

# Web access by phone offers versatility, updates on the road

By WILLIE VOGT

**T**HE new Farm Progress Web sites offer you access to local news and a wide range of content you can customize for your farm. However, you're not always sitting in the office browsing the Web. When you need access to local news or information, you can visit the mobile version of your local Web site.

Web-enabled phones that go to [www.TheFarmerStockman.com](http://www.TheFarmerStockman.com) or [www.FarmProgress.com](http://www.FarmProgress.com) will be sent to the mobile version of our sites. You'll find local news and national ag news, as well as commodity prices.

The rise in the use of mobile phones with Web capability makes it important for most sites to have the mobile option, and it's a growing industry trend. For agriculture, Farm Progress is setting a new standard. If you have a Web-enabled phone — like a Blackberry, iPhone or some other device capable of browsing the Internet — just go to the mobile version of our site.

You can go there by entering [www.TheFarmerStockman.com](http://www.TheFarmerStockman.com) or by visiting [mobile.www.TheFarmerStockman.com](http://mobile.www.TheFarmerStockman.com). We have a quick menu you can use to check headlines, weather (with animated radar) and the markets.

## Key Points

- You can access our new Web site by mobile phone.
- The system allows you to set up custom price listings.
- You can also register for text alerts to be warned of market moves.

## Setting up the markets

The first time you visit the mobile site and check the markets, you'll only see corn market prices. However, you can customize this display on your phone to include anything for grain (and livestock) from corn to cotton and from lean hogs to live cattle. Away from the computer for a while? You can always know what's happening in the market.

To set up this feature, visit the site and go to "Quotes," then select "Grain Quotes" or "Livestock Quotes." On either of those "pages" you will find a choice called "Commodity Preferences." Go to that page and type in your contract favorites.

Next time you visit the site, you'll see the new prices added. These are not real-time — there's usually a 10- to 15-minute delay. But you can have market prices at your fingertips, and in today's

market that can be important information when you need it.

Besides the industry-leading local and national Web news, you'll find livestock news; "Technology Update" with new product information; and "Your Markets Today," Arlan Suderman's daily afternoon market update. And we'll be adding more features to the mobile site version in the future.

## 3G and your phone

High-speed Internet is moving to the country, whether by satellite, phone line or other means. One area that's getting a lot of attention is the 3G version of cell phone service. That 3G designation essentially means "third generation," and it's the fastest form of cell phone data transfer. If your carrier is offering phones with 3G capability (and you have coverage), they can make browsing the mobile Web even easier.

Just check with your provider and you can do more than get e-mail on your phone. You can keep up with the news, markets and weather of the day all from your tractor cab, or in the coffee shop.

## Register for updates

Another feature we offer through the main Web site is the ability to set up text



alerts. Want to get a text message if a key crop contract passes a specific price? You can set that up in the system.

You do need to register for the site (a simple and free process), to use the service.

The registration process is important if you want to take full advantage of our Web sites.

You can use plenty of features (even localized weather) without registering, but if you want to get text alerts on market moves, or engage in our new online community, you need to register.

Everyone who registers by Dec. 31 is entered into a drawing for a \$1,000 cash prize and has the opportunity to subscribe to *Farm Futures Daily* for free.

Visit [www.FarmProgress.com](http://www.FarmProgress.com) to learn more.

# Weather foils repeat of high yields for Texas

By FARM PROGRESS STAFF

**M**OST regions of the Cotton Belt are faring well as the season nears its end this year. Prices are still lagging but at least quality and yields are better.

There is one exception, but that exception is a big one — Texas. Something shy of 5 million acres of cotton were planted in that king-sized state this year, and some believe the story of those acres could very well affect growers all over the rest of the country by the time Texas growers complete their harvest.

## You can't get lucky every year

After bumper and record Texas cotton crops in recent seasons, the weather just didn't cooperate in 2008.

Shawn Wade of Plains Cotton Growers in Lubbock, Texas, is at the center of the High Plains region, often referred to as the "World's Largest Cotton Patch." But some of the patch didn't make it this year.

Wade says abandonment has been the big story on the High Plains this year, with a whopping 1.1 million acres of the region's 3.2 million planted acres lost by August.

"Losses have been primarily from drought-related causes," Wade notes. "But hail and wind also have been sig-

## Key Points

- Cotton looks average to good over most of the belt.
- Texas growers abandoned more than 1 million acres this year.
- Farmers cut back cotton acres in nearly every region of the country.

nificant contributors, especially in irrigated cotton."

Of that total abandonment figure for the High Plains, some 900,000 acres of dryland and more than 200,000 acres of irrigated cotton were destroyed.

Roger Haldenby, PCG vice president of operations, notes some parts of the High Plains received some rainfall in mid-August. While August rains are rare, they are greatly appreciated in cotton country. Texas' overall planted acreage for 2008 came in at about 4.7 million acres. Hurricane Dolly whammed the Lower Rio Grande Valley cotton crop this year. There it was a case of too much water.

Meanwhile, the Rolling Plains cotton crop never saw a 100-degree day in 2007, but 2008 already was hit with day-after-day of temperatures well over 100 degrees in both early and midsummer.

Wade says what cotton remains on the High Plains will be made or broken

by fall weather. Farmers there typically get into high gear harvesting cotton some time during October.

## The view from afar

Despite dry spells and some 100-degree dog days in June, timely rains came through and analysts say the cotton crop looks very good in Virginia and the Carolinas this year.

South Carolina's cotton crop is a "huge improvement from last year," notes Tre Coleman, South Carolina Department of Agriculture cotton marketing specialist.

"We had a really hot and dry June but we started getting some timely rains at the end of June through August, Coleman says. Also, insect pressure has been light, he adds. Resistant pigweeds have been somewhat problematic, starting out as an isolated problem but continuing to spread.

Cotton has lost a tremendous number of acres in the Carolinas over the last couple of years. North Carolina growers cut cotton planting intentions to 400,000 acres in 2008, down 20% from 2007.

With this in mind, Coleman, industry analysts and growers have been following the situation in Texas closely.

"Obviously, cotton has not done what corn, wheat and beans have done in terms of price," Coleman says. "With the situation with the Texas crop the way

it is, when the Texas harvest numbers start to come in, hopefully the price will move a bit. Our peanut acreage has gone up and cotton is a great rotation with peanuts, so if the price goes up I'm optimistic we won't lose more acres next year."

## More from the Cotton Belt

In Arkansas, cotton producers could have a "pretty good" year, says the state's cotton specialist. "We got a late start, but a lot of sunshine and cooler nighttime temperatures helped the crop put on a good bottom load," University of Arkansas Extension cotton specialist Tom Barber says.

Much of the Mid-South got a late start on cotton planting. Cool temperatures, along with a wet spring, saw cotton planting taking place into June.

In the Southeast, cotton growers continued to be plagued by dry weather and the profit wilting cost of irrigating at \$16.50 an acre-inch. Most growers in Alabama, Georgia, Florida and Tennessee are thankful they either cut their cotton acres or completely quit on the crop — at least for 2008. The good news is average yields likely will be higher than in 2007.

Out West, most reports indicate that the California cotton crop is at or near cutout, but fields are variable.

*Farm Progress cotton state editors Len Richardson, Cecil Yancy, Pam Golden, Richard Davis and J.T. Smith contributed to this report.*

## Buckling



## the Belt



COLEMAN