



Media Contact:

Heidi Nelson
Harvest PR, 503.880.6313
heidi@harvest-pr.com

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COTTONSEED INDUSTRY PREPARES FOR BIGGEST CRUSH IN SEVERAL YEARS

*More cotton acres, favorable weather and strong food industry demand
could boost cottonseed oil production 25 percent in 2010-11*

CORDOVA, Tenn. – (July 16, 2010) – U.S. cottonseed crushers are gearing up for what could be its busiest season in several years, says Ben Morgan, executive vice president of the National Cottonseed Products Association, located in Cordova, Tenn.

“Crushers are preparing to receive the first loads of new crop cottonseed, expected to be part of the largest crop we’ve seen in at least three years,” he notes. “With continued favorable weather, we expect growers will harvest nearly 3 additional million cotton acres this year, resulting in more than 18 million bales of cotton and more than 6 million tons of cottonseed, compared to last year’s 4.1 million tons.”

Ronnie Gilbert of Lubbock, Texas-based PYCO Industries, one of the largest cottonseed crushers in the South, agrees the outlook for the crop could not be better.

“We’re experiencing the best start to a season that we’ve ever had,” he says. “Weather from the recent tropical hurricanes got hung up between two highs, giving West Texas a slow, steady drenching for a solid week. We’ve already surpassed our average rainfall for a year. With the high temperatures and sunshine, the cotton just keeps growing and growing.”

More cottonseed is good news for the food industry, which relies on cottonseed oil as a quality ingredient in preparing everything from potato chips and French fries to fried catfish and tempura. Cottonseed oil is a versatile, trans-fat-free cooking oil revered among food service operators and snack food manufacturers for its “nutty buttery” neutral flavor and naturally high stability.

“With the continued strong demand for healthy, stable cooking oils, cottonseed oil production may rise by nearly 25 percent over last year,” Morgan says. “Our crushers are expected to produce close to 770 million pounds of cottonseed oil in 2010-11, compared to the 610 million pounds in 2009-10 and 669 million pounds in 2008-09.”

Morgan adds that cottonseed oil consumption is projected to surge to more than 600 million pounds in 2010-11, compared to 510 million pounds in 2009-10.

Gilbert says he has seen a significant uptick in interest for cottonseed oil this year among food manufacturers, mainly due to the anticipated stronger supply and good prices.

“It’s shaping up to be a banner year for the crushers, and for the cotton industry as a whole,” he says.

About the National Cottonseed Products Association

NCPA is the national trade association for the cottonseed processing industry. In addition to the U.S. cottonseed crushing industry, association membership includes refiners, who process cottonseed oil into semi-finished and finished products, dealers and brokers who market cottonseed products, and other firms that provide goods and services to the industry. For more information, visit cottonseed.com and cottonseedoiltour.com.

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