



COMMENTATOR

PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION >>>>>>>>> WINTER 2008-09

COTTON'S PAST

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

AMERICAN DENIM FOR AMERICAN HEROES

Local Volunteers Help Make This
Christmas Special for Soldiers Overseas

LOCAL CHAMBER INDUCTS PCCA INTO HALL OF FAME

COMMENTATOR

VOLUME 41, NO 3 >>>> WINTER 2008-2009



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On the cover...

Not far from Acuff, Texas, cotton glows in the setting sun as brothers Benny and Jack Sides harvest their cotton nearby.

Photo by Lynette 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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MEETING THE NEW CROP YEAR WITH AN AIR OF OPTIMISM

PHOTOS AND STORY BY LYNETTE WILSON

In late December, good news was hard to find in the cotton industry. Most of the 2008-09 cotton crop was out of the field, but a global economic recession sent cotton sales grinding to a virtual halt. Despite the “gloom and doom,” an air of optimism remained.

“Unfortunately, for the time being we’re dealing with a lack of demand, a worldwide economic crisis, a tightening of credit like we have not experienced in a long time, and the sheer uncertainty of what the market will do tomorrow,” said Lonnie Winters, PCCA’s vice president of marketing. “Those factors have many market players on the sidelines.”

Although there was some demand for high-quality tenderable cotton styles, the marketability of the 2008-09 Texas/Oklahoma/Kansas cotton crop was compromised by quality issues resulting from adverse weather early in the season. Nevertheless, Winters was confident the cotton eventually would find a home.

“With slowing demand and sales, the season could be very drawn out,” Winters cautioned. “I’m hopeful that the world economy eventually will turn around resulting in a boost in consumer confidence and an increase in cotton sales to the textile mills that survive these difficult financial times.”

As 2009 approached, the weakening U.S. dollar added some support to the cotton market and the commodity complex as a whole, and projections pointed to a continued deterioration in the dollar’s value. Some observers felt the situation could be the “wildcard” the cotton market needed as a declining U.S. dollar could translate into strengthening commodity prices. Others, however, were not positive the circumstances would boost the market.

“The weaker dollar may have very little impact on the short-term demand for cotton,” a market analyst said. “Consumers in the U.S. and in many of the other key world economies

are unlikely to see a jump in discretionary spending for household furnishings and clothing items no matter what currency these items are traded in,” he noted.

Hampered by rising unemployment rates, consumer confidence remained at historical lows in many major consumer economies, suggesting weak consumer spending likely would continue into the next year. Meanwhile, there was mounting evidence of deterioration in emerging economies, and growth estimates were being revised downward for developing countries originally believed capable of weathering the economic crisis. According to experts, it would be unusual to see the trend reversed over the near term.

Data from USDA’s December supply/demand report contained few, if any, surprises for industry observers. The department’s estimates for 2008-09 showed lower domestic mill use and exports compared to the previous month,

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Texas Brings Home National Title

By Brittni Drennan



L-R: Coach James Tabor and team members Trevor White, Corey Smith, Jordan Clem, and Heath Link accept their award.

Among 46 teams from all over the United States competing for a national title, four boys from New Home, Texas, were recognized as the best livestock judging team in the nation.

Jordan Clem, Heath Link, Corey Smith, and Trevor White were given top honors at the National FFA Livestock Judging contest held October 21-24, 2008, in Indianapolis, Ind. Trevor is the son of PCCA members Mike and Carol White. Mark and Georgia Clem, Jordan's parents, also are PCCA members. Both families farm near New Home, Texas.

"This is something these kids will always remember," said James Tabor, agriscience teacher at New Home High School and the team's coach. "When they look back, they will know they were the best in the nation!"

The livestock judging contest includes a series of six classes, two in each category of three live animal species- cattle, sheep and swine. The contestants grade each class from best to worst and give oral reasons explaining why each contestant placed the class accordingly. Individuals also take a written exam covering questions concerning livestock and poultry.

"It just proves that it doesn't matter where you come from," White said. "If you find something you're passionate about, nobody can stop you from achieving your goals. We've had a great ag teacher and county agent that have shown leadership and given us the tools we need to excel."

The team has been invited to compete in the international contest in Scotland in June

"It just proves that it doesn't matter where you come from. If you find something you're passionate about, nobody can stop you from achieving your goals."

The three highest individual scores on each judging team are added to comprise the team's total score. Three individuals on New Home's team placed in the top 10 which contributed to the team's success. White had the privilege of being named top high individual in the contest. Smith placed sixth, and Clem placed ninth overall.

2009. This experience provides a two-week-long educational tour of agriculture in several countries including England, France, Belgium and Germany, not to mention a chance to compete with the top judging teams in the world. However, the team has yet to reach its \$12,000 fundraising goal in order to pay for travel and contest expenses.

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District 10 Delegates Select Frank DeStefano to Fill PCCA Board Position

By Lynette Wilson

In November, South Texas PCCA members elected Frank DeStefano to represent District 10 on the cooperative's Board of Directors. He replaces the late Curtis Jensen.

