

NC Boll Weevil Eradication Program Update



Andrew Sanderson, State Boll Weevil Program Manager, collects a trap from a cotton field in eastern North Carolina after the conclusion of last year's harvest.

This past year in North Carolina, our contractors set and monitored 5,532 traps across 274,198 acres of cotton in 55 counties, and I am pleased to report there were no wild boll weevils caught.

This season, there are no major changes to the operation of the trapping program. We plan to begin our trap set on August 14, and conclude the trap removal sometime around the beginning of December. One change the producer will see, however, is that the 2017 assessment fee has been lowered from \$1.00 per-acre down to \$0.75 per-acre. The Foundation is always attempting to operate as efficiently as possible and when those efficiencies are realized, we pass those savings along to you the producers.

As you move equipment in and out of your fields this year, please remember to be mindful of the traps and their locations as you work your crop. Each trap plays a very important role in the protection of our cotton crop across the state. Please notify me of any downed or damaged traps you may encounter throughout the season, so they may promptly be replaced to allow them to be effective throughout the year.

I will be happy to discuss the Boll Weevil Trapping Program with any producers that may have questions. If you would like, feel free to email questions or comments to bwefnc@gmail.com, and I will answer them as soon as possible. I wish each of our state's cotton producers the best, as collectively, we work together to protect all cotton in North Carolina from boll weevils.

With the azaleas in full bloom, and all other plants waking up from their winter dormancy, it means spring is here and the start of this year's cotton production season is right around the corner. For 2017, the Boll Weevil Trapping program staff are looking forward to and planning for another year of protecting the state's cotton from any potential re-infestation of this terrible pest.



Since the late 1800s when the boll weevil entered the United States, this pest has cost cotton producers \$15 billion in yield losses and control costs. Launched along the Virginia/North Carolina border in the late 70s by USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, the Boll Weevil Eradication Program became one of the most successful Integrated Pest Management efforts in the history of US agriculture.



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Burlesons Are 2017 Southeast High Cotton Award Recipients Father and Son Recognized for Innovation and Stewardship



Andrew Burleson, Southeast Farm Press Editor John Hart, and Ronnie Burleson all exhibit smiles of pride and satisfaction just after Hart presented the Burlesons with their trophy recognizing them as Southeast Region winners of the 2017 Farm Press High Cotton Awards. The Award was presented during the High Cotton Awards Breakfast in Memphis, Tennessee. High Cotton Award winners were also selected from the Mid-South, Southeast and Western regions of the Cotton Belt.

Ronnie and Andrew Burleson, from Richfield, North Carolina, were named 2017 Southeast High Cotton Award winners by the family of Farm Press Publications. The father and son farming duo traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to receive the award on March 3, just before the start of the annual Mid-South Farm and Gin Show.

This year marks the 23rd anniversary of the High Cotton Awards. They have been presented to some of our nation's most forward-thinking, innovative, and dedicated cotton producers – and the Burlesons are no exception.

"I'll have to admit, we were surprised and humbled when we got the call that we had been selected," states Andrew Burleson, who is the current President of the North Carolina Cotton Producers Association and long-time industry leader.

The father and son team farm over 4,000 acres of cotton, corn, soybeans, and wheat across five different counties, but also have a cattle and turkey operation. Ronnie and Andrew carry on a family farming legacy that was started by Andrew's grandparents.

Ronnie received his Agronomy degree from NC State in 1971, and Andrew majored in the same discipline, graduating in 1999, but also earned a minor in Ag Business. He came home from college and assumed the farming responsibilities he had to put on hold while getting his degree.

"I've been farming all my life. I never want to do anything else but farm, and to have my dad farming with me is a real blessing," says the younger Burleson.

The father and son have a great relationship on and off the farm. Sure, they may disagree once in a blue moon, but the squabbles have been few, and they never last long before moving on with the way of life and dedication to the land that played a significant part in them being selected for the High Cotton Award.

