



PCCA COMMENTATOR

PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION | WINTER 2016-17

MEET THE PCCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE, WOMEN IN COTTON

FROM THE GREAT DEPRESSION TO GREAT CHANGES

The Story of Max and Dan Jackson

TOUGH TIMES, SOFT HEART

Jack Holcomb's Living Legacy

COMMENTATOR

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On the cover...

Demand for physical cotton is good. See related story on page 2.

Photo by Jayci Cave.

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Kevin Brinkley

Letter *from the* President

Recently, I have been asking growers to help me understand their biggest concerns for the future—what keeps them up at night? The most common answers were focused on low commodity prices coupled with the high cost of production. But, growers in the mid-to-latter part of their careers are spending a lot of time thinking about succession planning and what will happen to their operations and assets when they are no longer farming. It's not an easy matter to address.

Per USDA, the number of farmers age 55 or older increased six percent from 2007 to 2012 (USDA, NASS-Census of Agriculture). It's likely that trend will continue when the next census is taken in 2017. There is little doubt that growers are working more years just as non-farmers are doing. However, unlike the non-farming public, most farmers are self-employed and have built a business that is comprised of assets and "know-how."

Many growers want to preserve the legacy of their family farm by passing it to the next generation. As some sixth generation PCCA members are doing, assets are preserved through inheritance and the know-how from working side-by-side with family. But, it's getting harder to ask family members to continue in a business that has been so difficult in recent years.

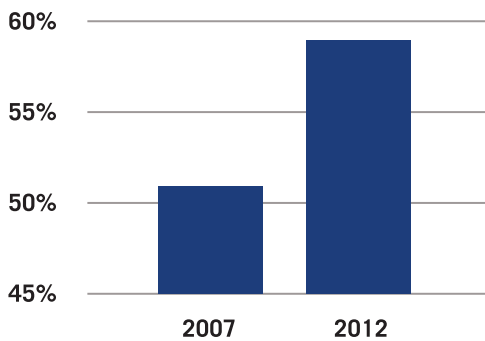
Making sure the next generation knows the path toward success is the answer to the challenge of keeping the farm in the family. That is why so many long-time PCCA members communicate the importance of cooperative ownership to their children and grandchildren. Farming is a long-term commitment, and you need to know that your local cooperative will be there to serve the family farm for many years down the road.

For its part, PCCA is constantly looking for ways to adapt to the future of cotton marketing. Our members expect nothing less. In addition to our pool marketing and online trading, we are exploring innovative ways that growers may want to sell their crop in the future.

Providing value both now and well into the future is at the core of our mission. Successfully executing on that commitment will ensure growers can provide an optimistic outlook to their children and grandchildren if farming is part of their future. 🌱

Sincerely,

Age 55 or older



Farming is a long-term commitment, and you need to know that your local cooperative will be there to serve the family farm for many years down the road.



Demand for Physical Cotton Good, Futures Stuck in a Rut

By John Johnson | Photo by Jayci Cave

The high number of inquiries from export markets for U.S. cotton this harvest season thus far indicates demand is good, and the crop has been moving into the supply pipeline in an orderly fashion. Part of the reason could be the pipeline was nearly depleted ahead of the U.S. harvest. Unlike most years, there has been little harvest pressure on prices, possibly due to the lagging progress of harvest in Texas.

In mid-November, the Texas cotton harvest was 20 percentage points behind the state's five-year average, leading to concerns about a supply delay since Texas is expected to account for about 45 percent of the U.S. crop. However, mostly favorable weather ensued and enabled West Texas farmers to make better progress. Providing fodder for market bulls has been the pace of export sales for the 2016-17 marketing year.

As of Dec. 15, export commitments for U.S. cotton stood at 8.31 million bales, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Consequently, weekly sales only need to average 114,332 bales for the remainder of the marketing year to reach USDA's forecast of 12.20 million. This was bolstered in the weeks ended Dec. 1 and Dec. 8 when combined net export sales of U.S. upland cotton totaled 716,900 bales. Weekly export shipments, however, have been somewhat slow and need to average 259,844 bales for the remainder of the season. In the week ended Dec. 8, shipments totaled 218,400 bales, up 48 percent from the prior four-week average.



On Dec. 9, USDA released its monthly World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimate (WASDE) which was construed as bearish because U.S. and world ending stocks were raised. The department raised its estimate of the U.S. crop by 362,000 bales to 16.52 million. Domestic consumption was reduced 200,000 bales to 3.30 million, and U.S. exports were increased 200,000 bales to 12.20 million. Consequently, ending stocks are now pegged at 4.80 million bales compared to 4.50 million in November.

USDA raised its estimate of the Texas crop to 7.40 million bales, a 500,000-bale increase from the November report. The Oklahoma crop was pegged at 565,000 bales, and the Kansas crop was estimated at 71,000 bales.

