crop report from the USDA," an analyst said.

USDA's July supply/demand report held no surprises for the market. The department's U.S. 2008-09 cotton projections included lower production and exports resulting in a net reduction of 100,000 bales in ending stocks compared with the previous month. U.S. cotton production was reduced 500,000 bales based on slightly lower planted area in the June acreage survey and slightly higher abandonment reflecting conditions in Texas.

The department raised domestic mill use 100,000 bales to 4.4 million. Despite the slowing economy, several factors are supporting domestic mill use including higher overseas transportation costs, the weaker dollar, and payments to mills included in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Additionally, USDA's export forecast was reduced 500,000 bales due to lower U.S. supplies and lower foreign import demand.

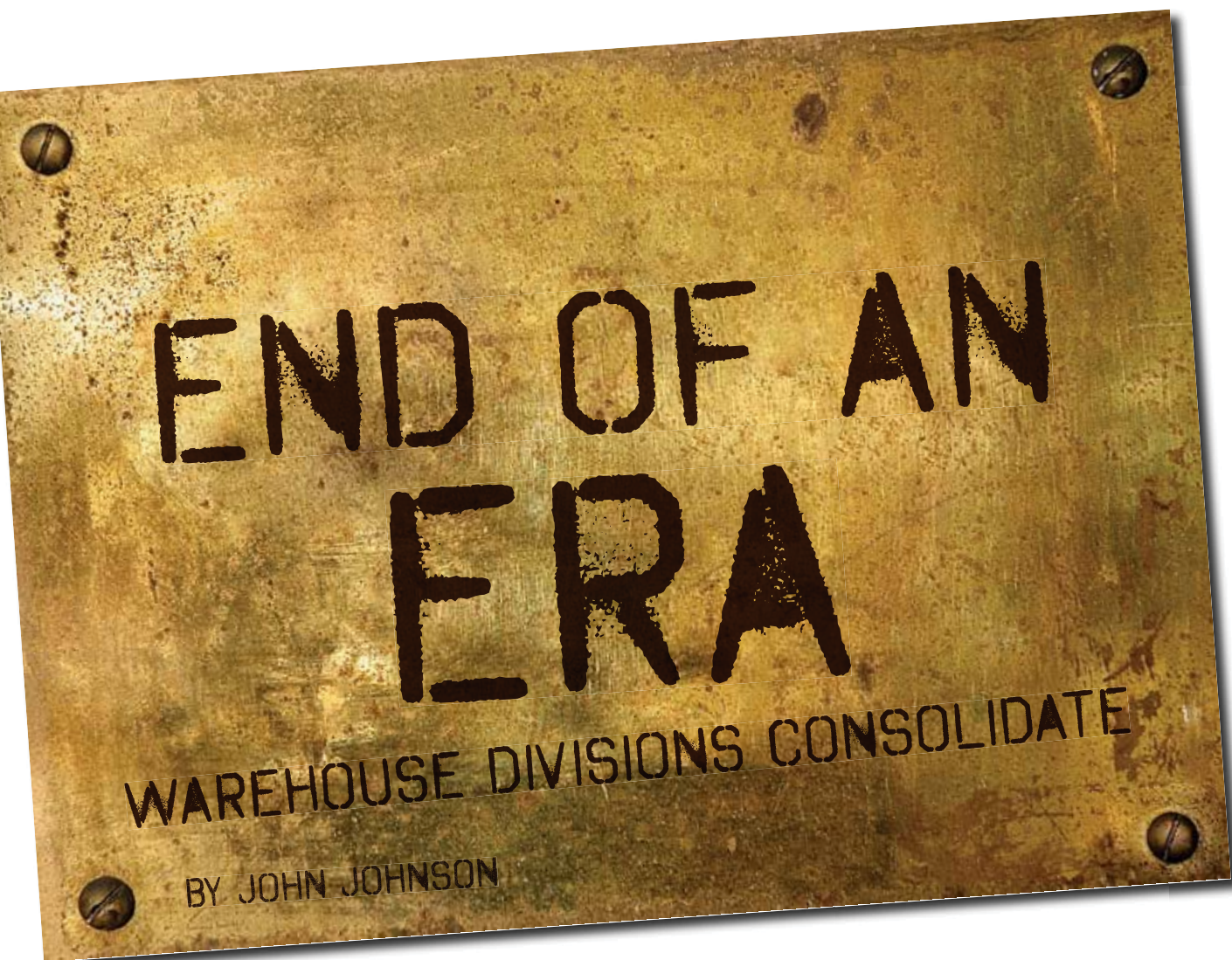
USDA's world cotton projections for 2008-09 included lower beginning stocks, production, offtake, and ending stocks. World production

was reduced approximately 1.5 million bales due mainly to reductions in India and the United States. The revision in India was based on lower reported planted area.