Based in Mumford, Texas, DeStefano began selling his cotton through PCCA in 1997 and became a member of the South Texas Pool Committee in 2000. He was elected vice-chairman of the committee in 2005 and still holds the office today.

Involved in agriculture for more than 25 years, DeStefano began farming soon after he received a bachelor of business administration in Finance from Sam Houston State University in 1984. DeStefano and his brothers, David, Daniel, and Patrick, now own and operate 3-D Farms where they grow cotton, corn, soybeans, and grain sorghum, and raise cattle. DeStefano has been active in Texas Farm Bureau and is a member of the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Bryan, Texas.

DeStefano has been married to Katheryn for 22 years, their daughter Megan attends the University of Texas, and their son Sam attends Bryan High School.

"I was fortunate to have served on the South Texas Pool Committee with Curtis Jensen for the past eight years," DeStefano said. "I have so much respect for Curtis and what he stood for. He was a great spokesperson for PCCA. Although I know I cannot fill his shoes, I look forward to representing PCCA's District 10 to the best of my ability," he concluded. ☺





Celebrating COTTON'S *Past*



Photos and Story By Lynette Wilson

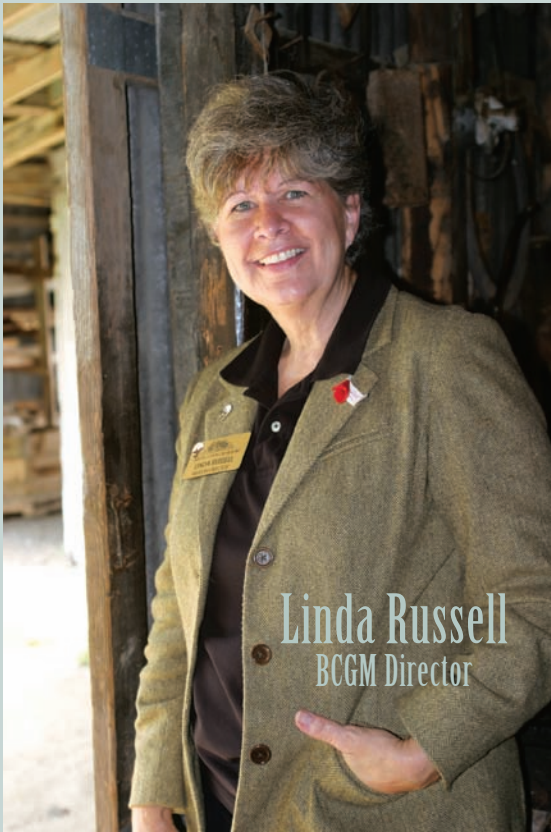
BURTON COTTON GIN MUSEUM

The aroma is a nostalgic combination of grandma's cellar, daddy's workshop, and the cool fall air when the wooden door creaks open at Burton Farmers Gin. The glow of pale yellow light bulbs and random rays of sunlight fall upon equipment from the turn of the century, allowing visitors to step back in time the moment they enter the historic gin.

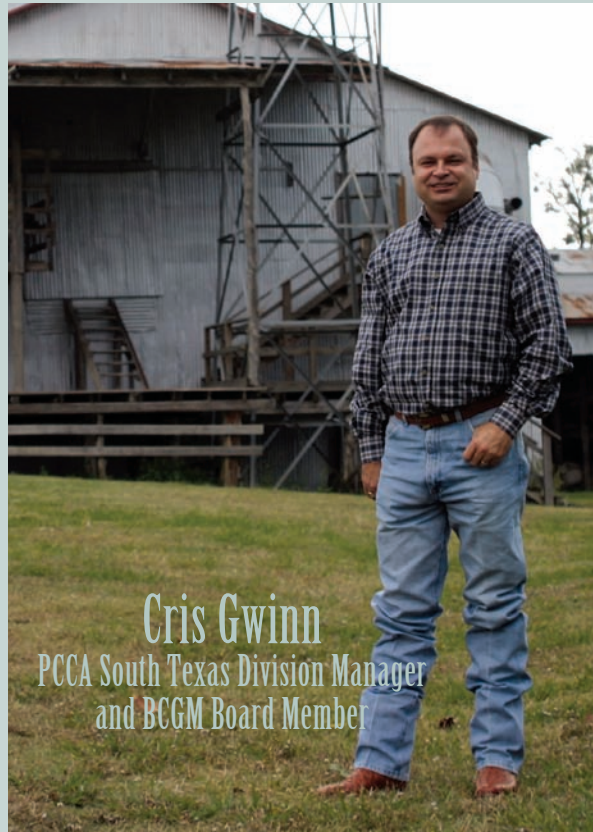
Built in 1914, the Burton Farmers Gin located in Burton, Texas, is the last operational turn-of-the-century air system gin in the United States on its initial site with its original equipment. Designed by the Lummus Cotton Gin Company, construction of the gin combined the skills of engineers, mechanics and carpenters to bring the machine design, plant layout, and wooden structure into industrial accord.