The world production estimate was raised 960,000 bales to 104.24 million, and world consumption was reduced 80,000 bales to 111.91 million. World ending stocks are now projected at 89.15 million compared to 88.31 million bales a month ago.

Cotton futures traded at the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE), meanwhile, have been confined to a narrow range for months, although there has been frequent intraday volatility. Supporting the market in recent weeks has been the net long position of speculators and index funds. In late November, speculators were 8.5 million bales net long, and index funds were 6.8 million bales net long.

Ahead of the U.S. presidential election, many investors seemed to be moving their money from equity markets to commodities such as cotton. Now, the huge net long positions worry some traders and analysts because of the potential negative impact on futures prices if they are liquidated in large quantities. Most traders and analysts will be keeping close watch on interest rates and the stock market for a clue about what the speculators and index funds may do. The trade also is watching developments in China, India and Pakistan.

The value of China's currency recently tumbled to an eight-year low which makes imports such as cotton more expensive. There also have been reports of logistical problems shipping new-crop cotton from China's western provinces to textile mills in the east.

Meanwhile, India implemented a new "demonetization" policy that significantly reduced the supply of currency available for the purchase of cotton from the country's farmers. Thus, the movement of cotton from farms to the marketplace slowed. Another factor this fall has been rising political tension between India and Pakistan which could limit imports of Indian cotton and increase sales of U.S. cotton to Pakistan. 🇵🇰



Meet the PCCA Board of Directors

PCCA is a grower-owned cooperative. Being such, it is governed by a board of directors. Members from each of PCCA's 11 districts elect a representative to serve on the board. Do you know the individuals who are making decisions for your company? Learn more about who they are and why they serve.



Eddie Smith
Chairman

Floydada, Texas – District 4
Fourth Generation
Farming Family
Served on the
PCCA Board 28 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: I get the benefit of getting a good price for my crops as I harvest them. I market

my cotton through PCCA's pool, and we get a good average price year after year.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: Harvest. I enjoy the harvest the most because that is the fruit of all the efforts we have put into it. It is one of those things that you look forward to.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: I feel like it is an honor to give back to the industry and also to the organization. It allows me to do the things that I like to do and farm.



Lexie Fennell
Vice Chairman

Springlake, Texas – District 3
Fifth Generation Farming Family
Served on the PCCA Board 12 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: With PCCA, there are numerous ways we can market our cotton, whether it be the pool or The Seam, or contracts, but in my mind the most important benefit is the check is always good. In today's

world, that is very important.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: I don't know if it would actually be about the farm, but it is the farming lifestyle that I like. It is the perfect place to raise a family, and you can work together, play together, and you go through the hard times and the good times together. It just really builds a bond, and to me, that is not replaceable.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: I think the board of directors plays a critical role in the health and continued success of PCCA. The directors represent the coops' grower-owners and are responsible for the overall governance of the cooperative. I think the primary role, though, is to develop vision and the long-term strategic plan of the organization so the management team knows the direction they need to be taking things.



Robert Robbins

Altus, Oklahoma – District 1
Fourth Generation Farming Family
Served on the PCCA Board 9 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: I find out what is going on in the cotton industry in the United States and the world.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: Just trying to be the best farmer I can be. It is a real thrill to produce exceptional crops like we did in 2005 and this year.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: I feel like somebody needs to represent Oklahoma and be involved and be able to pass the word on back to the farmers here and make them feel a part of PCCA.



Mark True

Plainview, Texas – District 2
Fourth Generation Farming Family
Served on the PCCA Board 2 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: The single most important benefit I get from PCCA is having an organization that has an orderly marketing process that allows me to be able to capitalize on moves in the market without me having to follow the market on a daily basis. Thus, I am able to commit my time and efforts to

other things that are pressing on the farm and know that my marketing is not suffering as a result of that.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: My favorite part of farming is planting a crop and watching it break the ground. It seems as though we get in these years where we have problems that develop during the season and we find ourselves wishing for the end of the crop. Just as we begin to think about the negative aspects and try to overcome those, we have a new crop come up and that is symbolic of a new beginning. It brings us newfound optimism.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: For me, it is a very easy decision since my father served on the PCCA board. I know that it is important for all of the members to have representation and that this is an international business. As such, it is very important for there to be direction from the individual owners, such as myself, which is one of the things I love about a cooperative—the fact that I am an owner of the business. It is always good to attend board meetings and gain insight to things that are going on in the industry and as PCCA tries to position itself to capitalize on any opportunity.



Charles Macha

Levelland, Texas – District 5
Fourth Generation Farming Family
Served on the PCCA Board 28 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: The main advantage is the

marketing of our cotton. The return we get from being in the pool and the marketing of it.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: It's just a way of life. Really, what I enjoy the most is harvest and running a cotton stripper in the fall.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: You learn the work of the marketing association. When you learn that, you understand what they do and go through then you can inform your fellow grower-owners about what you have learned and let them know what is going on at PCCA.