India, where the monsoon season is not arriving as producers there had hoped, is the U.S.'s largest cotton competitor and is working to make inroads to sell more cotton to China than American producers. The late monsoon season has resulted in a large number of unplanted acres, and a short crop in India could bode well for U.S. producers as world cotton supplies would tighten.

"If India's cotton totals come up short, it could really make things volatile on the upside for prices to producers," a market observer explained.

Cotton's long-term price outlook remains very positive, according to many in the industry; however, no near-term burst in prices is expected. World cotton shortages certainly could affect global cotton prices, and the 2008 cotton season already has been fraught with adverse weather. The size of the world crop will remain a mystery almost until harvest begins. Until then, producers and analysts alike will, as they do most every year, have to "wait and see." 🌱



One era ended on June 30, 2008, and another began the following day as Oklahoma Cotton Cooperative Association (OCCA) and Rolling Plains Cooperative Compress (RPCC) consolidated after operating as separate PCCA divisions since 1963. The new organization will maximize efficiency and profitability by better utilizing current and future assets. Now known as the Plains Cotton Cooperative Association Warehouse Division, the new name will capitalize on PCCA's excellent reputation among the worldwide cotton industry.

The idea of consolidation was first mentioned in early 2008 by Rex Ford, manager of Farmers Coop Gin – Stamford and chairman of the RPCC Committee. A special committee comprised of OCCA and RPCC committee members and PCCA staff soon began studying the concept.

"I always had wondered why PCCA had two warehouse divisions," Ford says. "It seemed to me they would be more efficient operating as one division." The study committee soon discovered something unexpected.

"The committee members were somewhat surprised to learn how much OCCA and RPCC operations were alike," says Dean Church, PCCA's vice president of grower services. "We also determined that combining the warehouse operations would increase projected book credit retirements for 2008," Church adds.

PCCA currently owns five warehouse facilities in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas and leases an additional seven locations in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. However, the five-year average of bales handled at all locations has exceeded total storage capacity by almost 300,000 bales.

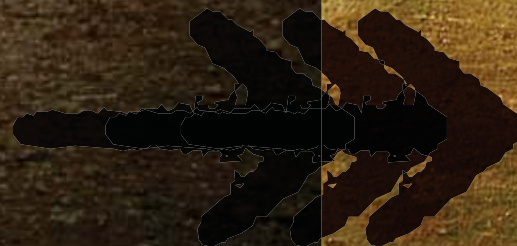
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"IT SEEMED TO ME THEY WOULD
BE MORE EFFICIENT OPERATING
AS ONE DIVISION."

REX FORD,
STANFORD FARMERS COOP GIN MANAGER
AND PCCA WAREHOUSE DIVISION CHAIRMAN

PHOTO BY LYNETTE COCKERELL WILSON





JAY COWART
DIRECTOR OF WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS

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"By consolidating these operations, we will be able to shift employees and equipment to warehouse locations where the workload demands them," Jay Cowart, director of warehouse operations, explains, "and we will be able to shift cotton receiving to those warehouses that have space. No labor, equipment or space will be wasted."

Other benefits of consolidation are reduced capital requirements, easier management of capital expenditures and personnel resources, leveling the "peaks and valleys" of cotton production by increasing the geographical footprint, and stronger political and industry alliances.

The study committee also approved a recommendation to capitalize the warehouse division via a Base Capital Plan due to wide swings in production, new members, and anticipated expansion. The plan will be initiated immediately following PCCA's annual stockholders meeting in September; therefore, equity retirements for warehouse patrons this year will be based on the base capital requirements.

"For our fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2008, the allocation of earnings will be based on deliveries to the OCCA and RPCC divisions, respectively," Church says, "and staff will recommend the levels of cash and book credit allocations for each of the divisions. In the future,

these allocations will be based on the allocable margins of all warehouse locations combined and divided by total bales received by all locations."

