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Increased cotton acres present program challenges

With cotton prices at all-time highs, we are seeing a significant increase in cotton acres planted in 2011. Fields historically not planted to cotton are being put into cotton production. And in some locations, growers who have never before planted cotton decided the high prices are worth the risk and are putting their land into cotton, as well. Regardless of the situation, both scenarios present significant challenges to the boll weevil eradication program.

Boll weevil eradication is a cooperative effort between Foundation personnel and the growers in each zone, and we need your help. Over the past two years, growers in South and East Texas have continued to show their dedication to the eradication program by addressing big issues like volunteer cotton and stalk destruction. That commitment has brought the program to where it is today, and weevil numbers have been drastically reduced.

"We are at a pivotal point in the program in the South and East Texas zones," said Foundation Chief Administrative Officer Patrick Burson. "Weevil numbers are at the lowest point ever in many locations, and the program is poised to move forward, towards eradication."

Mapping and trapping of all cotton, along with solid communication between Foundation personnel and grow-



ers are key elements to achieving eradication.

"Not locating even a single cotton field can jeopardize program advances and ultimately cost producers more money to eliminate this devastating pest," said Burson.

State law requires cotton producers to report any acreage planted to cotton to the Foundation. Although the Foundation does receive this information from FSA, by the time this occurs, cotton is usually in its later developmental stages and weevil reproduction is well under way. Ideally, the Foundation would know about planted fields prior to planting, or just after planting has occurred. This can only be accomplished via communication between Foundation personnel and growers.

Once a field is planted, traps must be placed on the field. Often grow-

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Increased cotton acres, cont.

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ers question why traps are placed on fields that may be too dry and have not yet germinated. This is done in order to monitor any cotton emer-

gence. Even a single plant can cause enough weevil reproduction to keep the program from achieving eradication, ultimately costing growers money.

If you have a field, or know of a field that is planted to cotton and does not have traps deployed on it, please report it to your local Foundation office.

2011 assessment dates, rates established

The commissioner of agriculture has set the annual assessment for the SBL zone at \$12 per dryland acre and \$27 per irrigated acre, the rate established by growers and landowners in the zone's original referendum.

Key 2011 Dates

Assessments mailed	Sept 1
Pay by for 2% discount.....	Sept 19
Due date.....	Oct 4

Assessments are based on crop share as reported to FSA.

Statements will be mailed Sept 1, and payments are due Oct 4. Growers who pay by Sept 19 are eligible for a two percent assessment discount.

Custom harvesters must clean equipment

Southern Blacklands cotton producers need to make sure any equipment brought into their zone does not harbor boll weevils. Producers have worked too hard and have spent too much money eradicating the weevil to let someone bring weevils back into the zone. Please communicate to custom harvesters and remind your neighbors how important it is to clean their machinery. Also, ask gin managers to insist any module trucks coming from other areas be cleaned before entering the zone. Before moving equipment north, it is a good idea to contact TDA to get a Phytosanitary Certificate verifying equipment is clean.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED