



November 19, 2024

Cotton Growers

**RE: Mandatory Cotton Plow down December 20, 2024**

The Cooperative Pink Bollworm Program (CPBP) has successfully prevented incipient infestations of pink bollworm from becoming established in cotton growing areas of the San Joaquin Valley for nearly 50 years. CPBP is a unique Integrated Pest Control program that has relied on trapping, sterile release, crop destruction (plowdown), and occasional pheromone treatments to keep infestations below economic impact levels since 1967.

"Cotton Host Free Period" regulations require that all cotton plants in Kern County be destroyed (plowed down) by **December 20<sup>th</sup>** as described below:

- (1) **Shredding.** All cotton stalks and debris shall be shredded by a power driven shredding device in a manner which effectively reduces stalks to a particle size permitting burial and decomposition and assures that bolls remaining in the field are broken open and the parts scattered.
- (2) **Tillage.** Following shredding as required above, the land on which any cotton plants were growing during the preceding season shall be tilled in such a manner that stubs are uprooted and loosened from soil around their roots. Roots, plant stubs, shredding debris and trash remaining from harvesting or clean-up operations **shall be mixed with surface soil.**

**The Agricultural Commissioner will inspect every cotton field in Kern County prior to December 20<sup>th</sup> to ensure compliance with "Host Free Period" regulations.** Any acreage not meeting the above requirements **after December 20<sup>th</sup>**, will be in violation and pursuant to the provisions of law, the Agricultural Commissioner will pursue civil penalties (fines) and /or abatement to bring such property into compliance at the grower's/property owner's expense.

Your cooperation is necessary in order to make the program successful and to prevent incurring added expenses related to fines and abatements. Feel free to contact me at (661)868-6300 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Brian Gatzka  
Deputy Director