A new, nine-member committee has been elected to oversee Warehouse Division operations and make recommendations such as capital expenditures, tariffs and other items to PCCA's Board. PCCA staff will meet with the committee on a regular basis. PCCA will continue to hold quarterly meetings at Sweetwater and Altus.

"Quarterly warehouse meetings have always been an important vehicle to communicate with PCCA members," Church concludes. ☺



Liberal, Kansas



Altus, Oklahoma



Sweetwater, Texas

Cotton Board Announces Promotions

Mayers is Board's New President and CEO

by Brittini Drennan



Drayton Mayers



Charles "Brad" Robb



Stacy Caldwell

Positive changes are taking place among the Memphis-based Cotton Board and its employees.

Drayton Mayers began his leadership role as the organization's president and CEO last December. He now supervises the Cotton Research and Promotion Program's activities to increase consumer demand for cotton.

Mayers has 14 years of valuable experience with Cotton Council International (CCI), a branch of the National Cotton Council. He initiated programs and constructed marketing and public relations campaigns. He has also worked in developing international partnerships and marketing promotions that have led to the continued success of the Cotton Council.

Additionally, Charles B. "Brad" Robb was promoted in May to vice president of com-

munications. Robb will lead the Regional Communications Managers, a collaboration of four regional representatives.

"Brad is well-known in the industry and has successfully managed the Cotton Board's communications program since 2001," Mayers said.

With support from Cotton Board members and a Cotton Board Field Services Task Force, Mayers consolidated the communications efforts and field services into one department called Cotton Board Communications.

In the newly formed department, Stacy Caldwell began working full-time on May 5 as the new communications assistant. After previously working part-time for the Cotton Board, Caldwell now is responsible for communications including producing news releases and newslet-

ters for the Cotton Board's importer segment. She recently earned a bachelor's degree in public relations from the University of Central Arkansas and is no amateur to the cotton industry.

"Stacey is already ahead of the curve in learning the business of cotton after having been raised around it for much of her life," Robb said.

The Cotton Board partners with Cotton Incorporated to perform research for U.S. cotton producers and importers. It is the Cotton Board's mission to keep cotton producers and consumers informed of the Cotton Research & Promotion Program's developments.

Craig and Glenda Kitten
and their
Little Cutie

She is 11-years-old and already has bonus tracks! Andi Kitten, the oldest of her four brothers and sisters, is a member of the local up-and-coming singing sensation called the Cactus Cuties.

Andi's father, Craig Kitten, is a PCCA member and farms 6,000 acres of cotton near Slaton with his three brothers. He and his wife, Glenda, said Andi started singing when she was very young.

"I noticed she could sing when she was two or three," said Glenda. "She would sing in the back seat of the car all the time."

She now has made her way from singing at the Cactus Theater in downtown Lubbock to appearing on the Disney Channel, visiting with celebrities, and she even helped write a children's book about the National Anthem called "Oh Say, Did You Know." The book includes a CD of the Cactus Cuties singing the Star Spangled Banner and two other bonus tracks.



story and photos by
Emma Matkin

The Cactus Cuties



The Cuties have brought a new rendition of the Star Spangled Banner to Americans, and Andi continues to amaze people with her gift.

The girls have traveled the United States singing the National Anthem and a medley of oldies. They have performed in San Antonio, Texas, for a Spurs basketball game; Arlington, Texas, for a Texas Rangers baseball game; Virginia Beach, Fla., on the 700 Club; Grand Junction, Colo., for Country Jam 2008 where the girls were able to visit with the country band Diamond Rio; Erie, Pa., for the 103rd Manufacturers' Association Convention; and Frisco, Texas, for a celebrity baseball game where they met Mark Cuban, Mike Modano and Michael Irvin.

The Cuties also went to Washington, D.C., where they had the opportunity to sing with the President's Marine band as part of the National Anthem Project. The Cuties worked with the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) which promotes the continuation of music in schools and educating children about the symbolism of the National Anthem.

Glenda said the National Anthem is what catapulted the Cuties into all of the great things they have been able to do, and she said she is very proud of that.

"The fact that it is the National Anthem and all it stands for just couldn't be any better," Glenda said.

Glenda believes Andi's involvement with the Cactus Cuties has been very positive. She said Andi's teacher is a wonderful mentor, and being involved with the Cactus Cuties has really helped boost Andi's confidence.

Andi attends Kingdom Preparatory Academy and will be in the sixth grade next year. She takes tap and dance lessons and rehearses one hour every week with the Cuties in addition to a 30 minute voice lesson.

Andi's parents have tried to keep her childhood as normal and down-to-earth as possible. Even though she has become a celebrity, Andi still has to perform her chores around the house. She washes dishes, sweeps the floor, tends to their pets, waters the flowers, and occasionally accompanies her dad when he works on the farm.

The Cactus Cuties have emerged from a simple singing class to an influential group that has connected with people across the United States and has touched the hearts of soldiers in Iraq with their strong, youthful voices. The Cuties have brought a new rendition of the Star Spangled Banner to Americans, and Andi continues to amaze people with her gift. ☺

Photo by
Shan Renee Ingram,
Courtesy of Don Caldwell

SAFE denim

Story and Photos by Lynette Cockerell Wilson



Sustainable,
American
and
Friendly
to the
Environment



AMERICAN COTTON GROWERS (ACG) proves its true colors are “true blue and green” with the launch of a new campaign highlighting the environmental friendliness of denim produced from cotton grown by its member-owners.

As fashion trends recently have gone “green,” the mill also hopes to capitalize on U.S. consumers’ growing interest in purchasing American-made, environmentally friendly products. The new promotion also was initiated to benefit the cooperative’s members by expanding ACG’s denim sales opportunities and striving to locate a less price-sensitive environment.

Small scale manufacturers of apparel, home furnishings, crafts, and fabric retailers that serve the home sewing markets, but need smaller volumes of fabrics, now have Internet access to denim that is Sustainable, American and Friendly to the Environment (SAFE). The fabric produced by ACG has been branded SAFEDenim.

“We can produce an average of 37 million yards of denim annually, every yard of which is spun, dyed and woven from the cotton our farmer-owners produce,” Wally Darneille, PCCA’s President and CEO said. “It is a process that is a true, homespun phenomenon, American denim literally created from field to fabric. Until now, ACG denim was available only to manufacturers who could meet our minimum volume requirements,” Darneille added. “Today, our fabrics featuring the same quality and reliability are available via the Internet with virtually no minimum requirements.”

ACG is focused on the development and production of value-added, fashion denim fabrics for its customers while meeting or exceeding all regulations administered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

“We created the SAFE concept to address a lot of misinformation that’s all too common in our industry. The idea that conventional cotton is bad for the environment is something we hear all too often,” said PCCA’s Vice President of Fabric Sales and Product

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For our farmer-owners, **IT IS NOT JUST A FAD**; it is a multi-generational **COMMITMENT** to take care of the air, soil and water to ensure their children and grandchildren **CAN FARM THE LAND.**"

SAFEDenim
True blue & green.

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Development Jack Mathews. "The SAFEDenim story helps to set the record straight and provide insight into practices and technologies of which many of our customers were unaware," Mathews added.

ACG's fabric, which until now was only available to the world's largest manufacturers, is being made available to smaller boutique manufacturers that share the mill's vision of cloth that is Sustainable, American, and Friendly to the Environment.

"In all possible processes throughout the mill, we use the best available technology to apply the principles of reduce, re-use, recycle and avoid production of hazardous waste," Darneille said. "That stewardship carries all the way from the field to our fabric. For our farmer-owners, it is not just a fad; it is a multi-generational com-

mitment to take care of the air, soil and water to ensure their children and grandchildren can farm the land."

New technologies have enabled cotton producers to use 45 percent less water to grow cotton, and pesticide applications have been reduced by 50 percent in the past 20 years. Other developments have dramatically reduced the land area required to produce enough cotton to meet demand. In 1926, U.S. farmers planted more than 44 million acres and produced almost 18 million bales. By 2004, U.S. cotton acreage totaled 14 million acres that produced 23 million bales, leaving an additional 30 million acres for production of food, conservation and wildlife habitat.

ACG's web-based store, www.safedenim.com, allows customers to buy SAFEDenim

direct from the source in 30-yard rolls for easy handling. Orders are shipped within two business days, and easy payment options help avoid delays.

"We offer a wide range of denim fabrics for bottomweight apparel such as jeans, jackets, skirts, shorts, and pants, as well as for home furnishings and crafts," Mathews explained. "We produce every style we offer; therefore, customers can be assured of consistent, reliable quality at great wholesale prices, and we can and will replenish our inventory to ensure they receive the same style time after time." Custom-made denim apparel and accessories may be offered by ACG in the future. 🌱



"In all possible processes throughout the mill, we use the best available technology to apply the principles of **REDUCE, RE-USE, RECYCLE** and avoid production of hazardous waste."



cotton pickings

DELEGATE BODY REPRESENTATIVES

Recently, a number of PCCA delegate body representatives have been elected or re-elected by their local coop gins. The following list was compiled through July 31, 2008.

Idalou Coop Gin - Kenneth Schoppa
Glasscock County Coop - Rodney Gully

COMINGS AND GOINGS

A number of cooperative gins have announced management changes in recent months. If we have overlooked anyone, our apologies. Please contact us at 806-763-8011, extension 285, if your gin's management has changed or if there is other news you would like to share with the readers of Commentator.

Amherst - Guyle Roberson
Butler - Josh Kirby
Danevang - Greg Tangerman
Ericksdahl - Brian Manske
Friona - Tony Newton
Glasscock - Jeff Turner
Gulf Coast - Chris Yaklin
Haskell - Brian Lehrmann
Jayton - Dusty Pharis
Lubbock Cotton Growers - Jerry Butman
Rangerville - Sam Simmons
Spade - Garrett Flowers



photo by Lynette Cockerell Wilson

High Plains Cotton Researcher Retires

by Emma Matkin

One might describe Dr. John Gannaway's office at Texas AgriLife Research, formerly the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in Lubbock, Texas, as a museum of keepsakes and memorabilia he collected throughout his years of working as a cotton breeder and professor.

The entire perimeter of his office is ornamented with old farming caps he acquired through the years, and he still has boxes of them at his house. A few delicate cotton bolls adorn his large desk along with tiny toy tractors. His shelves are stuffed with books and papers, causing one to imagine all of the research materials he has filed away during his career.

For the past 28 years, Dr. Gannaway has researched, discovered, and seen changes in the cotton industry that have impacted the entire agricultural industry. It is bittersweet to think in the next month he will have to sift through all of his belongings and embark on the journey of retirement.

Dr. Gannaway grew up on a farm in Haskell, Texas; a small country town just north of Abilene. It was in this small town where he began dreaming about how he was going to make his contribution to the world of cotton.

Like most children who live on a farm, the young Gannaway was a hard worker. He said he was never bored, there always was something to do, and of course there was plenty of work. Unlike many other teenage boys, Dr. Gannaway said he loved to work with his father.

"I always considered it quite a compliment when he asked me to go help him," Dr. Gannaway said.

He reminisced about the old days and how they had to hand-pick cotton and his job dumping sacks of cotton in the trailer. Dr. Gannaway was told to check for green bolls, dirt clods, and rocks and if any were left in the trailer, the field workers' wages would be reduced.

One of the most exciting days he remembers when he was growing up was the time his father bought a mechanical cotton harvester.

"I thought that was absolutely the neatest thing in the world," Dr. Gannaway said. "It was fine until I found out I had to ride in the trailer and pick through cotton!"

Dr. Gannaway explained how "back in those days," older cotton strippers were not equipped with green boll separators so anything that came into the stripper came out the back into the trailer. He said he was constantly "smacked" with green bolls and rocks coming through the machine!

Dr. Gannaway and his father would make their way home at night completely exhausted. He remembers his father telling him that without research, this was as good as cotton was ever going to be.

It was this comment about the future of the cotton industry that planted the seed in Dr. Gannaway's mind to embark on his journey into cotton research.

Dr. Gannaway attended Texas A&M University in College Station where he received his

bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. His sophomore year, he married his home-town sweetheart, Jan. During his time at College Station, he had the opportunity to work for Dr. G.A. Niles, a cotton breeder. Niles became Dr. Gannaway's mentor throughout his undergraduate and post-graduate studies.

"I was a student laborer at a cotton breeding program working for the fantastic salary of 67 cents an hour," said Dr. Gannaway with a smile.