"I always included Andrew in as many aspects of farming as I could while he was young. If I was going to get parts, or to the Farm Credit office, I would always tell him to jump in the truck with me. Now he's handling the business side of the operation," explains the elder Burleson.

The pair farm with family, Andrew's uncle and cousin. When Ronnie and Andrew travel to attend meetings, or to serve on industry boards, the uncle and cousin keep the operation running smoothly.



Third generation North Carolina farmer Andrew Burleson graduated from North Carolina State University in 1999. He is the 2016-2017 President of the North Carolina Cotton Producers Association.

"Dad and I want to extend our sincere thanks to John Hart and the entire Farm Press organization for bestowing this honor on us. We farm in an area of North Carolina that doesn't have a great deal of cotton acreage, so receiving such a high-profile award makes us very proud to be cotton farmers," concludes Burleson.

Get Your Golf Game Ready for the 2017 Billy Carter Cotton Cup



Beth Carter Burchell and Beverly Carter hold the Billy Carter Cotton Cup Trophy that will once again be awarded to the winners of the 2017 Billy Carter Cotton Cup golf scramble.

The 2017 Billy Carter Cotton Cup is slated for a 10 a.m. shotgun start on Friday, June 16, 2017 at The Links at Cotton Valley in Tarboro, North Carolina. The annual event raises funds for the North Carolina Cotton Producers Association Committee (NCCPAC). Billy Carter died in 2011 but his memory will live on forever through the Billy Carter Cotton Leadership Scholarship, and the annual Billy Carter Cotton Cup. Previously called the Cotton Cup, the tournament's name was officially changed after Carter's death to commemorate a man who unselfishly gave so much of his time to agriculture. The Billy Carter Leadership Scholarship Endowment was established in 2012 by Billy's wife, Beverly and their daughter, Beth Burchell, as a permanent endowment with the North Carolina Agricultural Foundation, Inc. In addition to the funding from Beverly and Beth, additional funding for the endowment was made by the North Carolina Cotton Producers Association, and other friends of Billy Carter. "Even though Billy isn't with us any longer, the drive and dedication he exhibited throughout his lifetime to improve agriculture continues even today through so many people he influenced. Everyone playing in or volunteering to help put on this tournament do it because they respected Billy and want to honor his memory," states, Rob Fleming, North Carolina cotton producer, NCCPA Vice President, and current PAC Chairman. For more information about the 2017 Billy Carter Cotton Cup, please contact North Carolina Cotton Producers Association's office (252) 459-3130.

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Message from the CEO



The 2015 fall harvest was the beginning of a long and cold winter for North Carolina's cotton industry. The devastating quality losses in the eastern region of our state, combined with low cotton prices, had a chilling effect on 2016 plantings. In fact, the last time growers in our state planted less than 300,000 acres was in 1990. To make

matters worse, most of the 280,000 acres that were planted to cotton in 2016 experienced significant yield loss due to Hurricane Matthew, the first category 5 hurricane since Hurricane Felix in 2007.

At our annual meeting in January when asked for an acreage projection for the 2017 planting season, I said, "Hopefully we can hold steady." In February, the National Cotton Council's 2017 prospective planting intentions report estimated North Carolina's acreage would be down 4.8 percent, to 267,000 acres. I think both of these estimates accurately reflected producers' intentions through January, but since then I've become more optimistic.

First and foremost, the recent rise in cotton prices resulted in a better price election for 2017 crop insurance than was available in 2016. Also, cotton's price relative to corn and soybeans, especially if normal yields are achieved, favors cotton in many areas of North Carolina.

Secondly, but also related to price, is the under-utilized harvest capacity across our state. While 72 cent to 74 cent cotton may not notice many farmers financially to purchase new equipment, it may persuade them to plant more acres to cotton that will subsequently have them utilizing the full capacity of their current equipment.

