



COMMENTATOR

PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION >>>>>>>>> SPRING 2010



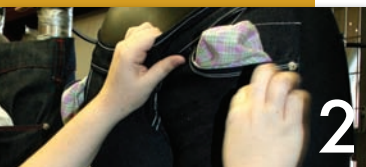
GREAT EXPECTATIONS

WITHSTANDING WINDY WEATHER

DENIM IS WALKING THE FASHION RUNWAY

COMMENTATOR

VOLUME 43, NO 1 >>>> SPRING 2010



Denim is Walking the Fashion Runway



Withstanding Windy Weather



A Lasting Trend



Discovering America

In other news...

- 1 Great Expectations
- 4 Darneille Elected to Lead Cotton Council International
- 5 TACC Honors Ginner of the Year
- 5 TCGA Ginner of the Year
- 14 Smith Elected to Lead National Cotton Council in 2010
- 15 Texas Tech Students Honored
- 16 PCCA Reaches Out to Young Producers
- 17 TCGA Names Jerry Multer as 2010 President
- 18 Cotton Pickings

visit us online at www.pcca.com

On the cover...

"Racing the storm." On his minimal tillage farm near Slide, Texas, Zach Walker rushes to get his cotton planted before rains from a spring thunderstorm begin.

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EDDIE SMITH - Chairman
Floydada, Tx.; District 4

DAVID PEARSON - Vice Chairman
O'Donnell, Tx.; District 7

ROBBIE ROBBINS
Altus, Ok.; District 1

RILEY TRUE
United Farm Ind., Tx.; District 2

LEXIE FENNELL
Springlake-Earth, Tx.; District 3

CHARLES MACHA
Levelland, Tx.; District 5

DEAN VARDEMAN
Lubbock, Tx.; District 6

LARRY WILLIAMS
Roscoe, Tx.; District 8

BILLY EGGEMEYER
Midkiff, Tx.; District 9

FRANK DeSTEFANO
Mumford, Tx.; District 10

STEVE BAUER
La Feria, Tx.; District 11

MANAGEMENT

WALLY DARNEILLE
President & CEO

DEAN CHURCH
Vice President - Grower Services

BRYAN GREGORY
Vice President - Textile Manufacturing

SAM HILL
Vice President - Finance

STAN KIRBY
Vice President - TELMARK, Inc.

JACK MATHEWS
Vice President -
Fabric Sales & Product Development

JIM TAYLOR
Vice President -
Administration & Human Resources

JOE TUBB
Vice President - Information Systems

LONNIE WINTERS
Vice President - Marketing

JOHN JOHNSON
Director - Public & Legislative Affairs

LYNETTE WILSON
Editor



Great Expectations

2010-11 COTTON OUTLOOK OPTIMISTIC

PHOTOS AND STORY BY LYNETTE WILSON

Near perfect weather and beneficial rainfall have set the stage for a potentially incredible 2010-2011 cotton crop in most of Plains Cotton Cooperative Association's marketing area. At the end of May, farmers said pre-plant moisture levels in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas were better than many had seen in generations.

The air was filled with optimism as planting was progressing smoothly by the last week of May, and the amount of acreage dedicated to cotton was expected to increase in all three states. At the same time, cotton plants already were thriving in South Texas where producers looked forward to a "phenomenal" crop after several years of drought and lower than expected yields.

Although conditions in some areas of the U.S. Cotton Belt were not as ideal, USDA still expected U.S. cotton production to increase this season. The department projected a 16.7 million-bale U.S. crop for 2010-2011, based on its March 31 Prospective Plantings report, a seven-percent

abandonment rate, and a projected yield of 815 pounds per harvested acre.

On the supply side, USDA predicted U.S. cotton exports will rise to 13.5 million bales in the upcoming year as foreign demand is expected to outpace supply. Ending stocks were projected at 3 million bales, the lowest since 1995-96.

Although the department projects world cotton production to rise almost 11 million bales in 2010-11, world cotton supplies will increase less than one percent from last season. An anticipated increase in world consumption, coupled with a decline in ending stocks, resulted in an expected stocks-to-use ratio of 42 percent, the lowest since 1994-95.

"World cotton stocks continued to decrease in 2009-10, and the amount of cotton expected to be planted this year probably will not produce enough to meet world needs," Wally Darneille, PCCA's President and CEO explained. "The bottom line is that global demand for cotton is

continued on page 4...

DENIM

is Walking the Fashion Runway

By Mica Graybill | Photos by Emma Matkin

PCCA, in collaboration with Texas Tech University and Cotton Council International (CCI), recently sponsored a local competition that will help send two Tech students on their way to fulfilling a career in the fashion industry.

Based on the Lifetime reality TV series “Project Runway,” Denim Runway was a similar contest created for students to put their design skills to the ultimate test. Twenty-six students studying apparel design and manufacturing at Tech had the opportunity to make a dream come true.

Students in the apparel design and manufacturing course at Tech created a pair of jeans from denim provided by ACG in Littlefield, Texas, to submit for the contest. This course teaches students how to work with a variety of materials, textures and techniques.