The cooperative gin served the farmers of the community for 60 years before a steady decrease of cotton plantings in the area eventually led to the plant's closure. The once busy cotton gin lay vacant from 1974 to 1986, but when developers took an interest in the property with intent

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Linda Russell
BCGM Director



Cris Gwinn
PCCA South Texas Division Manager
and BCGM Board Member

“So many people have absolutely no idea how important cotton is in their daily lives.”

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to build a strip mall, a group of local citizens formed an organization to save the gin. After several years of research and planning, restoration began in 1990.

Now the center of the Burton Cotton Gin and Museum (BCGM), guided tours of the facility are conducted year-round. The developer's “strip mall” resulted in nothing more than a laundromat and package store built adjacent to the gin. The BCGM eventually purchased that property as well, converting it into a cotton gift shop and museum.

Further down the road a bit, BCGM owns the Burton Cotton Warehouse. In addition to finished bales of cotton, the building now houses antique tractors, a 1951 IH cotton picker mounted on a Farmall H tractor and other cotton related farm equipment.

Linda Russell, the BCGM director, exhibits an unmatched passion and excitement for every inch of the historic property and each educational

tidbit it contains. She and Business Director Jerry Moore have big plans for the little museum.

“We currently have a few wonderful, but small, cotton and ginning exhibits and a nice gift shop near the gin,” Russell says. “However, we eventually hope to raise enough money to build a larger facility to showcase our growing number of historical items and have more room for large tour groups and meetings.”

A BCGM volunteer for 20 years and a paid employee for five, Russell is very knowledgeable about the cotton industry and the history of the Burton Farmers Gin. To explain how cotton was produced and ginned when Burton Farmers Gin opened in the early 1900s, Russell often dons vintage clothing to describe the difficult task of picking cotton by hand. Her enthusiasm is contagious, and guests are sure to leave with a new understanding of the cotton industry from past to present.

“So many people have absolutely no idea how important cotton is in their daily lives,” Russell explains. “There’s nothing more rewarding than seeing that ‘ah-ha!’ moment people have at some point during their visit to the museum or the gin.”

There most likely are many “ah-ha!” moments at BCGM as the gin attracts visitors from many walks of life, and tour groups range from individuals to large organizations. The Burton Farmers Gin has been designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its Bessemer diesel engine made BCGM eligible to be listed as one of only 250 National Mechanical Engineering Landmarks in the United States recognized by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Interestingly, the entire ginning system at the Burton Farmers Gin is mechanically driven by a single power source. A 1925

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“The story of cotton, and agriculture as a whole, involves everyone on a very personal level so it’s important to preserve the Burton Farmers Gin as a historical and cultural legacy for present and future generations.”



Information about BCGM can be accessed via its website at www.cottonginmuseum.org or by calling (979)289-3378. For special group tours or event tickets, the e-mail address is: burtoncottongin@earthlink.net.

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Bessemer diesel engine powers the ginning equipment through a line shaft, pulleys, and flat belting. This was a common arrangement for gins built during the first half of the twentieth century, but very few engines survived past 1970.

The 16-ton Bessemer Type IV oil engine is, by itself, a historical piece of equipment. Called "the Lady B", it is the largest operating internal combustion engine of this vintage in the southern United States, and possibly, the entire country. Dormant for more than 20 years, the engine had fallen into complete disrepair. Luckily, a Mount Vernon, Ohio, company was able to provide an original printing of the engine parts list, and the original drawings of the parts had survived on microfilm. Many companies donated components and services, and a group of dedicated volunteers worked on Saturdays for 14 months until the Bessemer diesel engine started up again on Feb. 29, 1992.

The Lady B is in operation each year during the third weekend in April when Burton Cotton Gin processes a single bale of cotton to be auctioned off during its Cotton Gin Festival. Since 1990, the Burton Cotton Gin Festival has celebrated cotton and the rich heritage of the Burton community. The three-day celebration is filled with parades, folk-life demonstrations, contests, tractor pulls, crafts, entertainment, and great food.

In addition to the Cotton Gin Festival, the BCGM hosts a Barn Dance and Gala each October. Proceeds from the two major fundraisers are used for the restoration, preservation and support of the gin museum.

The museum's small staff of two often is assisted by local volunteers and board members. A group of six retired men, affectionately called "the bollweevils", donate their time and expertise to keep the gin in working order. In addition, an active BCGM Board of Directors includes leaders from the Texas Cotton Ginners Association, the Lummus Corporation, a retired cotton farmer, and a wide range of others who are interested in the preservation of the historical gin and the educational opportunities it provides. Cris Gwinn, Plains Cotton Cooperative Association's South Texas Division manager, has served on the BCGM Board since January of 2008.

"It's an honor to serve on the board of such a meaningful institution," Gwinn says. "The story of cotton, and agriculture as a whole, involves everyone on a very personal level so it's important to preserve the Burton Farmers Gin as a historical and cultural legacy for present and future generations." 🍌



In Memory of Curtis Jensen

By John Johnson

Plains Cotton Cooperative Association lost a loyal member and devoted leader October 13 with the passing of long-time Director Curtis Jensen from Danevang, Texas.