Dean Vardeman

Lubbock, Texas – District 6

Third Generation Farming Family

Served on the PCCA Board 9 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: I feel like the number one benefit of PCCA is the complete service that is offered from the coop. It involves marketing to give me better opportunities with a group than it would be individually. Also, you have the relationships with the gins, the Member Access, the ginning system; all of that being intertwined I think is a much larger and more beneficial package compared to any other system offered out there.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: One of my most favorite aspects of farming is starting each year with the natural resources and everything that mother nature has provided and being able to use a renewable resource that is very valuable and beneficial to the rest of the economy or to all of the people that are here on this earth. It helps provide food and fiber and a resource they can use to benefit their lives.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Well, I feel like it has been a real benefit to me to be able to serve. I think anyone that serves gains a much greater perspective of the sheer scope and size of this organization and all of the things that are involved in handling the cotton crop for the grower-owners of this organization. I think it is just a real benefit to be able to serve your fellow patrons and to be directly involved in that process. It has broadened my perspective of the real talent and abilities that are in place in all aspects of PCCA and the very fine job that is being done there by all the employees.



Dahlen Hancock

New Home, Texas – District 7

Fifth Generation Farming Family

Elected September 2016 to PCCA Board

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: I think the single most important benefit I get from PCCA is that I am part of a network and a team of experts that market

our cotton. Whenever our cotton is processed at the gin and winds up going to the compress and on down the supply chain, I don't really have to worry about it. There is a team of professionals that are taking care of that crop.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: I think the most important thing for me right now is getting to participate with my boys and getting to see that farming legacy continue. I really like that. I love watching the crop grow, and that has always been something that I enjoy. Even during challenging times, it is still part of who you are.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: I think it is important to serve on PCCA's Board and other boards because you want to be part of the process from the field until it winds up in a mill somewhere. If you aren't participating, then you have no say in it, and you aren't part of the checks and balances. I like being part of that process, part of helping to make sure that there is accountability and that my side, the producer side, is represented in the process.



Larry Williams

Roscoe, Texas – District 8

Sixth Generation Farming Family

Served on the PCCA Board 11 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: I think the main benefit I have received over the years has been the pool. It gives us a good high average price year-in and year-out. You have the comfort of knowing when you get your check that it is going to be

good. We have situations where we have sold cotton to other folks and they declared bankruptcy. That is no fun. The surety of selling at a good price and knowing you are going to get your money is probably the one thing that is most important to us.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: I guess my favorite part of farming is getting the chance to earn a living running your own show. Trying to leave the land and your community and church, all those things, better off than when you came on board, and the opportunity to raise my kids in the country.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: I have served on a lot of different boards over the years. I have always wondered why people wanted me to serve on them, but I have been on the school board, I am on the local bank board right now, and I have been on the farm credit bank board. It is just something that I feel like is our responsibility; to serve in our community and in our industry to try to make things better and to have a voice in how that goes. The director I replaced, he and I served on the bank board together and he encouraged me to run for the PCCA Board. I just feel like it is our responsibility to give back to the industry.

"My biggest benefit is the financial stability we have through the coop. It is really big in today's environment to know that the money is there and that the money is good. That is one component of risk that is taken out, and I am sure I am going to get paid."



Billy Eggemeyer

Midkiff, Texas – District 9

Fifth Generation
Farming Family

Served on the
PCCA Board 8 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT

BENEFIT FROM PCCA: The single most important benefit I get from PCCA is one stop shopping. It is stress-free marketing of my

crop; I don't have to worry about it. They take care of all of my marketing. If you don't want to be in the pool, you can sell it on The Seam.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: My favorite part of farming is the country life and being able to be my own boss.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

To me in our area, most of the generations that started farming there are my age or older. We have a bunch of young sons coming back now, and I like to serve on PCCA's Board because I can bring everything back here that the coop means to me and my family and share it with these young guys. Hopefully, I can instill it in these young men that this is really the way to go with your life.



Frank DeStefano

Mumford, Texas – District 10

Fourth Generation Farming Family

Served on the PCCA Board 9 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT

BENEFIT FROM PCCA: My biggest benefit is the financial stability we have through the coop. It is really big in today's environment to know that the money is there and that the money is good. That is one component of risk that is

taken out, and I am sure I am going to get paid.

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: The thing I love about farming is that you do so many different things. It is not a continuous job that you do all the time. It involves marketing, bookkeeping, driving tractors and harvest equipment, and research. It is one occupation that you need to know a little bit of everything.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The benefit of serving is the representation of members in your district. I feel it is important that their voice be heard, and that is a responsibility you have because you are not just serving for yourself, you are serving for all of the members of your district.



