

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **2014-15 Emerging Leaders Program Participants Chosen**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – The National Cotton Council’s Emerging Leaders Program class for 2014-15 has been selected.

Sponsored by a grant to The Cotton Foundation from Monsanto, the program not only provides class participants with an in-depth look at the U.S. cotton industry infrastructure and the business and political arenas in which it operates but also gives them intensive professional development training.

NCC Chairman Wally Darneille said the Emerging Leaders Program “is designed to encourage and equip industry members so they are better prepared to handle the responsibilities of being a U.S. cotton industry leader.”

The Texas marketing cooperative official said the program helps participants gain a better understanding of the NCC’s role, including its programs, policy development and implementation process; 2) Cotton Council International’s central mission of developing and maintaining export markets for U.S. cotton, manufactured cotton products and cottonseed products; 3) the broad spectrum of issues that affect U.S. cotton’s economic well-being; and 4) the U.S. political process.

The Emerging Leaders Program, initiated with the 2013-14 class, encourages participants to increase their involvement in these and other NCC activities. The program also helps them enhance their communications skills -- including presentation and business etiquette, instruction for engaging with the news media, and utilizing social media tools and tactics.

Those chosen for the 2014-15 class are: Christopher Alphin, a ginner with Commonwealth Gin, Windsor, Va.; Jon Bibb, a Tunica, Miss., producer; Scott Gunn, a manufacturer with Swift Spinning, Inc., Columbus, Ga.; Bradley Harrison, a Yuma, Ariz., producer; Chad Mathis, Jr., an Arlington, Ga., producer; Travis Mires, an O’Donnell, Tex., producer; John Romines, a merchant with Cargill Cotton, Memphis, Tenn.; Stacy Smith, a Wilson, Tex., producer; Brett Underwood, a

warehouseman with The Trinity Company, and Steven White, an executive with Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, both in Lubbock, Tex.

Class members will participate in three sessions. The first session, set for the week of June 15 in Memphis and St. Louis, will provide an orientation to the NCC, professional development/communication skills training and an agribusiness briefing. Class members will see policy development at the NCC's 2015 Annual Meeting in February during the second session while the third session in Washington, D.C., will provide a focus on policy implementation and international market development.

As the U.S. cotton industry's unifying force, the Memphis-based National Cotton Council carries out a mission of ensuring the seven industry segments' ability to compete effectively and profitably in the raw cotton, oilseed and U.S.-manufactured product markets at home and abroad.

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