Finally, like many farmers in North Carolina, I appreciate Dr. Ron Heiniger's study of long-term weather patterns. Unlike last year, Dr. Heiniger predicts 2017

conditions should favor cotton, rather than corn production. He also believes that current patterns could produce similar conditions like those we enjoyed in 2009. For the record, in 2009 North Carolina enjoyed its third highest yield to harvested acre ratio average at 990 pounds.

Input costs, particularly from cotton seed, continue to be our biggest limiting factor holding back more acres being dedicated to cotton. All things considered, I now expect our cotton acres to increase. USDA's NASS March 31, report of 340,000 acres may be a little optimistic, but depending on what cotton and soybean prices do between now and mid-May I wouldn't rule it out.

Regardless of our state's final planted acreage number, North Carolina's cotton industry needs a good harvest. Only time will tell, but I hope the current warm breeze is a sign that winter is giving way to spring. The North Carolina Cotton Producers Association wishes you the best for a successful year.

Please visit our Web site <http://www.nccotton.org/>, visit and 'Like' our Facebook page, and follow me on Twitter @NC_CottonCEO for the latest news and information.

Dr. Guy Collins – North Carolina State University Cotton Extension Associate Professor Optimism for 2017 – What We Learned in 2016

Throughout the winter meeting season, there seemed to be a renewed and expanding interest in cotton as growers looked toward 2017. County meeting attendance was up 16 percent from 2016, and was also the highest since my return to North Carolina. Throughout the winter, the mood regarding cotton clearly shifted from the bitter remnants of the 2016 harvest season, due to the damaging storms in the fall, to a much more favorable and positive outlook for cotton in 2017. Though it's difficult to make accurate acreage projections during this time of year, I'd say we can safely project a 10 percent and maybe even a 20 percent acreage increase, depending on what commodity prices do between now and planting.

Variety selection continues to be an increasingly important decision affecting producer profitability, with a statewide impact of \$20,350,000 to \$47,575,000 in 2016 alone, as illustrated in the 2016 NC On-Farm Cotton Variety Evaluation Program. This program continues to be a success, and growers are excited to see Xtend, Enlist, and GLT varieties in these trials in 2017. Additionally, the NCSU Cotton Variety Performance Calculator is gaining major strides in its use by producers across the state. This calculator can be found on the NCSU Cotton Portal Website (<https://cotton.ces.ncsu.edu/>) or directly at <https://trials.ces.ncsu.edu/cotton/>.

Even though we are optimistic and hopeful for a prosperous 2017 season for North Carolina's cotton crop, we must remember the lessons we learned throughout a very difficult 2016. Despite significant challenges during planting in 2016, North Carolina growers were

nurturing a very strong crop, statewide, prior to Labor Day. Disappointingly however, we saw much of this yield potential disintegrate when Hermine, and subsequently Matthew, pummeled across our state in the early fall. This clearly illustrated that risks can turn into reality in various forms, and we are powerless against many of them. As we approach the 2017 season, risk management and costs/input management are on the forefront of many growers' minds, and are likely influencing their early season decisions.

The NCSU Cotton Team will continue to work diligently through the upcoming year to provide timely and applicable research-based production information to producers throughout the year. We are here to help all producers in any way we can, as is your local county agent. Our newsletter articles will be posted on the NCSU Cotton Portal Website, and growers can subscribe to our email list by emailing me (email listed below) or subscribing online. As I write this on March 28th, I just now completed an early draft of a newsletter that will be released in mid-April regarding Tips for Successful Cotton Planting. During the cold, wet spring of 2016, we were reminded how difficult it can be to establish a cotton crop. As a preview, the aforementioned newsletter will include several tips for planting such as documenting information about seed purchases, adjusting planting depths, managing seed according to vigor, adjusting seeding rates, watching weather predictions and projections for heat unit accumulation, considering placement of starter fertilizers, and lastly, ensuring good contact of liquid



Dr. Guy Collins has included Xtend, Enlist, and GLT varieties in the 2017 On-Farm Variety Evaluation Program. Choosing the right variety for your growing environment is an increasingly important decision affecting your profitability. In 2016 variety selection had a statewide impact of \$20,350,000 to \$47,575,000.

in-furrow insecticides with cotton seed. Hopefully these tips, along with better planting weather, will help us avoid 2017 planting issues and get this crop off to the best start possible.