Mr. Jensen served on PCCA's Executive Committee and Board of Directors since 1980. He was elected to represent District 10 on PCCA's Board in 1988 when it was re-organized to an 11-member board and was re-elected to another three-year term during the cooperative's annual stockholders meeting on September 17, 2008. He also served as chairman of PCCA's South Texas Division and the South Texas Marketing Pool Committee.

"I don't think anyone cared more about PCCA, its members and employees than Curtis," says PCCA Chairman Eddie Smith. "He generously contributed his time and talents to serve this cooperative, and his sense of humor helped all of us on the Board to keep things in perspective and he will be greatly missed. While Curtis served on our Board, PCCA experienced unprecedented growth, purchased the American Cotton

Growers denim mill, and offered innovative marketing options for our members including an Internet-based cotton trading system and pool marketing."

"Curtis was a man of extraordinary courage and good humor," says PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille. "He had a positive impact on virtually everyone he met."

Mr. Jensen also was active in his local community, serving on the Danevang Coop Board of Directors, the Wharton County ASCS Committee, the Advisory Board of the El Campo Production Credit Association, and the National Cotton Council. He also worked tirelessly on behalf of the Wharton County Youth Fair Board, the El Campo ISD Board of Directors, the Danevang Lutheran Church Board of Directors, the Danevang Lutheran Cemetery, and the El Campo Rotary Club.

Smith announced on December 17 PCCA will name its new boardroom in memory of Jensen. The announcement was made during PCCA's December Delegate Body meeting that was attended by Jensen's widow, Patty, and sons Brian and Carl. 🌱





L-R: Stephanie, Brian, Patty, and Carl Jensen with PCCA Chairman Eddie Smith and PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille. PCCA announced it will name the cooperative's new boardroom in honor of long-time Director Curtis Jensen. The announcement was made during the PCCA Delegate Body meeting on December 17.



*New Home's Livestock Judging team members:
L-R: Jordan Clem, Trevor White, Heath Link, and Corey Smith.*

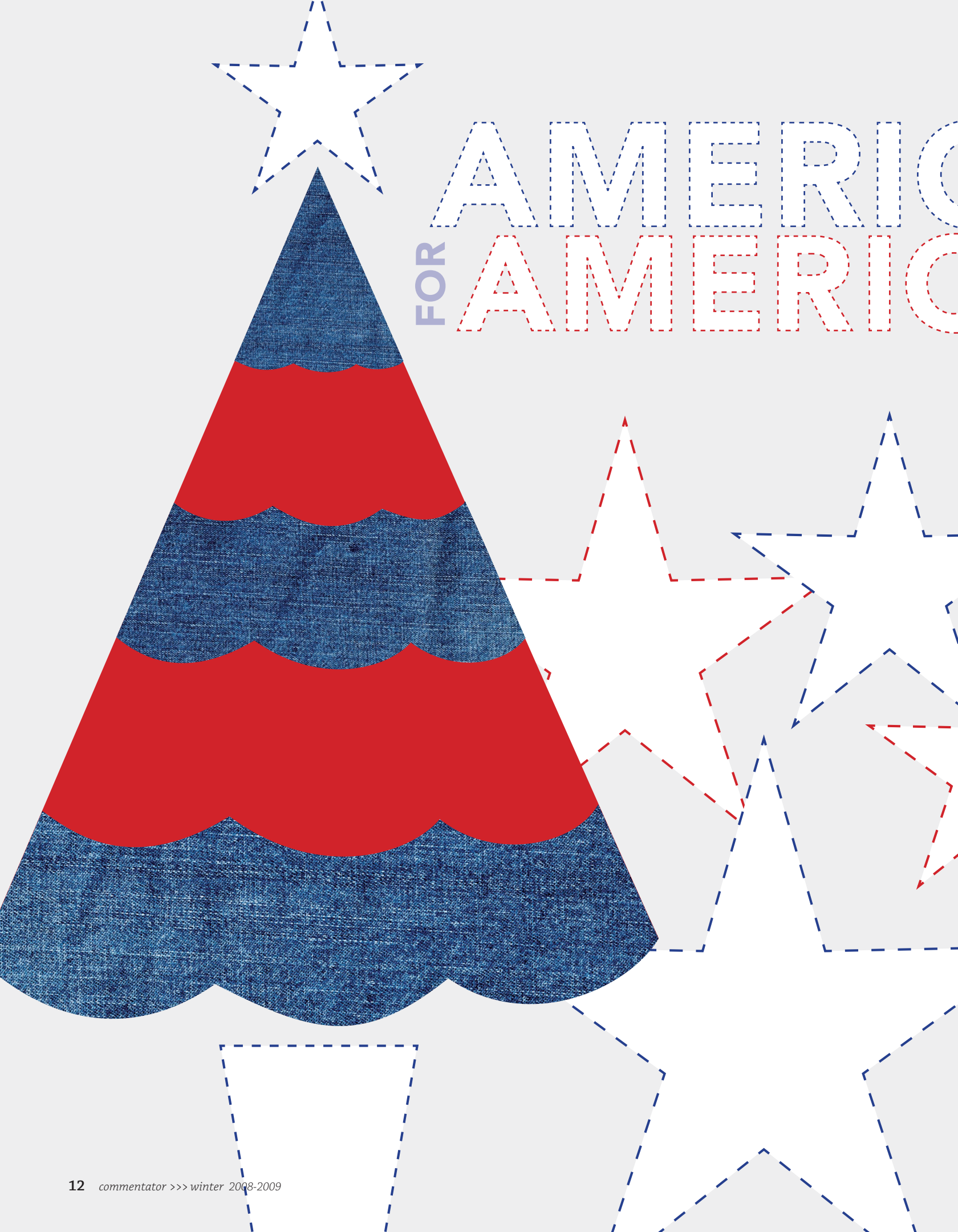
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"Winning nationals in an event like this has opened up a lot of doors for us in the agriculture industry," said Clem who is currently a freshman attending Redlands Community College in El Reno, Okla., on a judging scholarship. "It takes a lot of dedication to achieve the goals you have set, but if you want something bad enough you can do it."

