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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 of these 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 growers 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

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## Increased cotton acres, cont.

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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 growers 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 emergence. 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.

## Custom harvesters must clean equipment

UCB 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.

## 2011 assessment dates, rates established

The commissioner of agriculture has set the annual

assessment for the UCB zone at \$20.20 per acre, the rate established by growers and landowners in the zone's original referendum. Assessments are based on crop share as reported to FSA.

Statements will be mailed Aug 1, and payments are due Sept 3. Growers who pay by

| Key 2011 Dates              |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Assessments mailed.....     | Aug 1  |
| Pay by for 2% discount..... | Aug 19 |
| Due date .....              | Sept 3 |

Aug 19 are eligible for a two percent assessment discount.

Acres failed by the final FSA certification date are eligible to receive a refund of 50 percent, to be given in early 2012. Growers are eligible for failed acre refunds provided: fields remain free of hostable cotton after the fail date; the grower has provided full vehicular access to all fields during the growing season; and the grower is

not delinquent on any TBWEF assessments. ***In order to qualify for the refund, acres must be reported as failed to FSA.***



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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**