After college, he moved his family to El Paso, Texas, where he took over the cotton breeding program at the El Paso Experiment Station where he was first exposed to high-strength, upland cotton; the breakthrough that changed his future.

This was around the time open-end spinning came online, and one of the first requirements of open-end spinning was strength.

Since his discovery in 1974, Dr. Gannaway has been working with fiber strength in upland cotton for almost 34 years and has released countless numbers of germplasms that have high fiber strength. He explained that germplasm is an unfinished variety; a line of cotton that has some trait the industry needs.

In 1980, Dr. Gannaway took over the cotton breeding program at the Station in Lubbock after Dr. Levon Ray retired. It was a fulfillment of his lifelong dream.

"You don't find very many people that have a dream way back when and actually get to fulfill it," he said.

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Dr. Gannaway's job at the Experiment Station was one that involved research, forward thinking, and creativity. His major responsibility has been developing germplasm that will help meet the needs of the producers on the Texas High Plains.

"I get up every morning excited because I know there is going to be a challenge, and there is going to be an opportunity, and it's going to be fun. It's been hard, it's been tough, but it has always been fun," Dr. Gannaway explained.

The drive that has kept him passionate about his job all of these years is "that wonderful little cotton plant." He also said he has enjoyed watching his students develop professionally and go out into the workplace.

"I'm going to miss the people, and I am going to miss the challenge. The biggest challenge now will be trying to stay busy!"

When Dr. Gannaway retires, he and his wife will be moving back to Haskell. During his retirement, he would like to travel, play golf, fish, and he said he has a "half-acre of yard" to keep him busy.

He said Texas Agrilife Research could not have hired anyone better than Dr. Jane Dever. Dr. Gannaway said she is already familiar with the program so she has less time to spend on the learning curve.

"It's time to step aside and let younger and brighter minds take over," Dr. Gannaway said.

Dr. Dever will be assuming Dr. Gannaway's position on September 1. She received all three of her degrees from Texas Tech University; she has a bachelor's degree in textile engineering, a master's in crop science and agronomy, and a doctorate in agronomy and plant breeding.

Dr. Dever was the global cotton breeding manager for Bayer Crop Science; an administra-

tive position that was focused on developing commercial cotton varieties and new biotechnology traits.

"At Texas AgriLife Research, I have the opportunity to do more hands-on breeding and develop new germplasm," she said.

Dr. Dever started working with Dr. Gannaway at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in Lubbock in 1983 while she was in graduate school. She said he has a way of really convincing people about the importance of cotton research.

"Through Dr. Gannaway's work, this program has become one of the most well-known and best publically-supported cotton breeding programs in the country," Dr. Dever said. "He has a dynamic personality and has been a wonderful spokesman for the industry." ☺

that wonderful little cotton plant



Dr. Jane Dever

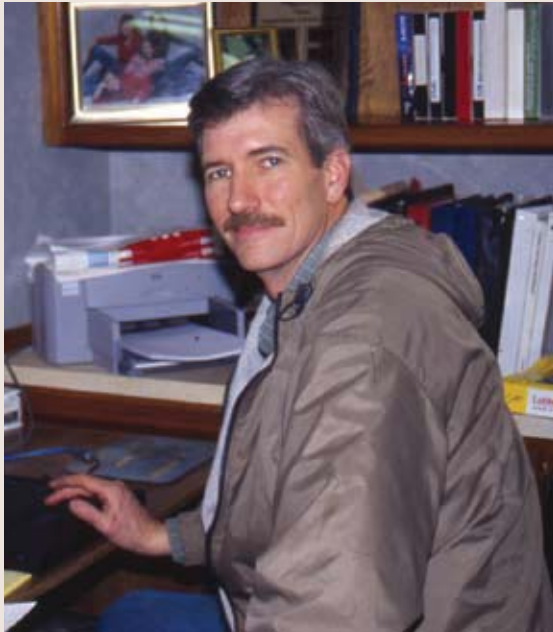


Dr. John Gannaway

photos by Emma Matkin

TACC Presents Awards

by Brittni Drennan



Paul Wilson

The Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council (TACC) presented awards to four outstanding individuals in recognition of their dedication to the success of the cotton and cooperative industries. The awards ceremony took place during the organization's annual meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas, on March 17, 2008.

