



COTTON

The cotton sector is smaller in production than other Kansas crops but production and ginning in the state has increased significantly since 1996. There are more than 221 active cotton growers, who together have exceeded 2.4 million bales since 1996. Several infrastructure investments, including four gins and two warehouses, have extended the potential for the crop in the future. Cotton offers farmers a highly water-efficient crop which works well as part of a rotation management system.

Despite the success cotton has seen in recent years, several barriers still pose challenges for farmers who are interested in pursuing expansion into the cotton market. Cotton is a very susceptible crop to 2,4-D and is subject to possible crop loss due to herbicide drift. Increasing the availability of 2,4-D tolerant cotton is key to reducing future crop loss. In recent years, the

status of cotton in the farm bill has varied, creating uncertainty for producers. This lack of certainty makes cotton seem a risky option, especially when considering the high cost of inputs and high capital cost of custom harvesting equipment for this specialized crop.

As we face a future with an ever-depleting water supply, a crop like cotton could be a profitable alternative. A long-term growth strategy to overcome the challenges will require input and discussion among key partners both public and private. Research will play a key role in this plan, examining issues of fertility, weed control and profitability, among others. Collaborative efforts from industry leaders and public organizations will be critical to development of a strategic growth plan.

Status

Kansas ranks 14th nationwide in production of cotton. Although a relatively small percentage of the national total, production and ginning in the state has increased significantly since 1996. As of the 2017 Ag Census there were 221 active cotton growers.

According to estimates prepared by the Kansas Department of Agriculture and based on the IMPLAN economic data model, the cotton industry in Kansas has a direct output of \$107.9 million and 598 jobs. Through indirect and induced impacts, the industry creates a total economic contribution of approximately \$169.8 million and 938 jobs.

Cotton production and ginning in Kansas has exceeded 2.4 million bales since 1996. Significant infrastructure investments have been made in Kansas cotton including the establishment of four gins located in Moscow, Pratt, Anthony and Winfield, and warehouses in Liberal and Clearwater. The number of acres planted has increased from 110,000 acres in 2021 to 165,000 acres in 2022.

Successes

- Legislation was passed in 2022 to formally establish and recognize the Kansas Cotton Boll Weevil Program, allowing Kansas to formally join the national effort to eradicate boll weevils throughout the U.S. Cotton Belt. The program was authorized to carry out statewide monitoring and rapid action, should boll weevils ever be discovered within the state.
- Access to Phylogen Enlist 2,4-D tolerant cottonseed has expanded to allow for widespread use by Kansas cotton growers. Additional varieties that are more climate-appropriate for Kansas are also being developed.
- Several million dollars has been invested throughout the state in harvesting equipment along with a \$30 million investment in the expansion of four gins locations. These gins were expanded upon in the last three years.
- Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA) added train-loading capabilities to its Altus, Oklahoma, location to create efficiencies in the supply chain for cotton to be exported. The intermodal train holds as much cotton as 220 trucks, reducing the 88,000 miles on the highway to 400. The facility began operation in 2021. PCCA serves Kansas, as well as Texas and Oklahoma.
- PCCA also built a new warehouse in Clearwater which opened in 2021. This facility is the second facility in Kansas and will provide another storage option to help alleviate transportation issues.
- The introduction of the revolutionary John Deere stripper-round baler or picker-round baler harvesting equipment has transformed the harvest, storage, and transport paradigm in Kansas. It allows increased harvest efficiency and capacity, improves field and yard storage of the round bales, and affords greater ginning options to producers through cheaper transport of their cotton to the gins of their choice. This has increased competition for customers among local and out-of-state gins.
- In 2018, the Kansas Cotton Association held informational meetings for new and existing cotton producers in Sublette and Wichita. In 2020, Cotton Incorporated Inc., in cooperation with the Kansas Cotton Association, established the Annual Great Plains Cotton Conference, held in Wichita, Kansas. At the conference, cutting-edge information from nationally recognized speakers on all aspects of the cotton industry were shared. It has been well attended by producers, ag industry, extension, and local and state government representatives.
- The 2018 Farm Bill included many of the cotton industry's policy priorities, including continuation of the seed cotton ARC/PLC program, full access to the marketing loan program, full funding for textile competitiveness programs, effective crop insurance products, no reduction in arbitrary payment limits, and addressing restrictive family farm eligibility requirements.