The winners with the top men’s and women’s designs traveled to Guatemala and toured Denimatrix to see how denim is made into high fashion jeans for name brand companies such as Abercrombie & Fitch. The winning students also met some top designers and networked with other people in the industry. Students in the class say this is a goal that many of them strive to achieve.

CCI, co-sponsor of the competition, also contributed a trip for the winners to travel to the ColombiaModa Apparel Sourcing Show, the most important fashion trade show in Colombia.

John Johnson, PCCA’s director of public and legislative affairs, and Emma Matkin, PCCA’s communications specialist, helped coordinate Denim Runway.

“When we started this project, I really did not think it was going to be anything like what

it became,” Matkin said. “Denim Runway escalated into a project that is a once in a lifetime opportunity for students.”

PCCA first contacted Interim Chair and Associate Professor Dr. Cherif Amor from the Department of Design at Tech. Dr. Amor said he knew from the beginning that partnering with PCCA would be a positive opportunity.

“The first time I spoke with PCCA and was shown the denim approach and their importance of being green and sustainable, I knew this was a group with which we could become partners,” Dr. Amor said. “We have the same ideas and goals in terms of how we can better take care of the environment by being green and sustainable.”

Amor said that working with PCCA and CCI has helped bridge the gap for students between theory and practice. Students had the opportunity to take part in a hands-on project that will prepare them for their professional lives.

“Creating an assignment that students like is very attractive,” Amor said. “I saw energy and enthusiasm from the students who are involved in the project, and it helps them attain the target goals that they have set for themselves.”

Apparel Design and Manufacturing instructor Laura Haynie also agreed that there was much excitement about the contest by students in the department.

“Each of the designs were wildly different,” Haynie said. “There was tremendous excitement shown from the students, and every individual designer was out to win the ultimate prize.”

Haynie believes that the students involved with the contest had the advantage of learning about professional construction and techniques that can be carried with them outside

of the classroom.

The students put many hours into developing their designs and creating the jeans. After they had sewn and constructed their designs, they had the opportunity to travel to ACG to finish their garments. Demonstrations of certain finishing techniques were presented to the students. They then used the equipment to add destruction, rivets, and buttons to their designs. According to Johnson, many of the students had never been to a textile mill and asked to be taken on a tour of ACG while they were there.

“The students got to use equipment that they have never used before in creating apparel,” Johnson said. “They found it fascinating to see how fashion denim is created.”

A panel of judges selected the winning designs on April 19, and the winners were announced April 24 at the department’s TechStyle Fashion Show at Tech’s Allen Theatre. Junior Stephanie Hartwig was named for her winning pair of men’s jeans, and Senior Becca Pierce’s jeans won in the women’s jeans division.

“This is such an honor,” Pierce said. “But as excited as I am, I can’t accept the honor without recognizing all my peers who competed in this project. It was a tough competition, and I’m truly overwhelmed.”

Through this process, it seemed to be a unanimous opinion among all involved that everyone would like to see Denim Runway continue.

“We have thoroughly enjoyed being partners with PCCA in this experience,” Amor said. “We value and admire our relationship with PCCA, and hope to see more of Denim Runway in years to come.” 🍋



Left and Above, Stephanie Hartwig won the men's jean competition. PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille presented her award.



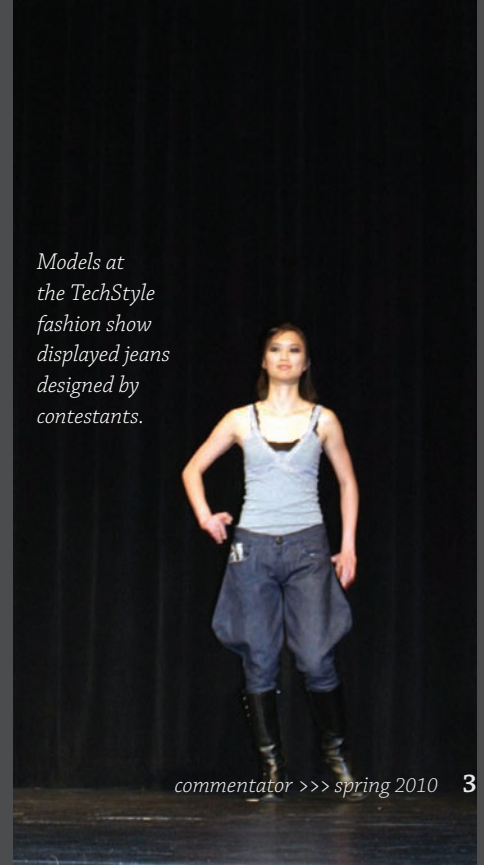
A Denim Runway contestant prepares to use a sanding technique to distress her jeans for the contest.



Above and Right: Becca Pierce captured the top honor in the women's jean category.



ACG Product Development Manager Larry Lundberg explains washing techniques to Denim Runway contestants.



Models at the TechStyle fashion show displayed jeans designed by contestants.



Wally Darneille

DARNEILLE ELECTED TO LEAD COTTON COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL By Mica Graybill

PCCA President and CEO Wally Darneille has been chosen to lead Cotton Council International in 2010. He was elected to lead CCI as its president during NCC's 72nd annual meeting in Memphis, Tenn.