Steve Bauer

La Feria, Texas – District 11

Third Generation Farming Family

Served on the PCCA Board 25 Years

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM PCCA: My favorite part of PCCA is marketing my cotton and being in the pool. I have always been a coop man. They have treated us well, and I just feel like they were loyal to me so I am going to be loyal to my coop

FAVORITE PART OF FARMING: I enjoy watching my crops come up. I want to pass the farm on to my son, and hopefully my son will have children and keep the tradition of Bauer Farms going.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVING ON PCCA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS: I represent District 11. It is the southernmost district in PCCA. Since we are so far away from Lubbock, I like to tell our grower-owners what is going on and what PCCA is doing for them. That includes us down here in District 11. My main responsibility is to tell the story of what PCCA is doing for us down here in South Texas. 🌱

Women in Agriculture, Women in Cotton

By Jayci Cave



Whether running the farming operation, supporting it and her family behind the scenes, or working in the industry, women play an integral role in agriculture; more specifically the cotton industry. The Cotton Board realized this and saw an opportunity to begin putting an emphasis on reaching out and educating women in agriculture. In August 2016, The Cotton Board hosted the second Women in Agriculture Tour of Cotton Incorporated.

"Women play such a huge role in our industry, and it was important for us to bring them together," said Stacey Gorman, Director of Communications at The Cotton Board. "The women in the cotton industry are a treasure trove of untapped perspective and information. We wanted to reach out to them to educate them about the Cotton Research and Promotion Program and to start fostering relationships with this sector of the industry in hopes of inspiring future leaders."

The Cotton Board regularly hosts producer tours to make sure farmers know everything The Cotton Research and Promotion Program does for them. On the 2016 Women in Agriculture Tour, there were 35 attendees representing various professions and states across the Cotton Belt. These included cotton producers, ginners, farm and agritourism business managers, and industry relations professionals.

On this tour, attendees had the opportunity to hear about each segment of Cotton Incorporated in detail. This allowed them to see exactly what the organization is doing in the areas of agricultural research, fiber competition, product development, global supply chain marketing, and consumer marketing. An in-depth tour of the Cotton Incorporated corporate headquarters in Cary, North Carolina, and Raleigh Denim also were on the agenda. Attendees had the opportunity to network with others in the industry as well as the employees from The Cotton Board and Cotton Incorporated.

Christy Lewis, Director of Member Services for the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council, said she enjoyed meeting new people and learning more about the cotton industry.

"Sixty-five percent of our members are in the cotton industry," Lewis said, "It is imperative that I learn as much as I can about the cotton industry to better serve them. My favorite part of the tour was hearing each of the women introduce themselves and talk about their experience on the farm. I enjoyed getting to know them and learning about the joys and challenges of farming. I am consistently amazed at the passion in the industry, especially given the high-risk nature of the business."

Bob Stanley, Southwest Regional Communications Manager for The Cotton Board, said his favorite part of the tour was seeing how dedicated Cotton Incorporated is to its mission.

"My favorite part of the tour is seeing the dedicated and passionate people from Cotton Incorporated share with the people they serve how Cotton Incorporated is investing the funds raised by The Cotton Research and Promotion Program," Stanley said. "In my eight years of service, I have yet to see a single person come home without an increased appreciation of the work Cotton Incorporated is doing around the world to promote our cotton."

Gorman said The Cotton Board wants to make sure everyone in the cotton growing community is aware of their program, but on this tour specifically, they wanted to educate women to become advocates for the cotton industry. As a result, social media training was included in the most recent Women in Agriculture Tour. Gorman said research found the women in the industry tend to be more active on social media sites like Facebook.

Everyone in the agricultural industry understands the need to advocate in order to protect the industry and their lifestyle. Lewis said it is vital that the industry have informed advocates to share the farm story.

"Farmers need to tell their story," Lewis said, "so people who are not involved in agriculture understand how their lives are impacted by the food and fiber industry beyond their concerns about food safety."



The Cotton Board also hosts other tours throughout the year. Stanley said they are able to reach many producers and their families through these efforts.

"We have had about 100 women participate in the two women's tours so far," Stanley said. "In addition, our other producer tours often consist of farm couples where the spouse is active in the farm operation, and they always seem to really enjoy learning what their Cotton Board fees are doing for their future in cotton production. We are well aware that most of our producers operate family farming operations, and every member of the family is involved and makes significant contributions to their success."

Gorman said The Cotton Board would not be able to continue to do tours like this without the continued support of its sponsors. They include BASF, John Deere, Monsanto, and Syngenta. She said they hope to continue this program well into the future.

