

American Ingenuity

Technology Gives America's Cotton Industry A Much-Needed Boost

(NAPSA)—America's cotton producers have gotten a boost that will help them compete in the global marketplace.

High production costs, changes in U.S. farm policy, international competition and other forces are expected to have a long-term impact on U.S. cotton producers.

Most of the textile industry is now located in the Far East, mainly China. To be effective competitors on a global basis, experts say the U.S. cotton industry must focus on being a preferred supplier by providing consistent, reliable quality at a competitive price.

In addition to the shift in cotton milling, other factors that have made the global cotton market more competitive than ever include increased foreign cotton production, especially from India, slowing export demand from China and large inventories of unsold U.S. cotton.

"We're quite concerned about what is happening in the overall global cotton market," says Larry McClendon, a cotton producer and ginner from Marianna, Ark. "We don't really have any control over what is going on in China, India and Pakistan. All we can do is deliver the best product as economically as possible."

One bright spot for U.S. cotton producers is the recent acquisition of Delta and Pine Land Company, the world's leading cotton seed company, by Monsanto, the industry leader in cotton biotechnology.



Access to new biotech traits and high quality germplasm will help America's cotton industry deliver reliable quality at a competitive price.

"I feel pretty positive about Monsanto and Delta and Pine Land joining forces," says McClendon, who is also upcoming chairman of the National Cotton Council. "It's the best and most efficient way for the companies to deliver the biotech traits and germplasm that cotton producers need to stay competitive in today's global market."

McClendon also says that the research and development pipeline that delivers new technologies and products, such as improved fiber quality, will be enhanced by the combination of these two industry leaders.

"Both Monsanto Company and Delta and Pine Land are 100 percent focused on agriculture," says Kevin Eblen, Delta and Pine Land business lead for Monsanto, a major supplier of products and technology to cotton producers. "The opportunity to combine the cotton expertise,

biotechnology, breeding and genetic pool represented by the two companies should mean good things for the American cotton producer."

Because of improved speed and efficiency in research and development, the company expects to be able to develop new technology traits and get these traits into more cotton seed varieties faster, according to Eblen.

"Monsanto's biotech traits allow producers to control weeds and insects in cotton more efficiently and at reduced cost," Eblen explains. "As we work on our second-, third- and fourth-generations of traits, we plan to get those products into the hands of the cotton producer much more quickly."

"The next generation of technologies in development includes traits such as water-use efficiency, lygus protection and fiber-quality improvements for U.S. cotton producers," he adds.

Eblen also says that Monsanto's investment in Delta and Pine Land will further focus its efforts on cotton and increase competitive investment in the U.S. cotton industry. This ultimately could help U.S. cotton producers to be more competitive and profitable in the global marketplace.

"Using Monsanto's technology capabilities, both in breeding as well as in biotechnology, will allow us to mine Delta and Pine Land's germplasm for the fiber characteristics that we need to enhance U.S. cotton globally," Eblen says.