"Just because we're from a small town doesn't mean we can't compete at a higher level."

White is a freshman at Texas Tech University, Smith is a freshman attending Clarendon College, both on judging scholarships, and Link is a junior at New Home High School. Tabor said the hardest part is mentally convincing students they can reach a higher level if they believe in themselves.

"Just because we're from a small town doesn't mean we can't compete at a higher level," he said. "I hope we can say that we've got a tradition here." Tabor said the team took the initiative and did what they knew had to be done, and he is very proud of what they have accomplished. 🍌



FOR AMERICA
AMERICA

AMERICAN DENIM AMERICAN HEROES

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EMMA MATKIN

The service men and women of the U.S. 8th Fighter Wing stationed at Kunsan Air Base in Korea received a special holiday surprise this Christmas.

The Lubbock Westminster Presbyterian Church, the Bernina Sewing Studio, and other hardworking volunteers in the Lubbock community and surrounding areas came together for a second year to make denim Christmas stockings for our heroes overseas.

Dona Nussbaum is one of the many volunteers who helped make this project possible. She said the project was set in motion in October 2007 when the mission committee of the church decided they wanted to do an episodic (short term) mission that would be intergenerational. Thoughts were tossed around and the committee came up with the idea of sending Christmas stockings to a military base in Korea.

Nussbaum said within three weeks, everyone joined together to make, stuff, and send 3,000 denim stockings to troops for Christmas morning.

"The thank you letters we received from the base were so rewarding and inspirational that we decided to do the project again this year," Nussbaum said.

Last year, American Cotton Growers (ACG), the Textile Division of PCCA, donated 100 yards of denim to make the stockings. For this year's project, ACG donated 200 yards which was enough to make 2,500 Christmas stockings.

Virginia Dorton has been a member of the Volunteer Center of Lubbock for the past two years and was involved in the Christmas stocking project last year. She explained that the project has been a community-wide effort.

"Last year we didn't know what to expect, but people just started showing up to help," Dorton said. "We had people from all ages up here helping and making sure the project was successful. It was uplifting to see the support we have from the community."

Dorton said this year, when the committee decided to do the project again, all of the volunteers started working on the stockings well before December.

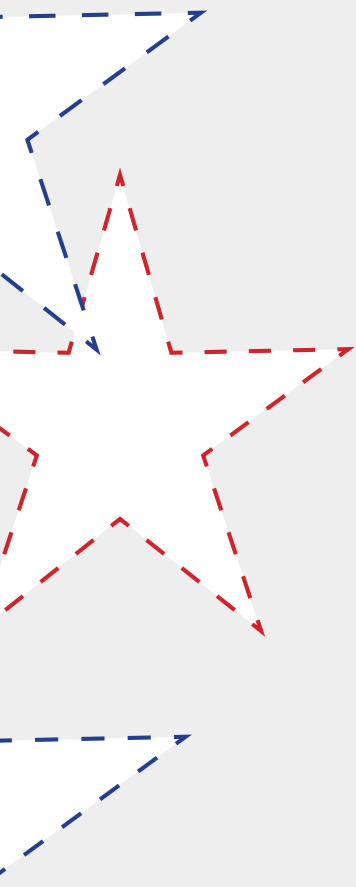
Nussbaum said the committee reached out to the community through the newspaper and asked for items to use in decorating the stockings and they received a great response. The volunteers spent every Wednesday night in May cutting out patterns and bagging the un-sewn stockings into packages of 25 along with 25 pieces of white fur for each of the cuffs. Volunteers then took the packages home and sewed the stockings together.

Sylvia Heinrich is a member and a volunteer from the church and was in charge of making sure all of the stockings were sewn.

"Many people were very creative with their stockings, and each one has a special uniqueness," Heinrich said. "The great thing about the stocking project is that it expanded beyond the church."

There is a variety of sewing styles in all of the stockings, because so many different people and organizations contributed to the sewing project. Heinrich said the Bernina Sewing Studio was very creative and very helpful in sewing the Christmas stockings. As part of their

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occupational therapy, people in assisted living volunteered to sew and decorate stockings as well. Sewing volunteers stretched even as far as Amarillo and many communities in between.

"I knew if God was directing it, everything would all work out," Heinrich said. "We prayed over it, and things just began to fall into place in such a way that we knew He was in control of it all."

