

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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MECHANICAL COLLEGE AND
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Speakers Summary for Oklahoma Cotton Acreage Reduction Campaign

The following points should be stressed by speakers in the order named:

I. THE SITUATION

1. Oklahoma and the whole United States have increased the acreage in cotton enormously in the past few years (see tables in the back of Safe Farming for 1927).
2. This has resulted in a piling up of a surplus, or carryover of cotton, and in the production of more cotton than the world can use at a fair price---therefore, the low price.
3. The price of cotton is now below cost of production. (See circular on Safe Farming).
4. The result is debts, instead of profits.

II. THE REMEDY

1. No chance of changing conditions helping, such as war, which helped the situation in 1915. No chance for Congress to buy the cotton.
2. The only remedy is the same remedy that is always used, namely, reduction of surplus of cotton. This situation is the best example in history of over-production and over-supply. The only remedy is reduction of surplus. That is in the hands of the farmer. (See Safe Farming, pages 5 and 8).

III. WHY A CAMPAIGN?

1. To get farmers and business men to understand the situation, and to get them to signify their intention to do the thing which is necessary to do in their own interest. Signing a pledge is merely a check-up on intentions to do the right thing for themselves and for all other farmers.

The following points are added for information and as suggestions:

Sell Yourself. No one should go out to talk cotton acreage reduction until he has sold the idea to himself. He should read Dr. Knapp's "Safe Farming for 1927," Mr. Trent's "A Suggested System for Oklahoma Cotton Farms" and articles that appear in the press. The details of the acreage reduction question should be discussed fully in committee meetings, so that everyone may understand the full purpose and plan of the campaign. Speakers should know the facts, state the facts, not talk too long and be prepared to answer questions.

Purpose of the Campaign. The low price of cotton will reduce the acreage, but an intensive campaign will reduce it more. A fifteen per cent reduction will not solve the problem. The reduction must be such that the surplus of cotton will be eliminated in 1927. The three or four percent additional reduction which will result from an intensive campaign throughout the South will probably be the deciding factor in the question of profit or loss on cotton in 1927. Even if the campaign did not reduce the acreage a single acre, it is worth while just to put over some ideas of safer, sounder and more profitable farming. Farmers are in a receptive mood now, they are inquiring what they may do to avoid such a calamity in the future, and they are open to suggestions as to how they may change their systems of farming to make the business less hazardous. It is an opportunity that can not be overlooked. It is the duty of every loyal American citizen to add his thought and effort to the solution of the problem. Let's take advantage of this emergency to spread the gospel of safe farming, producing the living at home, building up the soil, diversification, more and better livestock, etc.

The Campaign. Almost a million farmers in other cotton states have already signed pledges to reduce their acreage. Others are signing by the thousands. Every other cotton state has an intensive sign-up campaign under way. Several states have the campaign practically completed. Oklahoma and Texas are responsible for the surplus cotton acreage. These two states have doubled their acreage since 1910. The reduction in other southern states will not solve the problem unless Oklahoma and Texas fall in line. It is an obligation that we can not avoid. The pledge shows the earnestness and sincerity of the farmers and is a mutual agreement not to work against the interests of each other.

In 1905 American farmers reduced the cotton acreage 4,108,000 acres; in 1915 they reduced the acreage 5,420,000 acres; and in 1921 they reduced

it 5,369,000 acres. They have always reduced the acreage in such times in the past and will reduce it again. In 1915 the World War created a greater demand for cotton and helped to stabilize the price. In 1921 credit arrangements enabled cotton-hungry Europe to buy large quantities of American cotton and that helped the price. For 1927 there is nothing in sight to create an increased demand for cotton or to increase the price. The only remedy is a reduction in acreage greater than any reduction that has ever been made. No spontaneous chance reduction can be relied upon, no haphazard campaign will do. The farmers of the South must reduce the acreage from 25 to 35 percent. Nothing less will stabilize the price. No such reduction will be made except through a thorough, intensive, systematic campaign that places before every farmer, banker, landlord and business man the absolute necessity of a definite reduction by every cotton farmer. The campaign must be put over. The future of your bank, your store, your land holdings, your farm, and the very life of the Southern people depends upon it. Oklahoma must not be found wanting in this emergency. Oklahoma farmers will sign and will keep their pledges if the facts are presented to them.