Paul Wilson was named the Cooperative Ginners of the Year by TACC. Wilson graduated from Texas A&M's Agricultural Engineering program in 1981 and began working as an engineer for Continental Eagle in Fresno, Calif., where he met his wife, Janet. After several transitions and relocations, Wilson and his family made their final move in 2000 to United Cotton Growers Cooperative near Levelland, Texas.

Wilson, with the help of United Cotton Growers' Board of Directors, consolidated two gin plants into one. The new gin produced more than 60 bales per hour, making the plant more efficient and more profitable to growers. As one of the largest gins in the nation, the coop has ginned approximately 158,000 bales per year, and in just seven seasons Wilson has ginned more than 880,000 bales.

"There have been an elite few ginnerers whose vision and foresight have forever changed the landscape of ginning, but Paul Wilson's name should be added to that roll," said Dean Church, vice president of grower services at Plains Cotton Cooperative Association.

David Swinford received the TACC Distinguished Service Award for his commitment and leadership in the Texas House of Representatives. Spending most of his life in the Texas Panhandle, Swinford grew up in an agriculture environment and graduated from Texas Tech University with a degree in agricultural education. He began his career as a grain elevator owner and operator and a grain merchandiser. Being elected to



David Swinford

his local school board eventually led him to run for state representative in 1990. He has since represented the agriculture industry and Texas citizens in the state legislature for 18 consecutive years.

Many of his accomplishments have made paths for new beginnings. Animal rights bills, environmental bills, and many food and water bills came through the House Agriculture and Livestock Committee in which he served as chair and defended the agriculture industry. Swinford currently is chairman of the House State Affairs Committee.

Possibly Swinford's greatest accomplishment was his influence for the continuation of the coop franchise tax exemption. Swinford has served as vice chair of the Texas Republican Caucus and is on the board of the Texas Rural Caucus.

For the first time in 74 years, TACC honored two individuals with the Cooperator of the Year award. Their joint effort was described by Charlie McQuhae, presenter of the award, as "a trust level between two people beyond definition." Heinie Bade and Arlen Goebel together faced challenges and triumphs that eventually led to a very successful business and partnership.

Bade served on the board of Associated Milk Producers, Inc. (AMPI), which today is known as Dairy Farmers of America. He also served on many committees and held several leadership positions.

Arlen Goebel was hired by Bade in 1973 as general manager of DeWitt County Producers Association. Bade and Goebel expanded the small business from only three employees, limited facilities, and just 242 members to a large coop that currently serves nearly 800 customers.

These four have raised the bar for agriculturalists and have proved themselves worthy of receiving these honorary and prestigious awards. 🌱

Deadline Approaches for Ag Museum

by Emma Matkin

The American Museum of Agriculture (AMA) in Lubbock is approaching a critical moment in its history. By November 1, 2008, the museum must raise \$1 million dollars to take advantage of a generous offer from the City of Lubbock to donate a 25-acre plot of land. This site is just east of downtown Lubbock between Mackenzie Park and the American Wind Power Center.

Lacee Frazee, executive director of the museum, said the museum is in the middle of a campaign to get funding to build the new facility. The city's one stipulation in the contract was that by November 1, 2008, the museum must raise a total of \$1 million dollars to uphold the contract.

"We need the support of all people in the Southwestern United States, not just people in the agricultural industry," Frazee said. "We need people who want to see this new facility become a reality."

PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille and his wife, Margy, are personally involved in helping raise the building fund because they feel the museum is important to the entire agricultural industry as well as the whole High Plains area.

"We believe the AMA can be a tremendous tool for attracting young people to agriculture through education and hands-on involvement. I hope PCCA members will join us in supporting this effort," Darneille said.

Frazee said the biggest difference in the new facility is that it will be more interactive and educational. She said they will be able to share the story of agriculture with students and people of all ages.

The new facility will also have a meeting room that can be used by different groups for board meetings, presentations, and workshops.

So far the museum has raised almost \$800,000, but it still needs support to reach the fundraising goal before the deadline. Supporters have less than two months to raise a little over \$200,000.

Anyone who would like to make a one time gift or a multi-year pledge can make a donation strictly to the building fund. There also are multiple levels of museum membership.

For more information about how to make a contribution or pledge or to become a member, visit the museum's website at www.agriculturehistory.org or contact Frazee at 806-239-5796.



Executive Director Lacee Frazee



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