"We are planning to do the third Women in Agriculture Tour in 2017," Gorman said. "The women on this year's tour comprised current and future leaders in the cotton industry. Their perspectives and insight are invaluable to the continued success of the Cotton Research and Promotion Program. The cotton industry needs the type of leadership demonstrated by these women as we work to drive demand for cotton over the next 50 years." She also said tours like the Women in Agriculture Tour are a great first step to becoming more involved in the industry.

"These tours are the best way to see your cotton assessment dollars at work," Gorman said. "This is your program; you really should see the great work that is being done on your behalf. Use the tour of Cotton Incorporated's facility as a stepping stone to get more engaged and involved in the industry and to make some lasting relationships with the women you otherwise may not have met."

Anyone who is interested in participating in the next Women in Agriculture Tour or other tours is encouraged to reach out to The Cotton Board. The 2017 Women in Agriculture Tour will be held June 25-27. If you would like to participate, contact Bob Stanley at bstanley@cottonboard.org. 🌱



A New Mission

For a Rapidly Changing Economic Environment

BY JOHN JOHNSON PHOTO BY JAYCI CAVE

PCCA'S MISSION: To ensure the long-term profitability of our grower-owners through value-added marketing programs and through services to their gins.

PCCA updated its mission statement in 2016 in response to a rapidly changing economic environment and its impact on the cooperative's grower-owners. The change was announced at PCCA's annual meeting in September following an intensive and thorough review by the board of directors and senior management.

"PCCA is striving to be the kind of company its members will need now and in the future," said President and CEO Kevin Brinkley. "The mission statement is critical to ensuring PCCA's actions drive the company in the direction its membership needs."

During 2016, half of PCCA's grower-owners expected cotton prices to remain flat, and the vast majority of them expected input costs to continue to increase. The result is an economic squeeze and financial stress. To remain competitive in a rapidly changing global cotton market, PCCA's grower-owners must first be profitable.

"The new mission statement requires us to consider the long-term impact on profits of every decision we make," Brinkley said. "We consider these decisions not only for their impact on grower-owners but also the gins that are providing vital services to them."

PCCA's strategic plan also calls for new initiatives focused on enhancing the relationships and services provided within the cooperative system including the most innovative marketing tools for grower-owners. The latest is Marketing Text Alerts from the cooperative's sales department (see related story on page 17).

"We will improve our outreach to the next generation of grower and gin leadership," Brinkley explained, "to help ensure PCCA is creating value well into the future. Our vision is to be the first-choice marketer to cotton growers through our leadership and market power in the industry." 🌱

Invest In PERFORMANCE

*Own Your Marketing Company.
PCCA is designed to achieve
the **best overall value** for your farm.*

Professional Marketing Pool

Professional Global Merchandising

Integrated Risk Management

Forward Contracts

Exclusive Access to The Seam®



PLAINS COTTON
COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION
GROUNDED IN TRADITION INVESTED IN YOUR FUTURE®

FROM THE GREAT DEPRESSION TO GREAT CHANGES

THE STORY OF MAX AND DAN JACKSON

Story and Photos By Blair McCowen

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, a farm boy in West Texas worked hard to tend to the animals and crops on his family operation to make a living during a time of extreme economic difficulty. Today, the boy is a wise man who sits with his son and reflects on the lessons that farm life taught him and continued to serve him into his cotton farming and cotton-ginning career.

The wise man is Max Jackson of Slaton, Texas. His son is Dan Jackson of Meadow, Texas. Both men have made a living in the cotton industry and have a combined experience in gin management of more than 60 years. Max began his cotton-ginning career after the drought of the 1950s led to the loss of his farming operation.

"My first job was at McClung Coop Gin which is part of Acuff Coop Gin now," Max said. "I started there in 1965." Following his first job, Max spent four years during the 1970s at Earth Coop in Earth, Texas. Today, that gin is known as Springlake-Earth Cotton Growers. Max said during that time, farming treated people well and made his job even more enjoyable.

"Farmers had so much money, I even had one that bought a Mark IV Continental for a farm car! It was a wonderful time," Max said. "Everybody had money, and they bought all of the equipment they needed. It was something else." Max enlisted his wife to become his bookkeeper not long after Dan was born, and she held that position for 20 years. Max then finished up his ginning career at Union Coop, now Texas Star Coop, and retired in 1998 along with his wife.

"I spent 24 years at Union and retired, and I am tired," Max said. "Still tired!" Following in his father's footsteps, Dan Jackson did not start his career in a gin but found himself pulled in by the people and the experiences he had growing up around a gin office.

"I was actually in sales and had an opportunity to go to Swisher Coop Gin so I took it," Dan said. "I started there, then



Max Jackson with his son, Dan, inside the coop gin in Meadow.

went to Roscoe for three years and that was a great place to be. In 2002, I came to Meadow for an interview and have been here since." Dan also mentioned that his family played a role in his choice in becoming a gin manager.