National Family Volunteer Day was held November 22, and all across the country families were kicking off the holiday season by stepping out into the community and volunteering for a special cause. The Volunteer Center of Lubbock hosted its family day at the Westminster Presbyterian Church so families could take part in preparing the Christmas stockings for our soldiers.

The church's entire Family Ministry Center was neatly organized with tables stocked with supplies to fill each stocking. There were tubs of assorted candy, many different types of CDs, DVDs, cassette tapes, personal care items, comic

books and puzzles, and many promotional items from local companies. Christmas cards were prepared with handwritten messages of thanks and words of encouragement. Additionally, inside each card was a letter of thanks and best wishes from State Representative Carl Isett, Lubbock Mayor Tom Martin, Congressman Randy Neugebauer, and U.S. Senator John Cornyn. A small card with the "Texas Style" Ten Commandments was placed in the Christmas cards, and a decorated list with many of the contributors' names and businesses also was included.

Nussbaum said the stocking project is very rewarding because "you realize you really did make a difference in someone's life on a day when they might be particularly lonely."

"If it just ministers to one of our military people, it is worth all of the effort," Heinrich said. "They are overseas during the holidays, and it's important that we remember them because they are doing such important work for all of us." ☺



Above: Dona Nussbaum

Right: Volunteers at the Presbyterian Church

"There is a variety of sewing styles in all of the stockings because so many different people and organizations contributed to the sewing project."





Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Program

By Brittni Drennan

Grady Martin, PCCA's director of sales, was recently recognized for his leadership in the agriculture industry by being selected to the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) program.

TALL is a two-year program in which a diverse group of class members gain a better understanding of Texas agriculture through intensive training, seminars, tours, discussions, and guest speakers involved in all aspects of the industry. Class members will travel all over the state of Texas learning about key political issues, the legislative process, and how society depends on agriculture. Members also will meet more than 2,000 active leaders at the local, state, national and international levels.

"TALL helps broaden our horizons, and it helps us see what really happens in other areas of the agriculture industry," Martin said. "With a higher understanding of how one aspect of the industry affects another, we can be better ambassadors for agriculture."

About 25 class members are selected from about 300 applicants for each class based on their application, interview and recommendations. An applicant also can be nominated by a previous class member. John Johnson, PCCA's communications director, is a 1989 graduate from the first class, and PCCA's Grower Services Director Charley Triplett graduated from the tenth class.

With about 257 alumni and 10 graduated classes since 1989, the program positively impacts the agriculture industry and society as a whole. Alumni are more involved in their communities and state because they have a more in-depth perspective of critical issues facing our industry today. 🌱



Grady Martin

"TALL helps broaden our horizons, and it helps us see what really happens in other areas of the agriculture industry. With a higher understanding of how one aspect of the industry affects another, we can be better ambassadors for agriculture."

LOCAL CHAMBER INDUCTS PCCA INTO HALL OF FAME

BY JOHN JOHNSON



L-R: PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille and PCCA Chairman Eddie Smith display the plaque awarded to the cooperative by the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce. Photo by Lynette Wilson

Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA) was inducted into the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce's Business Hall of Fame during the organization's annual meeting December 2 in Lubbock. PCCA is the first agribusiness in Lubbock to receive the honor.

PCCA was recognized for its leadership in the world cotton industry, its support of the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, and its economic impact on the Lubbock community.

"PCCA markets cotton produced throughout most of Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas for its 25,000 stockholders, accounting for almost 30 percent of the entire U.S. cotton crop annually," said Chamber Chairman Gary Gregory. "In the past five years, PCCA has distributed additional, value-added cash payments to its members totaling \$133 million," Gregory noted. "Much of this money, along with the proceeds from the sale of members' cotton, flows through the Lubbock economy each year."

"Induction into the Lubbock Chamber's Business Hall of Fame is a tremendous honor," said PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille. "It is a direct result of the foresight, dedication and commitment of the many leaders of this cooperative throughout its history." 🌱

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resulting in higher ending stocks. Production was raised slightly.

Domestic mill use was reduced 100,000 bales, reflecting a marginal decline from the level of recent months. Exports were reduced 750,000 bales as sharply lower world consumption is expected to limit demand for U.S. cotton. Accordingly, ending stocks were raised almost 15 percent from last month to 7.1 million bales.

World numbers included lower cotton production, consumption, and trade. USDA reduced its world production estimate 1.4 million bales from its November figure as lower production for India, Brazil, Egypt and others was partially offset by an increase in Pakistan. World consumption was sharply reduced for the second consecutive month as deteriorating economic conditions continued to fade demand prospects. Consumption was lowered 2.7 million bales to 116.6 million with China, India, Pakistan and Turkey accounting for most of the decline. The revised world consumption estimate was 5.5 percent lower than 2007-08 which is the largest year-to-year percentage reduction since 1943-44.

Consistent with lower world consumption, USDA lowered world trade by seven percent in its December report due mainly to lower imports by China, Pakistan, and Turkey. India, the United States, and Uzbekistan account for



"IT MIGHT TAKE A WHILE, BUT I'M OPTIMISTIC THAT THE COTTON MARKET WILL TURN AROUND."

most of the reduction in world exports. World stocks were raised 2.4 percent, but still are 2.6 million bales below the beginning level.