CCI is the National Cotton Council's export promotions branch and oversees programs in more than 50 countries under the Cotton USA trademark. Cotton USA promotes U.S. cotton fiber and manufactured cotton products in markets around the world.

Darneille graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College in 1973 and graduated summa cum laude with an MBA from Auburn University of Montgomery in 1978. In 1975, he attended Murdoch's International Cotton School in Memphis, Tenn.

Darneille came to Lubbock to serve as president of PCCA in 2004. Prior to that, he had served 30-years in the cotton industry.

Darneille also serves on the boards of NCC, Amcot, TELMARK, the Southwest Council of Agribusiness, the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council, Denimatrix and The Seam. He also served as chairman of the National Council of Textile Organizations. He has served two terms on the American Cotton Shippers' Association Board of Directors, and he was the first American elected to full membership on the Liverpool Cotton Association's Board of Directors. He previously served as a member of various CCI delegations promoting U.S. cotton in export markets. Darneille currently is vice president of the World Cotton Exporters Association.

PCCA's Board Chairman Eddie Smith says Darneille's election will offer a higher level of coordination and cooperation on behalf of the U.S. cotton industry.

"We are able to communicate and make sure we are on the same page about all of the different challenges that the cotton industry faces," Smith said. "We have a unique relationship in the respect that we can talk about issues that affect CCI and the NCC." Smith feels that Darneille's previous experience in the cotton industry serves as an advantage as he leads the CCI as president.

"Wally brings a lot to the table," Smith said. "He has a lot of relationships that are vital to that organization which is key to being successful at communicating with individuals about issues that the cotton industry will be facing," Smith said. 🌱



Great Expectations continued from page 1...

steadily outgrowing supply. The hope is that market prices will continue to draw on support from expected tight inventories. Barring an unforeseen economic jolt, we should see good prices continuing through 2010 and into 2011," he said.

Into the next year, many expect an ongoing steady-to-solid demand for cotton. Global mill use rebounded faster and stronger than expected after a sharp drop in 2008-09 caused by the global financial and economic crisis. Although many economists believe the global recession is over, other market influences, including euro-zone debt issues, came to light this spring. The situation generated worries about the economy and also boosted the U.S. dollar, both of which normally hurt commodity prices.

"Weaker equities tend to hurt confidence in the economy and thus cotton demand while a stronger dollar makes commodities generally more expensive in other currencies," a trader explained.

"The fragility of the world economic system is worrisome," Darneille said. "There are many different factors out there that could affect both the price of cotton and the continued demand in the upcoming year."

Despite the possibility of global economic issues, cotton's news and fundamentals still were very supportive in the spring of 2010, and the outlook for the upcoming season was equally so. Cotton producers and the industry as a whole were looking forward to the 2010-11 season with great expectations. 🌱

<<< With almost all of his cotton acreage planted by late May, farmer Donald Rhoads of Ropesville, Texas, gauges the seed depth of his planter as he begins work in a new field.



Left to Right: TACC Executive Vice President Tommy Engelke, Tom and Patsy Byars.

TACC Honors Ginner of the Year

By Amy Dromgoole

After displaying a great amount of leadership and service, Tom Byars, gin manager at Lockney Coop Gin, was recognized as Ginner of the Year at the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council (TACC) annual meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas.

The Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council is a voluntary, statewide association whose purpose is to serve as a collective voice for all cooperative activities in the state. TACC recognizes its exceptional members who exhibit leadership skills and offer guidance to the organization.

After growing up in Enochs, Texas, Byars began his lifelong commitment to agriculture and the ginning industry.

an appreciation of the demands on farmers and ranchers," Gail Kring, President of TACC said.

After achieving the rank of sergeant in the military and serving in Germany, Byars ventured back to West Texas to attend college in Levelland and obtained his first job working on the construction of the coop gin in Enochs.

He continued his work with numerous cotton gins including Beck Gin Company, and Welch Farmers Gin before running his own gin and raising a family with his wife Patsy in Seminole, Texas.

While in Seminole, Byars also was active with the Chamber of Commerce, served on the school board and served as president of the ag

boosters club.

Word spread and Byars was called to Mexico to manage over 15 gins and built two gins in Africa.

"He took on the assignment as he always has with an open mind, high efficiency standards and a commitment to see it through," Kring said of Byars' Africa project.

Byars has been manager at the Lockney Coop Gin since 2005 and has successfully implemented his management skills and knowledge in order to accurately serve producers in an efficient way.

He also remains an active member of his community by being a member of the VFW in Lockney and the Masons in Plainview, Texas.

Nonetheless, Byars has dedicated a considerable amount of time bettering the cotton industry all over the world and is highly deserving of this prestigious award. 🍷

TCGA

Ginner of the Year

By: Emma Matkin

Dennis Flowers, general manager of Sudan Farmers Cooperative Gin in Sudan, Texas, comes from a long line of gin managers, and after 33 years in the business, he was named the 2010 Texas Cotton Ginners Association's (TCGA) "Ginner of the Year."

TCGA represents the cotton ginning industry and is a leader regarding numerous legislative and regulatory issues. Research and education to improve gin work environment are other high priorities for TCGA. Each year, TCGA awards this prominent honor to an outstanding member.

