

THE 2005 CROP YEAR IN REVIEW

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The 2005 cotton production season -- while it stopped short of being spectacular -- was a good one for most Georgia producers. The Boll Weevil Eradication certified the crop at 1,213,520 acres. Most of the state had good to excellent rainfall in the summer months but excessive amounts occurred in the southwest portion of the state in mid-summer and in east Georgia in early October, the latter associated with Tropical Storm Tammy. September was unusually hot and dry, which limited boll rot in most areas, diminished the top crop in many fields, but matured some late bolls in others. Final yield was 853 lb/A, eclipsing the all-time record for the state of 843 lb/A which was achieved in 1994. The U.S. produced a second consecutive record crop, in excess of 23.7 million bales. Nation-wide yields averaged about 830 lb/A. Prices remain depressed.

Quality of the 2005 crop was similar to 2004 and superior to 2003. Color grade, staple, and strength were quite good, but challenges still remain in regards to uniformity. Georgia still ranks toward the bottom of the national average in fiber length uniformity.

Table 1. Average Cotton Acreage and Production Since 1980.

| Time period | Planted acreage, x 1,000 | | Yield, lb/A | | Total bales, x 1,000 | |
|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|----------------------|-------------|
| | Average | Range | Average | Range | Average | Range |
| 1980-84 | 162 | 120-180 | 516 | 243-771 | 175 | 86-281 |
| 1985-89 | 269 | 225-350 | 573 | 395-696 | 321 | 185-370 |
| 1990-94 | 549 | 355-885 | 707 | 548-834 | 828 | 405-1,537 |
| 1995-99 | 1,426 | 1,350-1,500 | 610 | 512-739 | 1,810 | 1,542-2,079 |
| 2000 | 1,495 | --- | 502 | --- | 1,563 | --- |
| 2001 | 1,483 | --- | 709 | --- | 2,200 | --- |
| 2002 | 1,440 | --- | 600 | --- | 1,688 | --- |
| 2003 | 1,292 | --- | 800 | --- | 2,150 | --- |
| 2004 | 1,284 | --- | 675 | --- | 1,800 | --- |
| 2005* | 1,214 | — | 853 | --- | 2,150 | --- |

*Yield based on planted acreage and total bale production estimate as of January 2006.

Table 2. Fiber Quality of Bales Classed at the Macon USDA Classing Office.

| Color Grade 31/41 or better (% of crop) | Bark/Grass/ Prep (% of crop) | Avg Staple (in) | Avg Leaf Grade | Avg Strength (g/tex) | Avg Mic | Avg Uniformity |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 44 / 94 | 1 / * / * | 34.7 | 3.4 | 29.2 | 4.54 | 80.2 |

Based on 2.1 million bales classed through January 13, 2006
 Bales classed: short staple - 9.7 percent, high mic - 4.5 percent
 * reflects less than 1 percent.

DP 555 BG/RR dominated the state's acreage, with over 72 percent of the crop planted in that variety (USDA AMS Survey). The Survey estimated that over 95 percent of the Georgia crop was planted in transgenic varieties, primarily in Bollgard/Roundup Ready and Roundup Ready (RR) varieties. Growers continued to rely heavily on RR technology, and as predicted, shifts in weeds spectrum have occurred. In south Georgia, tropical spiderwort has proliferated. This difficult-to-control species has been found in 33 Georgia counties. Scientist from UGA have also documented the occurrence of Palmer amaranth resistance to glyphosate in RR cotton in Central Georgia and to ALS-herbicides (ex. Staple, Cadre) in several locations. In terms of insect management, there are suspicions that corn earworm has become less sensitive to pyrethroid insecticides.

Table 3. Technology Distribution of Cotton Planted in Georgia in 2005.

| Bollgard/Roundup Ready | Roundup Ready | Conventional | Other |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| 87.8 | 8.4 | 1.9 | 1.8 |

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Survey, August 2005.