

In The Pipeline

Delta Pine Offers Several Outstanding Cotton Varieties For 2008 Season

BETTY VALLE GEGG
MidAmerica Farmer Grower

The hot dry weather and plant bugs were the challenges for Delta cotton producers last year, according to Dave Albers, U.S. cotton germplasm manager with Delta and Pine Land, a Monsanto business, stationed at Memphis.

Albers said that plant bugs were a real challenge south of the mid-Delta, probably from Clarksdale to Greenville, Miss., or even a little south of there.

“There’s some debate on what caused that big a build-up of plant bugs last summer,” he said. “Some discussion would point toward the amount of corn since higher numbers of plant bugs were apparently associated with proximity to corn. Certainly the cotton would have been attractive to plant bugs at the same time and would have been available, too, for their feeding.”

The amount of plant bugs in the crop caused some growers to spray eight, 10, even 12 times. There was more spraying last year for that pest than what growers had experienced in the past. Still, several Deltapine varieties stood out last

The staple is about one staple unit longer, and with irrigated conditions DP 161 B2RF has had staple lengths above 37.”

The third variety Delta and Pine Land is releasing is a Roundup Ready Flex variety. It will be a little more limited in the seed supply.

“DP 174 RF contains the Roundup Ready Flex trait,” Albers said. “The most intriguing piece about it is, besides having good overall yield potential, it also has shown root knot nematode tolerance. For growers that may be looking for a variety to plant on fields with root knot nematode populations, DP 174 RF will give them an option.”

All three of these varieties fall in the range of mid-maturity to mid- to full-maturity. However, all the way up into the north Delta last year an Arizona August was experienced. With that kind of season and the number of heat units that these fields have received in August, these mid- to full-maturing varieties perform very well.

“I think growers recognize now that they have the tools to manage maturity more than they have had in the past,” he said. “Between the growth regulators and some very good plant



Dave Albers, U.S. Cotton Germplasm Manager with Delta and Pine Land, discusses the hot dry weather and plant bugs that became real challenges for Delta cotton producers.

Photo by John LaRose

year under the hot weather stress load.

“As far north as Sikeston, Mo., it is pretty unusual to see mid- or even mid- to full-maturity varieties topping trials,” said Albers. “But that is what happened in 2007. For example, DP 455 BG/RR topped the Sikeston university trial this year. Also yielding among the top varieties was DP 164 B2RF. Those are the two most commonly planted varieties in Arizona; so that says a lot when you have varieties that are showing that kind of Arizona adaptation topping trials in the far north end of the Missouri Bootheel.”

Whether those varieties will offer the highest returns for Missouri growers in 2008 is always a good question. Growers have had good performance with DP 164 B2RF in the past, especially in dryland conditions where there is concern there will be some stress, or on some clay or sandy ground where they need some stalk size.

“I think DP 164 B2RF is going to be a very good variety for growers from the south Delta to the north Delta, when placed on the right soils across the region,” Albers said.

As for 2008, there are a couple of things that look real promising. Delta and Pine Land is releasing three new varieties that will fit big areas of the Delta.

“What excites me about those varieties is that they appear to have very good combinations of yield performance and fiber quality,” Albers said. “In the mid to south Delta, DP 141 B2RF appears to have very strong yield performance, perhaps on par to compete with the yield standard, DP 555 BG/RR. That has been the challenge with any new variety.”

Albers said the company has good introductory quantities in most areas.

“If growers want to try a few bags, there will be good quantities available to try that variety,” he said. “Another one is DP 161 B2RF. DP 164 B2RF has good fiber properties, but DP 161 B2RF has some outstanding fiber properties.

mapping tools to know when and how to manage their crop, growers could probably plant more full-season varieties, so when the longer season comes along they can take advantage of that full season.”

Deltapine also has some existing varieties that will still be on line for this year. The popular DP 444 BG/RR, DP 445 BG/RR and DP 555 BG/RR will be available.

“Growers are certainly moving towards varieties with newer technologies,” he said. “We have another group of experimental lines coming through the pipeline that will be tested quite broadly this coming year and grown in seed production blocks in 2008 for sale in 2009. Delta and Pine Land has a very robust pipeline of new materials and should have some exciting things to look at across the whole range of maturities.”

On another topic, Albers noted that the EPA has announced that in certain geographies growers planting varieties that contain Bollgard II no longer need to plant a refuge of non-Bt varieties.

“There are two reasons for this,” he explained. “Part of the resistance management plan with Bollgard II is that it contains two different types of Bt genes, so the chances of having any individual bollworm or budworm developing resistance to both genes is much, much less, very remote.”

For 2008, there is a natural refuge option for Bollgard II, which extends to many cotton-production areas, excluding some locations in Texas, he said. (For additional information, please see www.monsanto.com/bollgardrefuge.)

“In other words, when growers plant Bollgard II they don’t have to plant a non-Bt variety for refuge,” Albers explained. “There are enough natural hosts for the bollworm and budworm in the wild that will serve as the needed refuge. Enough natural refuge is out there so the resistance development should be delayed or avoided.” Δ