"I am very honored to accept this prestigious award," Flowers said. "This really does mean a lot to me, and I am so happy to have earned it."

After graduating from high school, Flowers went straight into the ginning business at Sudan Farmers Cooperative and never left. He started out as a ginner in 1977, then took

on the job as plant manager. He was then promoted to gin manager, and for the past seven years, Flowers has been the general manager. "I started from the bottom and just worked my way up," Flowers said.

Flowers followed his grandfather's and father's footsteps in the cotton ginning business. His grandfather was the manager at Associated Cotton Growers in Crosbyton, Texas, and Flowers' father was the general manager at Sudan Farmers Cooperative. For about 25 years, Flowers had the privilege of working side by side with his father.

Flowers' father passed away this year which made receiving the Ginner of the Year award even more emotional

"It was pretty emotional receiving this award," Flowers said. "I would have liked to have had my dad there."



Dennis Flowers

Flowers' son, Garrett, is now the manager at Spade Coop Gin in Spade, Texas, making the Flowers' family a four generation legacy in the cotton ginning industry. This family tradition is something that Flowers cherishes.

"For some people, ginning just gets in your blood, and it's hard to get out," Flowers said.

Flowers' wife of 31 years, Kelli, his daughter, Tiffany, who is a kindergarten teacher in Littlefield, Texas, and his son, Garrett, were present at the TCGA awards banquet to see Flowers receive his well-earned award. 🍷



For decades, wind has caused harmful effects on cotton plants, often resulting in extreme damage and even death to the plant. This sandblasting condition sometimes can result in entire crops being completely destroyed.

By Mica Graybill | Photos by Lynette Wilson

In these cases, farmers may have to replant entire fields of cotton, impacting farming operations financially. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has been conducting USDA research in hopes of finding cotton varieties that may be more resistant to this type of damage.

The Agricultural Research Service is the principal scientific research group in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Based in Lubbock, Texas, the ARS Wind Erosion and Water Conservation Research Unit studies the effects of wind sandblasting on stems, leaves, and plant roots. The research unit has laboratory wind tunnels where researchers can investigate different wind speeds, duration of sand blasting events, and the resulting effects on plants. The ARS began the current wind sandblasting research program in 2004.

Wind sandblasting occurs when wind passes over bare soil. Strong winds with high velocity often can pick up small particles of soil and blast them into cotton plants. These tiny particles can impact young plants, damaging leaves and stems. When sand abrasion occurs, plant cells are ruptured and the contents of the cells, including water, seep out of the plant. Sand abrasion also can damage the plant stem which can kill the plant outright.

According to Dr. Jeffrey Baker, a plant physiologist at the ARS, this type of sandblasting damage usually occurs in the spring. Three conditions are occurring at this time: there are periods of high winds; farmers have plowed their fields for planting and the fields are nearly bare; and the emerged cotton plants are young, tender, and close to the ground.

Baker's research studies the effects of environmental variables on crop plants, especially variables that cause plant stress such as lack of water or nutrients and other factors such as heat and cold.

He and other researchers at the ARS blasted seedlings with sand-laden 30-mile-per-hour wind. They studied the effects immediately and again after two and four weeks. They found that over the first two weeks the seedlings shifted their growth from root and leaf growth to repair and growth of injured stems. After four weeks, plant growth had returned to its state prior to the sand blasting.

According to Baker, from a scientific standpoint, windblown sand abrasion effects are very dramatic and rapid. The plants that survive are teaching researchers "interesting tricks" for how certain types of plants are able to recover more quickly from this type of injury.

"We're looking at the whole problem, from the plant initially getting injured to what conditions lead to the plant actually dying, to how the plant ultimately recovers from this kind of damage," Baker said.

Wind sandblasting leaves farmers with no option but to accept windy conditions and sandblasting as a detrimental and often expensive part of their operation. According to Baker, when farmers are forced to replant crops, it can double the cost of planting in terms of time, fuel and new seed.

He and other researchers would like to find cotton varieties that may be more resistant to this type of damage. Because of the research being done by the ARS, breeders someday will be able to choose cotton plants that can better withstand wind sandblasting.

"This would give cotton breeders insight into the types of plant traits to select that would help minimize this damage," Baker said. "We are also experimenting with plant hormones, hoping to develop a recipe that farmers could spray on the crop or dip seeds in that would cause the plants to grow thicker and stronger stems." 🌱



Beside the wind tunnel, Dr. Jeffrey Baker explains his research process.



Small cotton plants bend under the stress of the wind and sand in the tunnel as the staff simulates the windy conditions in West Texas.



Examples of plant damage for cotton exposed to sand abrasion treatments lasting 0, 5, 10, 20, 30, and 40 minutes, left to right.



A Lasting TT



ing TREND

BY AMY DROMGOOLE | PHOTOS BY SAVANT PHOTOGRAPHY

In the past 25 years, stretch denim has been brought to the forefront of the denim market. During this transition, the entire industry, especially American Cotton Growers (ACG) in Littlefield, Texas, has made strides to keep up with the demand for the product and provide consumers with a valued product.

