



The University of Georgia

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College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences



Georgia Cotton

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CROP SITUATION / HARVEST PROGRESS. (*Brown*) The National Agricultural Statistics Service estimates that by October 2, Georgia cotton producers had gathered about 8 percent of the expected 2005 crop, compared to an average of 13 percent from the five previous years. While the report suggests we are slightly behind schedule, considerable acreage is READY for harvest aid application and harvest. Now that Tropical Storm Tammy has passed through, it is time to proceed at a rapid pace.

As we have stated in previous articles, if there is a single advancement we can and should make in our cotton culture in Georgia, it is a greater sense of urgency about harvest. We have seen hints of this in parts of the state over the last few weeks.

Some growers may be tempted to hold out for upper bolls. The heat and drought of September have limited the development of immature fruit. In some cases, late season stink bug feeding has also significantly diminished the potential of late bolls. As a result, this year's top crop will likely contribute little to overall yields in most fields. Waiting on the top crop – which probably will not open anyway – exposes the remainder of the crop to weathering and subsequent yield and quality losses.

Considerations for proceeding with harvest aid application include

- The crop is 60 to 70 percent open.
- Most harvestable bolls (1st position fruit) are within 5 or 6 nodes of an open/cracked 1st position boll.
- Bolls that are expected to be harvested are hard, difficult to cut with a sharp knife, and have darkened seed coats.
- Harvest equipment is ready and available.

Timely harvest maximizes yield, fiber quality, and profit.

SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON THE 2005 CROP – POST TAMMY (*Jost*) Comments have been made several times concerning bolls not opening once harvest-aids are applied. My observations to this point have been that we are defoliating a crop with very mature leaves. Thus, they are dropping from the plant very quickly (about 5 days). Once that occurs we can see the unopened bolls from the road!

These unopened bolls in the field tell me a several things.

1. I think we are now starting to defoliate on time. As mentioned in the previous article “we need a greater sense of urgency about harvest”. When harvest-aids are applied at 70% open or 4-5 NACB it will take 10-14 days to get all the harvestable bolls open.
2. In a lot of the East Georgia crop there is a “skip” in the fruiting sequence. If you count back nodes from the top to that skip it generally correlates with fruiting positions set during the first two weeks in July. That was the time during mid-season when we went through extreme heat with little rainfall. This gap in the fruiting sequence can lead to some wider ranges in maturity which will show up as delayed boll opening.
3. Finally, many of those top bolls will not open, and in fact we probably don’t want them to open. We have a good bottom and middle crop. Many of these very top bolls are immature and stink-bug damaged. These will do very little for yield and even less for quality.

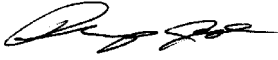
Prior to the arrival of Tammy many growers were getting by with a cheap defoliant application such as Def/Folex plus Prep. While this program may still work, the picker better be ready. We now have moisture and regrowth is imminent. In the current situation we should give products with Thidiazuron (Dropp/Freefall/Klean-Pik and Ginstar) some serious consideration for both the removal of juvenile growth and regrowth inhibition. In addition, even in situations where a boll opener may not be necessary, Finish, Prep and CottonQuik all help to remove juvenile growth if it is already present.

GEORGIA QUALITY COTTON AWARD (*Jost*) (Repeat from last month).....

Entry forms have been sent to all gins in Georgia soliciting nominations for the first Georgia Quality Cotton Award. Each gin will be allowed to nominate a grower within each of three acreage categories. Entry forms will also require that various information concerning the production of the crop be disclosed. In order for this entry form to be complete it must be verified by the county agent from which county the majority of the cotton is grown. Look for these packets over the next several weeks. While filling out entry forms may be a tedious process, they will be well worth the effort. The primary goals of this award are to recognize farmers and gins producing high quality cotton, identify associated management practices, and publicize improved quality in Georgia cotton.

County agents please talk to ginner in your county to make sure they are aware of this award.

Your local County Extension Agent is a source of more information on these subjects.
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