"I had a good example in the office and in the gin watching my dad and mom. I watched the hours they put in and the things they did," Dan said. "Dad was always spending other people's money and was cognizant of that fact. Everything he spent money on improved the efficiency of the gin and the return back to the producers."

During their ginning careers, Max and Dan both experienced advances in the cotton industry including gin efficiency, crop yields, cotton modules, and marketing technology from PCCA.

"It has been a great change even since I retired," Max said. "With the gin, the mechanization and everything changed. That is the reason they are able to gin so much cotton in an hour today." Max also said the cotton varieties grown today have increased in number and improved. He said during his childhood, if anybody was able to make a bale to the acre they were doing good, even on irrigated cotton. Another change the Jacksons lived through was the introduction of the cotton module which Dan said he remembers well.

“I hope that they always realize that everything we try to do here is to benefit the grower and to maximize the efficiency of the plant; that we always have their best interest at heart when we make a decision.”

“I can remember riding to Lubbock out by the airport to Bush Hog and picking up the first module truck they bought at Union in 1977. I was about nine,” Dan said. “That was the coolest thing I had ever seen around the cotton gin. I can remember that.”

“That sure changed the cotton industry,” Max said. “Before that, farmers kept buying trailers, and all that did was increase the amount of trailers that were on the yard. It was a fiasco. We got rid of the trailers then, and now it seems like we are going to get rid of everything except the round bales.”

As the mechanization of the gin and the development of the module changed the face of the ginning industry, so did the introduction of PCCA’s TELCOT marketing system in 1975. Better known among producers as the “green tube,” TELCOT was the predecessor to the modern day marketing system The Seam, and was the first electronic marketing system for cotton. Each coop gin office that was affiliated with PCCA had a monitor connected by phone lines to the mainframe computer located at the PCCA

office. The monitors then reflected the current trade statistics for cotton and allowed gin clerks to sell their producers’ cotton right from the gin office.

“One thing about PCCA,” Dan said, “they were there from the get-go. They were there when we got the first green tube, and I can still remember it getting put in. The farmers would come stare at the screen and drink coffee every morning.”

Despite the technological advances that vastly improved the cotton industry, Dan and Max both endured the hard times of West Texas agriculture. Back then and today, the Jacksons have pushed through difficult times to take care of their families.

“I was raised during the depression and you don’t forget times like that,” Max said. “We lived on the farm and everything that we had came from the farming we did. There’s always years that are better than others. Of course, that is farm life. I went to work to buy groceries and to take care of my family.”

“The recent drought was tough,” Dan said. “Trying to manage for the things you cannot control is the biggest challenge. You never know what will happen with the weather and the crops and the market. Every day, you are doing whatever you can to add to the producer’s bottom line. That is our whole job in running this coop.”

The trials and triumphs of the cotton industry taught Max many important life lessons as did growing up in the era of the Great Depression. He later passed his advice on to Dan who continues to use what his father taught him.

“He always took care of the money,” Dan said. “For being one of the smaller gins, he returned a lot of money back to those producers and always did. It was because of him hanging on and doing things himself and taking care of stuff that he was able to do that. I learned just how hard that is to do when I started out.” Dan also said that Max taught him how important business ethics are no matter the circumstances he might find himself.

“Dad’s biggest thing was that the ethics side of the business is the cornerstone of it,” he said. “Everything else will fall into place, but you have to treat people the way you want to be treated, and your business ethics can’t be questioned.”

“You sure can’t handle situations by yourself,” Max said. “You have got to be honest, and I hope that is the main thing I have instilled in Dan, that he will do things that are ethical and right.” Just as Max has left behind a legacy for Dan to follow, Dan said he hopes to leave one behind for others to follow as well.

“I hope that they always realize that everything we try to do here is to benefit the grower and to maximize the efficiency of the plant; that we always have their best interest at heart when we make a decision.” 🌱





TOUGH TIMES. *Soft Heart*

Jack Holcomb's Living Legacy

BY JAYCI CAVE

Strength.

Lila Bradshaw chose this single word to describe her father, Jack Holcomb, a leader in his local and regional agricultural cooperatives. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attack on America, Bradshaw, like many Americans, was emotional and fearful of the future. She turned to her father for some comfort.

"He has always been the kind of person you go talk to when something is bugging you or you are worried about something," Bradshaw said. "He said, 'Well I have been here for a lot of this—the stock market crash, the depression, and World War II. I just think that you need to know that the American people have great strength and when we need to take care of something, if we get together we can do it.'"

At 100 years old, Holcomb has experienced both great hardships and great joy in his life. One of three children, Holcomb was raised during the Great Depression. His father was a real estate developer. At 10 years old, his family moved from Miami, Florida, to Port Isabel, Texas. When the Great Depression began, his father lost all of his customers in the years that followed. There was no longer a need for his profession, and he was unable to

find work. Holcomb took a paper route at age 10 where he could make five dollars per week. His family lived for three years on the money he earned.