Stretch denim is made when core-spun yarn is spun around a spandex filament in order to give it stretching capability. Ninety-nine percent of all stretch denim made around the world contains spandex in the yarn. The filling is placed in the horizontal weave of the fabric. It is beneficial to use spandex in the filling in order to allow for jeans to stretch across the body rather than vertically.

Denim of this kind is made with the principle of weaving the cloth with enough opening in the weave to allow for shrinkage in the width when the garment is washed. This openness in the weave also allows the filling yarn to be extended, or stretched, when force is applied. The small amount of spandex filling pulls the fabric back into place after force is released allowing for recovery in the shape.

Stretch denim is treated with a process that gives the denim a “f at” appearance and keeps the fabric from stretching when made into jeans.

First, a prep range will pre-shrink the fabric in the width by brushing and singeing loose fibers, applying a caustic soda chemical to the fabric in order to give it the f at appearance, and skewing the fabric in order to keep the fabric from twisting when constructed into jeans. Next, a machine called a sanforizor pre-shrinks the denim vertically to complete the process.

According to Jack Mathews, Vice President of Fabric Sales and Product Development at Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, there are three categories of stretch denim: comfort, traditional and power stretch. Comfort denim is found in men’s jeans where very little stretch is needed while traditional and power stretch denim is used in the women’s market. Stretch denim demands mostly come from the women’s and girl’s retail segments because of the need for a form-fitting, comfortable product.

“Most women’s jeans are made from stretch denim,” Mathews said. “The female consumer loves stretch denim because it allows her to wear a tighter fitting jean that’s comfortable and

continued on page 10...



continued from page 9...

retains its shape after repeated wear. Because the spandex fiber is wrapped in cotton, stretch denim jeans still have the great soft hand that only cotton provides.”

Stretch denim in the men’s market is still a niche business. Most men’s stretch denim jeans are made from fabrics that are designed to stretch less, usually in the range of 15 percent compared to women’s that can stretch up to 40 percent.

However, as the industry expands into a higher end premium men’s market, a shift to more traditional stretch denim fabrics is occurring. This shift will allow for men’s jeans to stretch closer to 20 or 25 percent.

In addition to the common demand for the fabric in women’s clothing, a recent garment named “jeggings” also has become a popular trend in high fashion circuits. These garments resemble knit leggings but are made from woven stretch denim that’s designed for maximum stretch and recovery. Jeggings will stretch between 35 and 45 percent.

“Over the past decade, we have seen stretch denim come to dominate female jeans wear to the tune of 80



**“THE NEED FOR THIS
FABRIC WON’T GO AWAY.”**

percent of the market,” Mike Windham, project coordinator at ACG, said.

ACG has always had a significant presence in the men’s business. Mathews estimates that today approximately 75 to 80 percent of ACG denim fabric sales are for the men’s market.

However, the Denimatrix business model is more balanced with men’s and women’s markets each representing about 50 percent of the business. This balance should provide significant opportunities for ACG to increase its fabric sales into the women’s market. Prior to the creation of Denimatrix by PCCA in 2009, most stretch denim had been made in Asia.

“Before Denimatrix, 75 percent of the jeans ACG produced were for men and 25 percent for women,” Mathews said. “However, our production now rests at 50 percent for both men and women.”

ACG now produces 60,000 pounds of core-spun yarn weekly and is the only facility in the Western Hemisphere with the capacity to produce this quantity of fabric. ACG currently has six machines, three of which produce core-spun yarn and three that produce 100 percent ring spun cotton yarn. However, due to the increased demand for stretch denim, in July of 2010 ACG will add attachments to two of the ring spinning frames. With this addition, five of the six machines will have core-spinning capabilities.

“The beauty of these frames is that as minor shifts happen in the marketplace we can convert the machines back and forth between ring spinning and core-spinning,” Mathews said. Nonetheless, the demand for stretch denim is not expected to change anytime soon.

“The need for this fabric won’t go away,” Mathews said. “The weave, color and yarn character might change in order to keep up with various trends, but its value in terms of comfort make it a staple.”



**“THE WEAVE, COLOR
AND YARN CHARACTER
MIGHT CHANGE IN
ORDER TO KEEP UP
WITH VARIOUS TRENDS,
BUT ITS VALUE IN
TERMS OF COMFORT
MAKE IT A STAPLE.”**

Discovering AME

Story and Photos by Lynette Wilson



Toni and Bob Midkiff

The enticement of the Oregon Trail lured Bob Midkiff into a life of exploration. The rallying call of “Head West, Young Man” found its way to his ears much later than it was first spoken as Bob and his wife Toni hit the dusty trail almost 150 years after the great migration to the West began.

As one of the forerunners of America’s westward expansion, the Oregon Trail was the pathway to the Pacific between 1841 and 1869 for fur traders, gold seekers, and families looking for a new and better life. Bob Midkiff is a descendant of one of those rough and ready pioneer families.

A member of Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, Bob owns a farm and ranch near Midkiff, Texas, a community named in honor of his family, located 30 miles south of Midland. He left the farm and moved to Midland to pursue a career as a Farm Bureau insurance agent, and 13 years later he opened his own independent agency while Toni worked in the home and raised their two children.