As the 2008-09 cotton harvest season neared an end, the market outlook slowly shifted to the 2009-10 crop. Many in the industry said the outlook for cotton appeared grim as the global market continued to contend with a more than ample supply and a worsening economic situation that threatened to undermine retail sales. Reduced acreage, competition from other crops with better profit margins and higher production costs also would affect how much cotton farmers will plant in 2009. The cotton market as a whole had left some producers "shell shocked" as volatility during the past year had been the rule and not the exception.

"I think the keys to cotton's rebound in 2009-10 will be a smaller number of planted acres in the United States, the resurrection of the global economy, and a resurgence in cotton demand," Winters explained. "It might take a while, but I'm optimistic that the cotton market will turn around," he concluded. 🌱





A Family Tradition

By Mica Graybill



In December, the Bingham Family performed a Christmas concert for PCCA employees. Back row, L-R: Savannah, Betty, Cliff, Emilee, Daniel, and Blake. Front row, L-R: Sierra, Brianna, Marissa, and Nathan

The employees of Plains Cotton Cooperative Association enjoyed a concert of Christmas carols on December 19 performed by eight members of the Bingham family from Meadow, Texas.

Cliff Bingham, a member of Meadow Coop Gin and PCCA, grew up in a farming family with strong ties to Meadow Coop Gin. Cliff graduated from Texas Tech University with a business degree, and he and his father farm 3,000 acres of organic cotton, peanuts, sesame and other crops. The Bingham family also grows organic grapes on a 50-acre vineyard.

Cliff and his wife, Betty, have had a passion for music for as long as they can remember. Cliff has played the piano since he was a child, and Betty also enjoys playing the piano and singing. As their children got older, Cliff and Betty wanted to instill their love for music in their children.

"We began teaching our children to play instruments when our oldest was about 13," Cliff said. "Our youngest daughter started playing the violin when she was four."

The Bingham children had always been exposed to the piano growing up, but when the oldest children got into their early teenage years, they expressed a great interest to their parents for expanding their musical talents. With younger children at home to care for, Betty said she did not have the time to take them to

lessons on a weekly basis. Cliff took it upon himself to take one day a week from his busy work schedule to chauffeur the children back and forth to music lessons.

The Bingham children began playing instruments as a hobby and later began playing with the Lubbock Youth Symphony Orchestra (LYSO). The Bingham family has been playing with the orchestra for seven years.

Over the years, the Bingham children have taken lessons from many great music teachers throughout the Lubbock area. They have taken lessons from professors in the music departments at Texas Tech University and South Plains College (SPC) in Levelland, Texas. Several of the children also took a bluegrass class at SPC where they learned to play the harmonica and banjo.

Aside from the LYSO, the Bingham children play at other events including weddings, church programs, and the Mother-Daughter Banquet hosted by the Calvary Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas. To prepare for events throughout the year, the talented young musicians practice five days a week. The children practice at least one hour a day by themselves, and the older children often practice for two or three hours. Some days, the family works together and practices as a group.

"Some people say we have enough kids to make a football team," Cliff said. "I tell them,

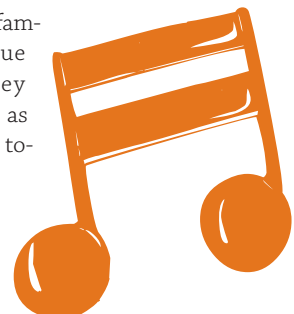
'No, we have enough to make an orchestra.'"

Cliff and Betty have homeschooled each of their 11 children. The flexibility of their school schedule allows the children to help on the farm when needed. According to Cliff, his children also help tremendously with the family vineyard, putting forth time and effort to help care for the grapes.

In order for their organic crops to stay within organic guidelines, Cliff can only use organic pesticides and herbicides as opposed to synthetic. He uses compost to fertilize the crops, and he sprays sulfur on the grapes to keep powdery mildew from damaging the crop. Aside from his own vineyard, Cliff will be busy planting three other 22-acre vineyards in the next year to help three of his oldest children get started in the family business. Dan Jackson, the manager at Meadow Coop Gin, regularly does business with the family.

"The Bingham family are some of the nicest people you'll ever meet," said Jackson. "They're great farmers, good business people and wonderful parents."

The talented Bingham family is an example of true harmony, whether they are playing instruments as an orchestra or working together on the farm. 🎵





New to the Board of Directors

By Brittini Drennan

Billy Eggemeyer of Midkiff, Texas, was elected to PCCA's Board of Directors to represent District 9 during the cooperative's 55th Annual Stockholders Meeting held September 17, 2008.

Eggemeyer graduated from Rankin High School in 1973. Just a year and a half later, he began farming and currently raises cotton, corn, milo or wheat in a joint-venture with his wife, Diane. They have raised four children and have one grandchild.

During his 33-year tenure as a PCCA member, Eggemeyer has been on the Midkiff Farmers Cooperative Gin Board of Directors for 22 years and has served as the board's president. He also has served as a director of St. Lawrence Cotton Growers.