"So, life was hard growing up, I mean it was hard," Holcomb said. "I had a scholarship to the Coast Guard Academy; four years of scholarship. It was given through a representative and an appointment and everything in Connecticut, and I couldn't go. My family could not do without the five dollars I could make in a week for us to eat on. I have been through some pretty rough times, but I have been very fortunate to have taken all kinds of jobs."

At the age of 18, he took a job as an engineer on a railroad. Holcomb also worked as an engineer on the project that dug the Brownsville Ship Channel.

"I ended up as an engineer on that and got a good 25 percent bonus for two years of work, so I became independent all of a sudden," Holcomb said. "I bought 20 acres of land in the Progreso area when I was 20 years old. I paid 20 dollars an acre for it, and I was going to build a home on it. Well, it was 10 years later that

“Cooperatives are important because they do help one another,” Holcomb said. “If you belong to a cooperative, you feel like everybody is your partner. You aren’t working against them, you work with them.”

I came back and built my home. I have been here ever since.” Holcomb has farmed in the Progreso area since he moved there.

“I was so conservative that I did not work on borrowed money. I worked on my own money,” Holcomb said. “I bought more land when I could, and I kept it.” Holcomb started out his farming career with citrus. After a freeze knocked out his crop, he began row-crop farming.

“I went through all that deal with the row-crop farming and started back on cotton and a lot of vegetables,” Holcomb said. “Just whatever I thought I could make some money out of. I have had a thousand acres of irrigated land that I have farmed for 60 or 70 years.”

Holcomb still manages the finances on the farm, and he has partners in the operations that run the day-to-day farm activities. At 100 years old, Holcomb still serves on the board at his local coop gin, Progreso Coop, as well as on the board of Valley Cooperative Oil Mill (VALCO).

“For all practical purposes, I don’t do anything other than I still belong to some boards, and the boards have put up with me,” Holcomb said with a grin. “I have been on the board at VALCO for 42 years, and they still won’t let me go off, but I have enjoyed it and still enjoy it.”

He said one of his favorite parts of being part of the coop gin is the chance to visit with other farmers over coffee in the mornings. Holcomb also said it allows farmers to help one another and share information.

“Cooperatives are important because they do help one another,” Holcomb said. “If you belong to a cooperative, you feel like everybody is your partner. You aren’t working against them, you work with them.”

Today, Holcomb has two children, Lila Bradshaw and John A. Holcomb, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. When he had children, Holcomb said his primary goal was to give them everything he didn’t have growing up.

“My biggest goal in life was to have my children go to one school, and they were going to graduate in that same school,” Holcomb

said. “We weren’t going to move so they could have friends and all like I didn’t have because I went to school in five states. My children were also going to get a college degree. I wasn’t going to say where, but they were all going to go to college,” he recalled.

Holcomb succeeded in fulfilling his goal. All of his children and grandchildren earned college degrees. Bradshaw said her father and late mother were both incredible role models for them growing up. She said her mother encouraged them to love to read and learn, and her father was an example of an impeccable work ethic and commitment.

“When he undertook a project no matter how large or how small, he gave it everything he had and really saw it through,” Bradshaw said. “Of course, anybody that really pays attention on a farm knows there is adversity, and we have experienced it. You could have the best cotton crop in the world sitting in the field, and a tropical depression comes in and you don’t pick anything, but my father’s attitude was always so resilient and optimistic. He just did not let himself get defeated by those things. He would turn right around and say, ‘Let’s plant the next crop.’”

Holcomb said he hoped he passed down to his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren that honesty is the most important thing in life. He also said he has been very lucky throughout his life.

“I think you have to be honest with your associates and yourself. You have to be honest to yourself, too, you know,” Holcomb said. “I think honesty is the most important part of the whole thing.”

Throughout his life, Holcomb has enjoyed the journey. Even though he faced some difficult hardships in his life, he has created a legacy that will last for many years to come. His positive attitude and honest values have set a wonderful example for his children and paved a way for his grandchildren and great grandchildren to follow. 🌱



New Information Surfaces on Phytogen 2, 4-D Resistant Cotton Grown in Kansas

BY BLAIR MCCOWEN | PHOTO BY JAYCI CAVE

Since its trial launch for the 2016 crop year, Phytogen's Enlist Duo cottonseed has satisfactorily met grower and industry expectations with its durability and economic advantages.

According to the Enlist website, growers across the country have put the new seed to use and have already seen an increase in their yields. PCCA Member Communications Area Manager Zach Hrencher echoed these claims describing the potential of the 2, 4-D resistant fields in Kansas.

"This year, Kansas has three Enlist Duo irrigated fields," Hrencher said. "The yield potential has been incredible. Between good weather and no chemical damage to the crop, those fields have had a chance to make three bales per acre." PCCA grower-owner and 2, 4-D resistant cotton grower Tom Lahey of Southwest Kansas shared his experience with the new cotton variety as well.

