



North Carolina Cotton Producers Association, Inc.

Cotton Trends

March 2005

54th Annual NC Cotton Producers Assn. Day-Long Meeting Successful

Cotton growers and related educational and agribusiness leaders came out for the 54th Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Cotton Producers Assn. held Jan. 11 at the Gateway Convention Center in Rocky Mount.

Two top national cotton leaders, National Cotton Council President Mark Lange and Cotton Incorporated President J. Berrye Worsham, joined by Southern Cotton Growers President Sam Spruill of Alabama, were featured speakers of the morning session.

On the expanded day-long Cotton Production and Marketing Seminar agenda, renowned cotton marketing expert Dr. O.A. Cleveland and NC State Agriculture & Resource Dept. cotton economist Dr. Blake Brown shared their predictions on the world-wide supply and demand forecasts for the 2005 crop.

Several members of the NC State Cotton Research Team updated attendees on results of cotton insect and weed control trials run in 2004.

Speaking to the group were entomologists Dr. Jack Bachelier and Dr. J.R. Bradley and crop scientists Dr. Keith Edmisten and Dr. Alan York.

Beaufort County Cooperative Extension Service agent Gaylon Ambrose and Stan Winslow, a private crop consultant, offered their advice on how to grow the best cotton crop in 2005.



Cotton industry leaders around a bale of cotton at the annual meeting include: J. Berrye Worsham, president and CEO of Cotton Incorporated; Billy Carter, executive vice president of NCCPA; Mark Lange, president and CEO of the National Cotton Council, and Taylor Slade, NCCPA president.



Cotton bale winner Richard Jackson of Edenton is presented a check from Carolinas Cotton Growers Cooperative President Mike Quinn.



54th Annual Meeting Luncheon sponsors

NC Cotton Grower Max Denning Member of NCC's Leadership Class for 2004-2005

"If you want to grow a crop and have an opinion you want heard, you've got to participate in the politics of cotton," says Johnston County cotton grower Max Denning.

For exactly that reason, Max wanted to get involved in the National Cotton Council's 2004-2005 Leadership Class saying, "It's been a very good experience for me and really opened my eyes as a grower to the importance of keeping the seven segments of the cotton industry working closely together."

Of his experience as only one of four growers in the 10-member class of cotton industry representatives, Max says, "The NCC is doing an excellent job on our behalf. They really helped write the last Farm Bill—with experts working on trade policy for the future."

When he's back home in the off-weeks of the six-week program, Max, along with his brother, Mark, run the Joe Denning & Sons 5,000-acre farming operation that covers six counties. This year, they'll be growing 4,300 acres of cotton, 170 acres of tobacco, along with corn and soybeans.

Max's dad, Joe, and uncle, Bill, stopped growing cotton in the late '60s because of the boll weevil. "Cotton is a challenging crop to grow, but I really love not knowing from one year to the next just what might happen in growing, harvesting, and marketing a crop," says Max. Last year was a very good year for Max, as his cotton yielded right at two bales per acre. That's exactly the yield he made his first year growing cotton in 1985.

From the start, Max has been practicing mostly minimum or no-till on his cotton ground but says, "It wasn't until we got Roundup Ready cotton that we could realize the benefits from it. Another new development, BT, has done a really good job helping us keep the worm population down."

A user of Fiber Max and Delta Pine cotton varieties over the past five years because of their better grading and yielding traits, Max is thankful that seed producers have been trying to develop varieties that the textile mill wants. Max adds, "We've been blending seed over the past five to six years, trying to get good grading cotton."

Max knows well the importance of good grad-

ing cotton because over the years he's gotten into selling cotton himself. Since, he's found a good merchant that's helping him get the best price for his cotton.

The 46-year-old cotton grower is also a cotton gin owner, having bought out the Newton Grove Gin Company in 1994. In 2000, his family-run business brought in two partners, and in 2002, bought out a cotton gin in Goldsboro and has since centered everything there at the Coastal Plains Gin Company. Max is proud of his new facility, which has three 158 loom stands and a 28-bale-per-hour capacity.

Before the NCC Leadership Class is over next August, Max says, "I'll have learned a lot about the effectiveness of 'grassroots' politics in the cotton industry. I'm also very thankful for DuPont's sponsorship of the program and do business with them because of that."

The NCC Leadership Class began in 1983-84 and has since trained more than 200 industry leaders. Each class consists of four growers, a ginner, warehouseman, merchant, crusher, and two cooperative representatives.

Max and his wife, Sheila, who operates the family's heavy tom turkey contract operation with Prestage Farms, have two sons and a daughter. His eldest son, Jordan, just came back to work full-time for the Joe Denning & Sons farming operation. Another son, Barrett is enrolled in community college, while daughter, Leah is a senior in high school.