After their son Herd and daughter Kris were grown, Bob and Toni sold the insurance agency while keeping an interest in the family farming/ranching operations. In retirement, their interest in traveling grew faster than most of their crops.

The couple decided to follow the path of Bob’s great, great, great grandfather on the Oregon Trail. Just as his ancestors did, Bob and Toni began in Independence, Mo., and traveled west to Sacramento, Calif. Some trail ruts still can be seen today along the 3,000-mile trail. The deep grooves serve as vivid reminders of the sacrifices, struggles, and triumphs of early American travelers and settlers on the Oregon Trail. While following the tracks forged into the hard ground through eight states, Bob and Toni discovered their adventurous spirits.

“Once we passed through that many American states, I told Toni we might as well make them all,” Bob said with a smile. And they did.

The Midkiffs had no problem committing themselves to a project; after all, they have been married for 48 years. From 1993 to 2009, the Midkiffs visited all 50 states in the Union; they drove to each of the lower 48 states. Where possible, the couple avoided major highways, preferring to drive on smaller farm-to-market roads in order to enjoy more of the great American scenery and meet interesting people along the way.

“The number of unforgettable people and places you can discover when you aren’t on the main highway is amazing,” Toni explained.

ERICA



"We liked to stop along the roadside and take photographs of the beautiful landscapes we found as we traveled."

Not wanting to miss a thing, the couple attended a photography course at Midland College to learn valuable tips and tricks for capturing their travels on film. With the number of photographs piling up, the Midkiffs decided to have placemats made, one from each state they visited. The placemats now serve as great conversation starters at parties and family functions in their home, Bob explained.

"Although we saw some beautiful country, the more we traveled the more we were thankful to live in our great state," Bob said. Toni wholeheartedly agreed.

In a lull between trips out of state, the Midkiffs decided the winding roads and wide-open spaces of Texas were calling. The couple resolved to visit all 254 counties in the Lone Star state. To give their travels an even greater purpose, they took photos of every courthouse in Texas. The project began in August 1993 and was completed in 1996.

An impressively organized lady, Toni placed the courthouse photos in individual white envelopes, labeled them with the corresponding county name, and carefully arranged over 10,000 miles of memories in a small white box. The envelopes were alphabetized for easy access, of course. Her spiral notebook containing orderly notes, personal impressions, and random thoughts from their travels now are kept alongside the box of photos.

Never staying still too long, the Midkiffs soon will be adding to their treasure trove of interesting photos and travel tidbits. They plan to attend the Buffalo Roundup at Custer State Park in South Dakota and then make the trek to Manitoba, Canada, to see the polar bears.

"We like to spend our time visiting with our family, especially our grandson Robert Stephens, and traveling to see new and different things in the world," Bob said as he turned the pages of one of Toni's lovingly crafted photo books. "We enjoy ourselves," he concluded. 🍷

Top: Toni and Bob Midkiff enjoy a stop along the Oregon Trail.

Top Right: Like this photo in Decatur, Texas, (Wise County) the couple photographed the courthouse in each Texas county they visited.

Middle: The Midkiffs pose in front of the Hardeman County courthouse (Quanah, Texas).

Bottom: The Comal County courthouse (New Braunfels, Texas) was one of the Midkiff's favorites.





Eddie Smith

Smith Elected to Lead National Cotton Council in 2010

By Mica Graybill

PCCA Board Chairman Eddie Smith has had a great deal of experience as a leader in the cotton industry, and in 2010 he is leading the National Cotton Council (NCC). Smith was elected chairman of the NCC at its annual meeting in Memphis, Tenn.

In 2009, Smith served as the NCC's vice chairman. He also has served on a number of council committees including its Environmental Task Force, and he completed the council's Cotton Leadership Program in 1991.

According to Smith, a nominating committee selects candidates they feel have the leadership skills necessary to effectively lead the organization. Smith said it was "an honor to be nominated."

The NCC serves all sectors of the U.S. cotton industry: producers, ginner, warehouses, merchants, cottonseed processors/dealers, cooperatives and textile manufacturers. The organization is a unifying force, bringing together representatives from the seven industry segments in the 17 cotton-producing states of the Cotton Belt to work out common problems and develop programs of mutual benefit. Smith's involvement in reviewing council programs and policies will open doors and provide opportunities for the cotton industry to flourish.

Smith already has been heavily involved in changes that are taking place at the NCC, addressing issues for the 2012 farm bill, and he is working to increase membership in Texas.

"I am really enjoying being chairman of the NCC," Smith said. "The interaction with the people has been one of the biggest rewards. I get the opportunity to work with some very interesting and talented individuals."

Smith is a 1973 graduate of Texas Tech University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics. Upon graduation, he began farming in Floydada, Texas, and has continued to maintain his cotton, cattle and grain operation for the past 37 years. Smith shares partnership of his business with his father, Ed, and his son, Eric.

Since 1984, Smith has served on PCCA's Board of Directors, and in 2004 he was unanimously elected chairman of the cooperative. He also has served as a director of Floydada Cooperative Gin in Floydada, Texas.

Smith is a past chairman and longtime director of Cotton Incorporated. He also has served as the organization's treasurer, secretary and vice chairman. In 2009, he was recognized by the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC) as Director of the Year at the organization's 80th Annual Meeting.

