

REVIEW OF MID-SOUTH COTTON PRODUCTION 2008**Tom Barber****University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture****Little Rock, AR****Abstract**

Cotton acres continue to shift towards alternative crops in 2008, with an 867,000 acre, or 32% reduction from 2007. Mid-South cotton producers averaged 913lbs of lint per acre over 1.847 million harvested acres, totaling 3.51 million bales produced in 2008. Out of the Mid-South states, Arkansas continues to maintain the most acres at 640,000 followed by Mississippi at 360,000; Missouri 307,000; Tennessee 280,000; and Louisiana with 260,000 acres. The majority of varieties planted in the Mid-South continue to be Roundup Ready plus BollGard I, with the exception of Missouri where the majority of the acreage was planted in BollGard II plus Roundup Ready Flex. The trend will continue toward increased BollGard II plus Flex because BollGard I varieties will lose registration by 2010. The defining moment for southern most states in the Mid-South was rain and winds from hurricane's Gustav and Ivan. Cotton was severely damaged in Louisiana where at least 60,000 acres were not harvested because of the damage. Southern Arkansas and Southern Mississippi also were affected by heavy rains totaling close to 30 inches in some areas, resulting in losses due to hard-lock and boll rot. Other concerns across the Mid-south in 2008 include herbicide resistant weeds, populations of key insect pests and changing insect spectrum due to increase in variable crop mix across the Mid-South. Other concerns include ability to select varieties with similar maturity and yield potential as current varieties grown in the lower Mid-South. Challenges that face Mid-South cotton producers in 2009 include increased production costs associated with glyphosate-resistant weeds, increasing costs for insect control and lower commodity prices. However, opportunities do exist with new technology in production and harvest equipment, precision applications and decreased current prices for fuel and fertilizer.