The NCSU Cotton Team echoes the sentiment from producers across the state, as we are also very optimistic for North Carolina cotton in 2017!

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David Dunlow – Family Man, Farmer, and Cotton Industry Leader

Anyone familiar with David Dunlow knows he stays very active not only serving in cotton industry leadership roles, but in farming, and in life. After completing his term as President of Southern Cotton Growers (SCG), Dunlow steps into the Chairman's role with just as much energy and passion to continue representing all growers across the six states which are served by SCG.

"This organization provides a strong and unified voice to the national cotton industry arena for growers across the Southeastern United States," says Dunlow, who has been farming for 32 years and currently farms cotton, peanuts, corn, soybeans, and wheat across two North Carolina counties.

He and wife Debra have three children (William, Daniel, and Elizabeth) who collectively have been a strong support system for Dunlow, allowing him to travel to meetings across the Cotton Belt and to Washington, D.C. as he worked with other Southeast leadership to help shape legislation on cotton's behalf.

As President, he and other SCG leaders concentrated their efforts to affect positive changes in crop insurance, the Farm Bill, EPA Regulations, as well as to guide efforts in

research and promotion. He also sits on several committees that oversee SCG operations.

"As Chairman, I will oversee the Committee for the Advancement of Southeast Cotton (CASC), the SCG's Political Action Committee. This is an important funding mechanism for SCG leverage at the national level," adds Dunlow, who utilizes his downtime to pursue his hobbies of fishing and, since 1992, playing country music with a local band around Roanoke Rapids – covering everything from Hank Williams to Elvis Presley.

He will tell anyone there are a number of SCG members who unselfishly give their time and ability for the cotton industry because each one of them understands the national influence SCG exerts.

"Farming is different year-to-year, but I look forward to every year because it brings me great satisfaction being able to financially provide for my family, as well as to contribute my share of food and fiber to our country and the ever-expanding world population," states Dunlow.

David Dunlow's term SCG President may be over, but he most certainly has not left the building!



North Carolina Cotton Producers Association Board Member David Dunlow and wife Debra accept applause from those attending the 2017 Southern Southeastern Annual Meeting after he received a plaque expressing appreciation for his dedication and work as 2016 President of Southern Cotton Growers.

J. Michael Quinn Named VP of Cotton Operations

J. Michael Quinn, President & CEO of Cotton Growers Cooperative for the past 16 years resigned recently to accept a position as Vice President of Cotton Operations at Frontier Spinning Mills in Sanford, North Carolina. Under Quinn's leadership, Cotton Growers Cooperative grew not only in membership, but in number of bales handled, while also increasing the cooperative's overall net worth. He worked for the Cooperative for a total of 21 years. Unfortunately, the last two years have been difficult for the cooperative and North Carolina cotton producers in general due to adverse harvest weather.

"Over the last four or five years, the state's cotton acreage has dropped significantly, but by holding expenses in check, we were able to ride out that acreage downsizing without being too adversely impacted. I believe acreage in this region will increase, and the cooperative is poised to offer competitive marketing programs to the growers," states Quinn.

Around 2001, Quinn recognized an opportunity to establish an export program for the cooperative when

international demand for US cotton began to increase significantly. He hired Keith Lucas to initiate an export program, and it ended up being a very positive decision for the Cooperative which was recently recognized by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture as North Carolina Ag Exporter of the Year.

In his new role at Frontier Spinning, Quinn will oversee all cotton operations including purchasing and risk management strategies.

"I look forward to the challenge and opportunity to remain involved with cotton," concluded Quinn.