"The variety we have this year is the 490," he said. "It is a medium season variety, and because of the heat units we got late in the growing season, it finished very well." The good news with the 2, 4-D variety keeps rolling in as Hrencher said he received information regarding the EPA and the Enlist Duo cottonseed.

"I received an email stating that the EPA opened a 30-day comment period on the proposed amendment to the Enlist Duo herbicide registration to allow the use of Enlist with cotton," he said. "By entering into the comment period this early, maybe the label will be approved for the 2017 crop year."

This new information will allow the development of the 2, 4-D resistant cotton

to continue and even be aided by the use of an additional Phytogen herbicide to help control the Roundup resistant weeds that are common in Kansas cotton fields.

"While it is true that we have Roundup resistant weeds, our farmers also need protection from neighboring 2, 4-D drift," Hrencher said. "I believe a good amount of the state's (Kansas) cotton growers will want to plant 2, 4-D resistant cotton in some capacity based on what herbicides are typically sprayed in their area." The herbicide and insecticide variable has been a topic of interest for Lahey who, having grown the 2, 4-D resistant cotton, says there is still work to be done in the future.

"It has herbicide and several insecticide traits, but it can't be improved until we have more experience with it," Lahey said. The improvements developing on the 2, 4-D resistant cotton and the herbicides that could potentially be used alongside it are eagerly awaited by growers and others who work in the Kansas cotton industry.

"The new varieties have better yields, but 2, 4-D damage has pulled the yield down so far that we don't know what our true potential is anymore," Hrencher said. "A combination of higher yielding varieties and 2, 4-D resistance will help expand cotton acres." Looking to the future of Kansas' cotton production, Lahey shared information on the production of his coop gin.

"For two years, our gin has been working to get to the 20,000 – 25,000 bale mark, and we have been short," he said. "I think by 2018 with the 2, 4-D cotton, we could be looking at 75,000 to 100,00 bales." Hrencher said with the new information and results surfacing on the 2, 4-D resistant

cotton, there are growers who traditionally have not been interested in the crop that are looking into it now.

"Part of this interest comes from current commodity prices, and some of it comes from farmers with weak irrigation wells," he said, "and some of it comes from farmers who are interested in adding it to their crop rotation."

In addition to the economical appeal of cotton, the crop and its varieties fit into the Cotton Action Plan developed by the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA). As cotton is a more water efficient crop than others grown in the state, having more acres planted in cotton will help reduce the amount of water drawn from the Ogallala Aquifer.

"Cotton is expected to be an integral part of meeting the vision for the future of the state's water supply," Hrencher said. "The KDA recently came out with their most recent draft of the cotton action plan. They are setting lofty but achievable goals. They have also been using public input to determine how cotton can become a major crop in Western Kansas while reducing the use of the Ogallala Aquifer."

The introduction of 2, 4-D resistant cotton will aid in Kansas' water conservation goals and increase the yields for farmers who plant it. Though developments are still being made on this new variety and more new information is sure to surface, results show growing 2, 4-D resistant cotton has many potential benefits for producers.

"Overall, I think it will help us financially to be more stable and improve our bottom line," Lahey said. 🌱

PCCA Offers New Marketing Text Alert Service to Members



PCCA is a grower-owned cooperative whose mission is to ensure the long-term profitability of our grower-owners through value-added marketing programs and through services to their gins.

Part of ensuring this mission is fulfilled is making sure PCCA's grower-owners are informed about the market and other issues that impact farming operations.

Marketing Text Alerts are a new service offered by PCCA to its members. With this service you can sign up to receive cotton market updates from PCCA's Sales Department. The information you will receive includes market highlights featuring USDA reports, economic news and other market-related information.

Chris Kramedjian, PCCA Director of Risk Management, is new to the PCCA sales team but has experience dealing with futures, options and price risk management. He said this new text alert service is a convenient way for PCCA's grower-owners to stay up-to-date regarding the market. "Many of our members are interested in the fundamental supply and demand news that drives our market," Kramedjian said, "and we want to keep them informed as that information becomes available."

"Keeping up with the market is more than a full-time job," Kramedjian said. "That's why PCCA has a team of marketing specialists working together to monitor the market and to help producers achieve the best possible price. The text alert service will allow our grower-owners to keep up with key data without diverting time and energy away from producing cotton." Kramedjian said he is happy to be at PCCA and have the opportunity to work for its grower-owners.

"I'm excited to be part of a team that is trying to make a real difference for our grower-owners and their gins," Kramedjian said. "We want our grower-owners to have maximum confidence in our marketing team. Staying up-to-date on the market helps our grower-owners make the best possible decisions." 🌱

By Jayci Cave



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