

Cotton Winter Nursery Relocation

The Cotton Winter Nursery (CWN) is a collaboration between the National Cotton Council, the USDA-ARS, NIFA, and the SAAESD. Leadership of the CWN Steering Committee has decided to relocate the cotton nursery within the next couple years, either to a different site in Mexico or to Puerto Rico. Primary reasons for this relocation include; inability to obtain import permits for cotton genetically modified traits for political reasons, current INIFAP administration's insistence on back payment of reduced land fees, and INIFAP's recent demand for a new agreement that would place nursery operations management under their supervision. These reasons, along with an increasing risk for US travelers in the state of Colima, have resulted in this decision.

A Puerto Rico site would have many advantages, including; no foreign transfer of seed, easier access for US breeders, and University Puerto Rico, ARS, and private company experience with winter nurseries. An initial trip to Puerto Rico will occur on September 11-14 to visit potential sites and meet with university and private company personnel managing those sites. The group consisted of Bill Norman, Vice President Technical Services, National Cotton Council; Richard Percy, ARS Research Leader, Crop Germplasm Research Unit, College Station, TX; Don Jones, Director of Physiology, Genetics, Biotechnology, and Plant Pathology Research, Cotton Incorporated; and Eric Young, Executive Director, SAAESD.

Conversations with various industry and university scientists familiar with Puerto Rico indicated that the best location would be along the southern and southwestern edge of the island, primarily around Ponce, PR. Therefore, the initial visit concentrated on sites in this area. Elvin Roman has helped us identify the following people and sites that will be visited on this trip.

Prof. Irma Cabrera, Superintendent
Juana Díaz UPR/AES Substation

Prof. Hector Rodríguez Pastrana, Superintendent
Lajas UPR/AES Substation
Location of a rice winter nursery with LSU AgCenter and Texas AgriLife Research

Doug Miller, Technology Manager and CEO
Hannah Hudson, Operations Manager
Illinois Crop Improvement Association
Primary location at Potala Pastilio

Juan Carlos Justiniano, General Manager
Dianne Ortiz, Assistant General Manager
3rd Millennium Genetics
A service company that manages 19 different crops from 12 different countries, with a staff of 12 agronomists and 30 regular employees, as well as 150 to 175 seasonal workers during high season. Primary location is at Santa Isabel.