Outside of his active roles in agriculture, Eggemeyer is very involved in his community. He has been a volunteer firefighter, a 4-H club leader, a little league coach, and is active in his church. Eggemeyer has been president of the Rankin School Board and director of Eden State Bank.

Eggemeyer replaces Wendell Jones of St. Lawrence, Texas, who recently retired from the board. Jones was an integral member of PCCA, serving on the association's Board of Directors for almost 20 years. He also served on the West Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas Marketing Pool Committee and the PCCA Delegate Body since 1987. 🌱



Communication is Key

BY EMMA MATKIN



photo courtesy of the Cotton Board

Bob Stanley

A West Texas native has been hired as the new Southwest Regional Communication Manager for the Memphis-based Cotton Board.

Having grown up on a cotton farm, Bob Stanley has always had a love for the industry. He graduated high school in Lorenzo, Texas, and joined the U.S. Army. After a tour of duty in Vietnam, he started his college education at Texas Tech University. Stanley received a bachelor's degree in Mechanized Agriculture with an emphasis on Agribusiness Management in 1976. He has lived in the Lubbock area ever since he graduated from Tech.

"I am very fortunate to live in West Texas because this is the heart of the cotton business right now," Stanley said proudly. Stanley also said he has enjoyed raising his family here and being in the cotton business. For the past 30 years, most of his career activities have been selling and building cotton gins all over the United States.

"I have really been privileged and fortunate to be involved in the sale and construction of some of the nicest and newest cotton gins that have been built in this part of the world," he said.

Stanley was vice president of sales and marketing for Lummus Corporation where he managed a broad range of assignments from direct sales of new cotton gins to training and management of field sales staff.

"I always knew I wanted to get more involved in the cotton industry," Stanley said. "As the new Southwest Regional Communication Manager, this is my chance to give back something and try to help keep our industry viable."

Stanley started his new job November 17, 2008, and is in the middle of an intensive orientation process. Three other Regional Communication Managers were hired along with Stanley to represent the other regions of the U.S. Cotton Belt. The four managers spent a week in Memphis becoming familiar with the inner-workings of the Cotton Board.

In a recent news release, the new president and chief executive officer of the Cotton Board, Drayton Mayers, explained that the former Field Services positions have been renamed as the Regional Communication Managers to more accurately reflect what their position entails. The new managers will be communicating the activities and achievements of the Cotton Research & Promotion Program to their audiences through a wide range of methods including speaking roles at key industry meetings and events.

"The Cotton Board wants to continue to do a good job and increase communications toward producers," Stanley said. "It will be my job to travel southern Kansas, all of Oklahoma, and most of Texas communicating with the producers, ginner and explaining to them how Cotton Incorporated maximizes their assessments to increase the demand for and profitability of cotton."

Stanley said the thing he will like most about the new position is that he will continue to be actively involved with his friends that are growing and ginning cotton.

"I will be associated with the people I have been working with for years in the gin machinery business," he said.

Stanley is also excited about getting to organize tour groups for the Cotton Incorporated headquarters in Cary, North Carolina. He will be taking groups of producers

every year from the southwest region so they are able to see first-hand what is going on at Cotton Incorporated.

The Regional Communication Managers will report to Brad Robb, vice president of communications and supported by his department as well as other departments within the Cotton Board. Robb said he received a number of very qualified candidate resumes with very tenured levels of cotton industry experience.

"The wealth of experience Bob holds in the industry was the first reason I flagged his resume," Robb said. "When I met Bob and saw the way he carried himself and exhibited a true passion for agriculture, I knew I had to pull him into the Cotton Board's home office in Memphis to be reviewed by the Cotton Board senior staff."

Robb said the candidates were asked to give a short presentation on the Cotton Research & Promotion Program. He said Bob's presentation was very impressive and his ability to transfer information was evident.

"It's a true pleasure having someone with Bob's experience and strong communications skills on my staff," Robb said. "He will represent the Cotton Research & Promotion Program very well to those he will call on in the High Plains of Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma."

Stanley said his greatest accomplishment has been raising a family and maintaining business integrity throughout the years. He intends to spend the remainder of his cotton career trying to help promote the U.S. cotton industry.

"When times get tough, we need to remember how important it is to continue to spend money on research and promotion activities," Stanley said. "We have got to continue to build markets for our outstanding U.S. cotton." 🌱

"I always knew I wanted to get more involved in the cotton industry," Stanley said. "As the new Southwest Regional Communication Manager, this is my chance to give back something and try to help keep our industry viable."



Cotton Pickings

NEW DELEGATE BODY REPRESENTATIVES AS OF DECEMBER 17, 2008

Michael Barosh	Danevang
Kenneth Buerger	Ericksdahl
Zeferino Saucedo	Grassland
Everett Williams	Lakeview Farmers
Terry Galle	Lyford
Bruce Vaughn	O'Donnell
Bryan Bishop	United Farm Industries

NEW GIN MANAGERS

Brian Thompson	Spur
Jeff Camp	Tri-County Dodson



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