Progress of Upland Cotton Harvesting

C. Farr

ABSTRACT

In 1988, Maricopa County produced more acres of upland cotton with lower yields than it had in 1987 but also started harvest later. Weather and insects reduced yield and early maturity of the crop; rainfall delayed harvest in the October-November period less than it had in 1987.

INTRODUCTION

Harvest progress can be traced to a considerable extent by ginning records; a comparison of several years is revealing about the crop character, grower practices, and rainfall delays. For example, in 1987 harvest began earlier than in 1986 because the record crop was mature at an early date in September and defoliation worked effectively. In contrast, the 1988 crop produced a crop delayed by beet armyworms, other insects, and the weather so that defoliation was less effective and picking started later.

The 1987 harvest was delayed by rainfall in October and November, causing ginnings through 1 December to fall behind ginnings in 1986. The 1 January total for 1984 is not a large deficiency lag compared to other years, however it was the year when November-December-January rainfall prevented the plowup of 70,000 acres of cotton ground by 28 January 1985.

Moduling of cotton facilitates faster harvest, but it also means there is more of a backlog of unginned cotton in the fields or in gin yards than a decade ago. Nonetheless, ginning records remain an aid in serving as a record and reminder of weather conditions, harvesting practices, and agricultural problems.

Table 1. Percent of Crop Ginned by Dates

Date	1978	1979	1980	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
1 Oct	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.3	4.2	0.1
15 Oct	5.6	13.0	9.7	11.4	NA	14.5	19.2	10.4
1 Nov	25.1	38.7	25.0	37.6	35.7	41.8	45.9	41.6
15 Nov	45.5	57.8	46.8	50.9	47.1	69.4	61.1	66.0
1 Dec	NA	NA	NA	81.8	81.1	87.7	79.4	86.6
15 Dec	NA	NA	NA	87.9	89.9	95.3	91.2	96.7
1 Jan	NA	NA	NA	89.5	93.9	98.5	96.4	99.0