Max Denning with his favorite crop to grow—and market—Cotton.

CASC Gator Goes to Another Tar Heel Grower

For the second year in a row, a North Carolina cotton grower had his name drawn in the CASC raffle to win a John Deere Gator (4 x 2). This year's winner was Bertie County cotton grower Henry Graham "H.G." Alston of Alston Farms near Windsor.

The raffle benefits the Committee for the Advancement of Southeast Cotton. CASC is the political action committee formed by the Southern Cotton Growers and Southeastern Cotton Ginners Association.

An NC State Ag Institute graduate, who started raising cotton in 1995, H.G. grew 130 acres of cotton last year, along with soybeans, corn, peanuts, and tobacco, on his 550-acre farm last year. He and his wife, Martha Ellen, and two sons,

Zachary (11) and Lane (17 months), are looking forward to using their new Gator around their farm in the years ahead. "I'm going to use it for soil sampling, hauling trash and dirtin' in holes around the farm. I'm sure it's going to be a lot of fun. Even the baby will have fun riding, if I can find a way to put a baby seat on it," said the happy winner and new Gator owner.

H.G. bought his winning raffle ticket from his cotton ginner, B.B. Griffin, owner of Woodville Supply, Inc. of Lewiston and a past NC Cotton Producers Assn. president. "B.B. had been twisting my arm to get a raffle ticket, so I finally did it this year for the first time. I guess I'll probably have to do it from now on," says H.G.



NC Cotton Producers Assn. President Taylor Slade (left) congratulates H.G. Alston on winning a John Deere Gator in the CASC raffle.

NC's Griffin Cited as CASC's Top Fundraiser for 2004 and 2005

B.B. Griffin, chairman of the Southeastern Cotton Ginners Association, was named Top Fundraiser for 2004-2005 by the CASC political action committee (PAC).

Through CASC, industry members voluntarily pool their resources and support candidates whose views and voting records are in step with the needs of the Southeast cotton industry.



Ronnie Fleming, Southern Cotton Growers Assn. president (left) presents B.B. Griffin with a CASC plaque honoring him as the PAC's top fundraiser for 2004 and 2005.

Carter on Cotton

Assessment fee for 2005 is \$3.50 per acre

North Carolina's boll weevil assessment for 2005 will remain the same as last year, with growers paying \$3.50 per acre to protect their cotton crop against the highly destructive weevil. Every effort is being made by the BWEFNC, Inc. board to keep this cost as low as possible. New methods of trapping are presently being looked at which will hopefully keep the cost from increasing.

The assessment allows the BWEFNC, Inc. through its partnership with N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Plant Industry Division to implement a program of intensive trapping and monitoring that detects any re-introductions of the boll weevil to the state.

In 2004, a total of 119,130 traps were placed and maintained on 61,596 cotton fields totaling 722,596 acres in 56 counties. To allow for trapping and monitoring, cotton growers are required to certify cotton acreage information with their local Farm Service Agency office by July 1.

Research Projects Funded for 2005-2006

For 2005-2006, a total of \$230,383.59 has been granted for NC State Cotton research with monies generated through state support from Cotton Incorporated, NC Cotton Producers Assn., and the NC Cotton Quality Improvement Committee, which is funded by the NC General Assembly.

New NC Ag Commissioner Remarks – Steve Troxler

I am honored to write to you as your new Commissioner of Agriculture. I truly feel that we've needed a farmer in this position to bring the focus in the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services back where it should be - on agriculture. I have spent the last month getting to know more about the department and the many services we provide.

The department's role is twofold: to help farmers and to protect North Carolina consumers. While both jobs are equally important, I will make sure that farmers are not left by the wayside.

I recently met with your association's leaders and pledged to continue the strong relationship that has existed

between NCDA&CS and the N.C. Cotton Producers Association.

Cotton is now the second-largest row crop in North Carolina, with more than 1.35 million bales produced in 2004. With changes in the tobacco industry, cotton could soon become the top crop. It is exciting to see this commodity make a comeback. Part of this resurgence is due to the very successful boll weevil trapping system the department has undertaken in cooperation with the Southeastern Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation Inc.

We cannot afford a return of this destructive pest and I ensure you we will remain vigilant in our monitoring efforts. I ask for your continued cooperation with this program and wish you a prosperous year in your cotton fields.



NC Cotton Producers Assn. leaders Billy Carter and Taylor Slade recently discussed cotton issues with new Ag Commissioner Steve Troxler.

NC Cotton Producers Association Leadership - 2005

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