As a member of NCFC's Blue Ribbon Farm Bill Committee, Smith has served as vice chairman of the organization's Trade Working Group. He currently is a director of the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council.

Smith feels that his previous experience and involvement in the cotton industry will play a significant role as chairman of the NCC.

"PCCA has helped shape me as a leader in many different ways," Smith said. "I have been able to observe and learn from the leaders who have come through PCCA. That has helped me become an effective board member and an effective leader in the cotton industry."

As an active member of his community, Smith and his wife, JenniSu, currently reside in Floydada, Texas, where he is a deacon at the Floydada Baptist Church. They have one son, Eric, daughter-in-law Leigh, and two grandsons, Ethan and Logan.

Smith said he is really looking forward to being able to lead the NCC and hopes that he will have a positive influence on the organization's direction.

"I want to be engaged and involved in the NCC in any way possible and do what I can in a positive manner to make sure we do what is right for the cotton industry," Smith said. 🌱

TEXAS TECH STUDENTS HONORED

BY AMY DROMGOOLE



Sydney Pierce (left) and Skylar Sowder (right) were awarded PCCA's Howard Alford Memorial Scholarship.

With the increase in enrollment and tuition, funding for Texas Tech University students has become more difficult. However, for two young agriculture majors this burden has become a bit easier.

The Howard Alford Memorial Scholarship was endowed in 1974 by PCCA's Board of Directors in memory of the cooperative's former chairman of the board. This honor goes to top Texas Tech students pursuing a degree in agriculture and is based on students' high school record, SAT or ACT scores, grade point average and financial need. The most recent scholarships were awarded to Sydney Pierce and Skylar Sowder for their excellence in academics.

Pierce grew up in Lubbock, Texas, and graduated from Monterey High School in 2009. She is now a freshman animal science major specializing in management and production.

After spending her childhood on her grandfather's farm near Meadow, Texas, she came

to love animals and knew she always wanted to work with them. Her former Saddle Tramp father inspired her to be a Red Raider from a young age.

"My favorite thing about being a Red Raider would have to be all the traditions we have," Pierce said. "I think it's really cool that Tech has so much school spirit. To me, this scholarship means that I can pursue my dreams and goals," Pierce added. "I know that I wouldn't be able to accomplish half of what I have planned in the future without the help and support that I've received through being awarded this scholarship."

Skylar Sowder, also growing up in an agricultural environment as the daughter of a cotton farmer, now majors in agricultural and applied economics.

"I have been a Red Raider fan for as long as I can remember," Sowder said. "I also chose Texas Tech because of the financial support they were

willing to give me in the form of scholarships."

Sowder has become very involved in activities after beginning college. She is on the Texas Tech Wool Judging team, in the Agricultural Economics Association, Block and Bridle, and Ag Council.

"My favorite thing about being a Red Raider is the small town feel even though I go to a large school," Sowder said. "I really feel at home at Tech and especially in the College of Agriculture. Everyday, I come in contact with smiling faces among my fellow students as well as professors and staff within the university."

After growing up in Sudan, Texas, Sowder has enjoyed her transition into college life and is excited about the opportunities her major in agricultural and applied economics will give her.

"This scholarship is more than just dollars," Sowder said. "It is opportunities knocking at the door." 🍀



PCCA

Reaches Out to

young producers

By Amy Dromgoole



In an effort to spread the word and educate Plains Cotton Cooperative Association's members, the first Young Producer Orientation was held on April 1, 2010. PCCA invited young producers and their spouses from around the region for a day full of informative presentations and social activities.

The overall goal of the event was to improve communication with young members and reveal the spectrum of activities and projects PCCA is a part of on a daily basis. Presentations were given by various PCCA employees in order to convey the full capacity and positive impacts PCCA has on the members' operations as well as the cotton and textile industries.

"We wanted to relay that PCCA is not the 'stodgy' old cooperative that some may think, but it is progressive and positioned well for the future," Dean Church, PCCA's Vice President of Grower Services, said. "Our delegate body meetings are geared to producers that are well acquainted with PCCA, but they don't lend themselves to relaying the 'basics.'"

The orientation consisted of an international marketing presentation and a forecast from Vice President of Marketing Lonnie Winters; a financial recap from Chief Financial Officer Sam Hill; a presentation on technology for the future from Vice President of Information Systems Joe Tubb; a 'field to fashion' presentation from Wilson Avalos, Commercial Director at Denimatrix, and a final presentation about the cooperative advantage from PCCA President and Chief Executive Officer Wally Darneille.

Communications Manager Lynette Wilson also gave a presentation

about the overall structure and format of PCCA to the producers' spouses. Spouses also had the opportunity to tour a Lubbock winery following Wilson's presentation.

"I think it is important to know how all parts of your business works, from every piece of equipment in the field to the marketing aspects and even how the gin runs," Clay Graves, producer from Spade, Texas, said. "As a producer, I need every aspect of my organization to be as efficient and profitable as possible."

"I think it is better to be on the leading edge of what is going on — that is where the advantage is," Graves said. "The further behind the curve you are, the less advantage that curve gives you, and PCCA is on the leading edge of the curve."

