



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RE:** CENTRAL COAST COTTON CONFERENCE

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### **Cotton Conference celebrates fifth anniversary**

When Lowell and Becky Zelinski first thought about holding a cotton production meeting in California, they had no idea where it would lead. But now – five years later – the Central Coast Cotton Conference has weathered the test of time and a shrinking California cotton industry and will proudly celebrate its fifth anniversary, November 27-29, 2007 at the Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa in Monterey, Calif.

“If you had told me five years ago that we’d be hosting an annual meeting for the California cotton industry, I wouldn’t have believed you,” said conference director Lowell Zelinski. “We are very proud of the conference’s success especially in light of the decline in California cotton acreage.”

Since the conference began in November 2003, cotton acres have dwindled from 850,000 to 455,000. As the numbers of acres get smaller, so does the conference’s potential audience but somehow the Zelinskis have been able to keep people coming to the meeting.

“The last two years haven’t been easy,” said Becky Zelinski, the conference organizer. “It’s difficult to get sponsors and attendees excited about a cotton meeting when acres are declining. But we think these tough times make the meeting more important than ever for the California cotton industry and hope others feel the same way.”

The Zelinskis started the meeting in 2003 to give Lowell Zelinski a new forum for the in-field cotton production meetings he was conducting for pest control advisors. Becky Zelinski suggested to him that they might be able to get more people involved if they held one meeting at an attractive location. They discussed the idea with a few people that August who agreed it was a good idea, found a location on the Central Coast and held the first meeting in November. They had about 50 people attend in 2003 and more than 150 last year.

“Lowell likes to teach and I like to plan and organize events so it seemed like a good idea and it would allow us both to do something we love,” Becky Zelinski said.

The meeting also started about the same time the National Cotton Council decided it would no longer bring its annual meeting to the western states. And even though this isn’t why the Zelinskis started their meeting, they believe it left a void for western cotton production that their conference has filled.

“Many people have told us they were no longer attending the Beltwide since most of the topics are no longer related to California cotton production, and that since California cotton production is so unique, having their own meeting actually makes more sense,” Lowell Zelinski said.

Lowell Zelinski teaches at the meeting and directs the educational focus; however, he credits much of the success of the meeting to his wife and business partner, Becky Zelinski. But both Zelinskis agree that the sponsors and attendees are most important.

“We are very thankful for the support we receive from our sponsors and attendees as the meeting couldn’t happen without them,” Becky Zelinski said.

The Zelinskis also believe the meeting is successful because they – along with a volunteer steering committee – work hard each year to develop new programs and topics, bring in new speakers, and create new events to make the meeting worthwhile to new and repeat guests alike.

“Each year we try to make the meeting a little different and a little better than the last. We received more positive feedback about last year’s meeting than ever before, but there’s always room for improvement,” Becky Zelinski said.

Some of the changes for 2007 include: a later date since some felt the meeting was a little too early during late harvest years; a benefit golf tournament; three half-day sessions; a Mite Fax Live presentation; and more speakers and topics than ever before. There will be 17 topics presented by more than 18 speakers which include professors, farm advisors and experts who will discuss everything from soil fertility to cotton physiology. Western Farm Press is also giving away a free trip to the conference and Toyota Motor Company will be giving away free rides to the conference.

This year’s sponsors include Golden Bale sponsor Dupont, and Bayer Crop-Science, Western Farm Press, CASE IH, Dunavant of California, Precision Ag, Inc., Arysta LifeScience, California Cotton Growers Association, Dow AgroSciences/Phytogen, UPI, AmVac, Calcot, Cotton Inc., MANA, Monsanto, Supima, Syngenta and Wilbur-Ellis Company.

For complete details about the meeting or to register, visit [www.cottonconference.com](http://www.cottonconference.com) or call (888) 238-6658.