



Cotton struggles to compete for acreage

By Stewart Doan, Senior Editor, Agri-Pulse

© Copyright Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.

U.S. cotton planting this year is likely to fall below 10 million acres for the first time since 1983. According to a National Cotton Council planting intentions survey, growers are expected to plant just over 9.5-million acres, down nearly 12% from a year ago. The results were released on the opening day of the council's 70th annual meeting in Memphis, TN. last week. NCC economist Steve Slinsky says that despite cotton prices being about 15 cents above year-ago levels, "corn and especially soybean prices are going to especially hard to compete with this year. You look at your additional input costs and what the other crops are offering in terms of prices, and cotton acreage is definitely coming down again this year."

Slinsky said a wheat-soybean double-cropping rotation will steal the most acres from cotton. Council Chairman Larry McClendon, a grower and ginner from Marianna, Arkansas, predicted actual acreage would be closer to 9 million. "Survey responses were collected through mid-January and I think we've probably given up a few more acres since then just based on the strength of grain prices."

PROSPECTIVE 2008 U.S. COTTON PLANTINGS			
	2007 Actual	2008 Intended	Percent Change
	(Thou.) 1/	(Thou.) 2/	
SOUTHEAST	2,255	1,996	-11.5%
Alabama	400	355	-11.1%
Florida	85	70	-17.2%
Georgia	1,030	981	-4.8%
N. Carolina	500	390	-22.0%
S. Carolina	180	143	-20.4%
Virginia	60	56	-6.0%
MID-SOUTH	2,750	2,049	-25.5%
Arkansas	860	605	-29.7%
Louisiana	335	275	-17.9%
Mississippi	660	454	-31.2%
Missouri	380	349	-8.3%
Tennessee	515	366	-28.9%

SOUTHWEST	5,122	5,021	-2.0%
Kansas	47	54	15.6%
Oklahoma	175	180	2.6%
Texas	4,900	4,788	-2.3%
WEST	411	252	-38.7%
Arizona	170	127	-25.3%
California	195	91	-53.3%
New Mexico	46	34	-26.6%
TOTAL UPLAND	10,538	9,318	-11.6%
TOTAL ELS	292	231	-21.1%
Arizona	3	2	-20.0%
California	260	204	-21.4%
New Mexico	5	5	-4.8%
Texas	25	20	-21.4%
ALL COTTON	10,830	9,549	-11.8%
1/ USDA-NASS 2/ National Cotton Council			

Slinsky said the Mid-South is expected to lose the largest number of cotton acres.

“Growers in the region intend to plant 2.5 million acres. Coming on the heels of a sharp decline in 2007, the 2008 intentions put Mid-South cotton area at less than half that planted in 2006. The largest decrease is in Mississippi,

31%, with prospective plantings of 454,000 acres. Arkansas, down 30 percent, and Tennessee, down 29 percent, also show sizeable declines to 605,000 acres and 366 thousand acres, respectively. **The only states that indicate cotton acreage increases?** Kansas and Oklahoma – with about 16% and 3% increases, respectively. Slinsky also pointed out the survey shows half of this year’s U.S. cotton crop – 4.8 million acres – is expected to be planted in Texas. He said most of it will be grown under dryland conditions. “Growers there view cotton as their best option but I know they’re hoping for some good rains.”

© Copyright Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction or distribution in any form is prohibited without consent from Editor Sara Wyant, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc. 5N985 Rt. #31, St. Charles, IL. 60175. Phone: (630) 443-3257. Fax: (630) 443-3258. Staff: Senior Editor Stewart Doan. Contributing Editor Jim Webster. Webmaster: Ryan Sanders. Office Manager: Pam LaSalle. A one-year subscription rate (48 issues) is \$397.00. To subscribe, send an e-mail to: Agripulse@aol.com or visit: www.Agri-Pulse.com