"I think you have to customize your message to different groups that PCCA serves like these young producers," Church said. "It was fantastic to see the enthusiasm that this group had about agriculture. They are our future, and it's critical to know what they need and want in their cooperative."

Hopefully, the personal relationships built between producers and staff will allow young members to become more actively connected and informed.

"I think it was an excellent beginning on which to build for future years," Church said. "We got great, honest feedback from the group so we've got a good, clear direction for the future." 🌱

PCCA

Young Producer

Class of 2010

| Producer Name | Gin Name |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Corey Ayers | United Cotton Growers |
| Nolan Baker | Farmers Coop - Enochs |
| Mason Becker | Terry County Coop Gin |
| Ryan Buckman | Lorenzo Coop Gin |
| Daniel Canada | Yoakum Co. Coop Gin |
| Jody Clem | New Home Coop Gin |
| Kurt Collins | Petersburg Coop Gin |
| Justin Corzine | Farmers Coop - Stamford |
| Eric Englund | Acuff Coop Gin |
| Scott Etheredge | Central Rolling Plains Coop |
| Jaron Everett | Floydada Coop Gin |
| Matt Favor | Spade Coop Gin |
| Michael Goss | Swisher Coop Gin |
| Clay Graves | Spade Coop Gin |
| Derek Jacobs | Tillman Producers Coop |
| Dustin Jennings | Farmers Coop- Amherst |
| Mark Kellermeier | Mereta Coop Gin |
| Andrew King | Burns Flat Coop Assn |
| Eric Lincecum | Lubbock Cotton Growers |
| Armando Mandujano | Coyanosa Coop Gin |
| Michael Mefford | Farmers Coop Assn - Eldorado |
| Chris Orsak | Rhineland Coop |
| Eric Parkey | Springlake-Earth |
| Tyler Phillips | Lockney Coop Gin |
| Ricky Rhoades | Tri-Co. Producers Coop Gin - Loop |
| Kevin Schniers | Wall Coop Gin |
| Kris Schwertner | Parmer Co. Cotton Growers |
| Ross Short | O'Brien Coop Gin |
| Brent Staggs | Farmers Coop - Ackerly |
| Drew Stone | Farmers Coop- Tahoka |
| Clay Thixton | Flower Grove Coop Gin |
| Jake Timmons | Maple Coop Gin |
| Joshua Tunnell | Tarzan Farmers |
| Ryan Vinyard | Altus Cotton Growers |
| Jason Wallace | Martha Farmers Coop Gin |
| Jon Williams | Meadow Farmers Coop Gin |
| Chris Wilson | Midkiff Farmers Coop |
| Crain Zdansky | Lyford Gin Association |



Jerry Multer

TCGA

NAMES JERRY MULTER

AS 2010 PRESIDENT

By Emma Matkin

A strong foundation of knowledge and experience in the cotton industry is what has prepared Jerry Multer to lead the Texas Cotton Ginners Association (TCGA) as the organization's newly elected president for 2010.

For the past 15 years, Multer has been the manager of the Wall Cooperative Gin in Wall, Texas. During his time as manager, Multer was elected to the board at TCGA and began to move up the officer ranks. He has served as secretary, vice president, and now president.

"TCGA is a very important part of the cotton industry in Texas," Multer said. "The board at Wall has always been very supportive of my involvement in the association."

Multer is an advocate for the cotton industry and said he is always willing to step up and be involved.

Even from a young age, Multer had an interest in cotton. He grew up in Olfen, Texas, a small farming community south of Ballinger, Texas. After high school, he attended Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, where he studied agricultural economics. In 1971, Multer graduated and embarked on his journey in the cotton industry.

Along this path, Multer found himself working for Production Credit Association of Texas. In 1974, he and his wife Donna moved to Wall and have lived there ever since. For about 20 years, Multer worked for a fertilizer company and in 1995, he was hired as the manager of the Wall Cooperative Gin.

Multer said working as a gin manager is something that he has always aspired to do. In college, the majority of his educational background was directed toward cooperative business and working in the cotton industry.

Multer's leadership as the manager at Wall for the past 15 years will benefit his role as the new TCGA president. Multer said this year looks like it's going to be an outstanding cotton year. One of his main goals is to keep the Texas Cotton Ginners Trust strong and to try to engage new members.

"I am a big promoter of the cotton industry, and I want to keep it strong," he said.

Multer said he has raised a wonderful family and is proud to have been married to Donna for 40 years. They have two daughters with families of their own and are blessed with four grandchildren.

"I have been involved with cotton my whole life," Multer said. "It's my fabric of choice, and it's my family's livelihood." 🌱



PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 2827
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79408

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LUBBOCK, TX
PERMIT NO. 277



Cotton Pickings

NEW DELEGATE BODY REPRESENTATIVES AS OF MAY 19, 2010

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| David Hooper | Halfway |
| Kelly Gaskins | Knott |
| Marvin Beyer | Smith Gin |
| Steve Lowery | Tokio |

NEW GIN MANAGERS

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Benny Poe | Childress |
| Justin Myers | Jayton |
| Tony Newton | Mereta |