The Situation. The carry-over of American cotton for 1927 is conservatively estimated at 7,000,000 bales. The estimated consumption of American cotton for 1927 is 15,500,000 bales. Deducting a carry-over of 7,000,000 bales, America only needs to produce 8,500,000 of cotton in 1927 to meet the demand. To produce more will create a surplus and a surplus means lower prices and less profit. The farmers of the South will get more for a ten million bale crop produced in 1927 than for a fifteen million bale crop. If America should plant the same acreage of cotton in 1927 as in 1926 and produce the ten-year average yield of 156 pounds of lint per acre, the 1927 crop would amount to about fifteen million bales. This added to the carry-over of seven million bales would make twenty-two million bales of American cotton for market in 1927. That is a situation that must not happen and it can be prevented only by a reduction of one-third in the cotton acreage. It would be the greatest calamity that the South has faced since the Civil War.

Oklahoma Reduction. In Oklahoma it is proposed to reduce the acreage one-third, which will put Oklahoma back to the acreage of 1923. This means a reduction of 1,600,000 acres in the cotton crop of the state. It means that Oklahoma must grow only two acres of cotton in 1927 where we had three acres in 1926. It is the only way out. Every farmer, every landlord, every banker, every credit merchant, every citizen of the state owes it to his own financial interests and to the future of the state's agriculture to lend his influence and his cooperation in bringing this reduction about.

What to Grow Instead of Cotton. The big question in the whole situation is, "What can we grow instead of cotton?" Certainly there is no indication that it would be profitable to increase the acreage of broomcorn, potatoes, onions, cantaloupes, melons, cucumbers and other such cash crops. In some sections of the state there will be a considerable increase in the acreage of peanuts. Those who have studied the situation agree that most of this land should go to feed and food crops. It is true that an abundance of feed

was produced in 1926, but that was an unusual year and another such crop can not be expected in 1927. Every farmer can adopt such sources of cash income on a small scale as he is equipped to handle. The number of livestock on most farms may profitably be increased. According to the 1924 Federal Farm Census for Oklahoma, 106,000 Oklahoma farmers paid out \$15,500,000 for feed to be fed to livestock on their farms. If sufficient feed were produced on every farm of the state to feed the livestock maintained on the farm, it would take care of the surplus cotton acreage. For the amount of feed needed for livestock, see a Suggested System for Oklahoma Cotton Farms, page 5.

The farmer who does not have one or more good milk cows, one or more good brood sows, a flock of good poultry, a few head of livestock for market, a good garden, enough orchard to grow fruit for the family, enough land in feed to produce the year's supply, and who does not have something to sell besides cotton occasionally, is gambling with the future of his children, his wife and himself. The only sure way to have feed for livestock is to grow it on the farm. The only sure way to have food for the family is to produce it on the farm. The only sure way to have money to buy the things needed is to have something to sell besides cotton. The farmer who depends on cotton has one pay-day a year, on which day he pays the mortgage with his cotton. The farmer who sells cream, eggs, poultry, vegetables, butter, melons, hogs, etc. throughout the year has a pay-day once a week on which he receives the money that will meet the expenses of the family regularly and enable him to have a big pay-day in cash when he sells his cotton.

Safe Farming. These ideas are all outlined in Dr. Knapp's bulletin, "Safe Farming for 1927." (See summary on page 3).

If every farmer would plan his farming on this basis for 1927 and then follow his plan, there wouldn't be enough land left for cotton to produce more than the market needs. It is the only system that will bring permanent prosperity to the cotton farmers of the South. It is the only system of farming that will maintain the fertility of the soil. It is the only system that will preserve and upbuild the fertility of the tenant farm and thus protect the investment that the landlord has in the farm. It is the only system of farming that will enable the landlord to build better improvements on the tenant farms. It is the only system that will eliminate so much moving of tenant farmers. It is the only system that will make farm owners out of tenants. It is the only system that will make the rural school, the rural church, and rural social life what they should be. It will take care of the surplus cotton acreage and is the only way out of the present situation. The farmer, landlord, tenant, banker or merchant who doesn't adopt such a system for 1927 is hindering the progress of agriculture and of rural life in the state and is working against his own interest and that of his neighbors.

Play the game of "Two for Three," or plant in 1927 only two acres of cotton where you had three in 1926.