Wayne Boseman, formerly with Braswell Milling in Nashville, North Carolina, has been hired to replace Quinn.

The North Carolina Cotton Producers Association would like to thank Mike for his leadership at Cotton Growers Cooperative, and his continuing passion and dedication to the cotton industry. We also look forward to Wayne's return to Cotton Growers Cooperative to carry on the organization's long-standing success.



After 16 years as President and CEO of Cotton Growers Cooperative, Mike Quinn recently accepted a new position at Sanford, North Carolina-based Frontier Spinning Mills as their Vice President of Cotton Operations.

A Friendship Solidified Through Ginning

was running smoothly again and then go back to sleep – somehow always keeping an ear out for audible changes in the gin's constant humming," states Dunlow, who added, "Mr. Bell was a very knowledgeable ginner and a very giving man who traveled to other gins to help complete repairs or install new equipment."

Bell's Gin was small, with older equipment, and when breakdowns occurred, Bell somehow knew who to call to get parts that were most often difficult to find – he was very connected with suppliers and other ginners across the Cotton Belt.

"Thomas would travel only periodically to meetings across the southeast. He preferred to stay home, and at the gin," remembers Dunlow.

Thomas Jefferson Bell passed away on September 19, 2015. At this year's Southern Southeastern Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors of the Southeastern Cotton Ginners Association, on behalf of its members, honored the memory and celebrated the remarkable achievements of Thomas J. Bell's lifetime of ginning by passing a Board Resolution.

In part, the Board Resolution read: *Mr. Bell was a third-generation cotton ginner and an outspoken advocate for the small farmer and ginner. Bell's Gin, in Oconeechee Neck, NC, was the only African American-owned and operated gin in the country.*

"I accepted the resolution, delivered it to Mr. Bell's widow, Mrs. Catherine Ramsey Bell, and expressed my own appreciation to her for her husband's dedication to the ginning industry and his long-lasting friendship to me," concludes Dunlow.



A third-generation cotton ginner and advocate for small farmers and small ginners across the Cotton Belt, Mr. Thomas Jefferson Bell proudly stands in front of his Murray gin stand back in 2013. After 100 years of operation, Bell's Gin closed its doors for good after his death on September 19, 2015 marking the end to a true family ginning legacy.

Twenty years ago, David Dunlow rented some land on a plantation in an area most locals just call "The Neck". It is officially known as Oconeechee Neck, an area of North Carolina once home to an ancient Indian tribe known as the Pates.

Dunlow was working the new land when a pickup pulled up on the turnrow, and out stepped an African-American gentleman who, unbeknownst to Dunlow, would become a lifelong friend and business associate.

"My name is Thomas Bell and my family and I have been ginning the cotton harvested off this plantation for 80 years," Dunlow remembers Mr. Bell proudly saying.

I looked at him and told him I saw no reason for him to stop ginning it now!

There was another sizeable cotton operation in the area that also ginned at Bell's Gin. Bell would gin Dunlow's cotton a few days and then switch to the other grower's cotton. Dunlow told Bell that anytime he saw modules on his operation needing to be picked up and taken to the gin, Bell had Dunlow's approval to do just that.

During ginning season, Bell would sleep on a cot in his gin office. He could supposedly detect changes in the ginning system simply by the change in noises they caused.

"He was an inherently good ginner. He would get up off his cot, attend to the problem, make sure everything



On March 6-8, NCCPA Executive Committee Members Andrew Burleson, Rob Fleming, Joe Martin, Board of Director David Dunlow, ginner Wes Morgan and I traveled to Washington, D.C. as part of the Southern Southeastern annual D.C. visit. As evidenced by this picture, we had a great delegation of Southeast leadership who visited 10 North Carolina Congressional offices, and both North Carolina Senate offices. We held a joint meeting with House and Senate Ag Committee staff, networked at a Congressional Reception and participated in six additional events during our time in Washington. In the center of the picture and to my right in a brown jacket and red tie is House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway.