

COVID-19 and Cotton in Sudan

Ahmed M. Mustafa

Agricultural Research Corporation -ARC-, ARC- cotton, 7, Wad Medani, 126, Sudan



Ahmed Mohamed Mustafa: Cotton Research coordinator at Agricultural Research Corporation, Wad Medani, Sudan. Dr Mustafa is widely travelled. He has considerable experience in agronomy, soil science and plant breeding. Dr Mustafa has contributed significantly to cotton research and development in Sudan. He has been instrumental in the introduction on new technologies into the country.

In Sudan, cotton has been harvested but all ginning factories and spinning mills are closed; consequently, seed cotton prices have been negatively affected. Companies failed to export their cotton which has had a direct bearing on costs in stores. Cotton exported by trading companies is stuck in the target countries, but payments have not as yet been made. These companies also operate as contracting companies which finance farmers for crop production operations. Trade and export disruptions have a direct impact on the financial security of companies and availability of cash for cotton farming.

Land preparations start in November and continue through May; most of these practices have been affected by the spread of the disease. Cotton sowing for the coming season is expected to be affected by delays in seed availability, input supply, preparatory arrangements and input-distribution.

Sudan imports all cotton input chemicals, such as fertilisers, seed dressers and

herbicides; the prices of these chemicals wherever available have jumped 3-4 times. The limited availability of these chemicals shall seriously impact cotton production, especially due to poor weed management on account of weak herbicide supplies.

Given the fact that COVID-19 shall affect the whole world, Sudanese farmers will be focusing on food crops; sorghum, millet and maize to secure their home food and for exports.

As of now, the COVID-19 damage is continuing across the globe; the situation of cotton markets is uncertain, and farmers are hesitant to plant cotton. However, it is clear that raw cotton prices have crashed, textile processing has come to a standstill, clothing stores are closed, and fabric demand has crashed. In light of these developments, it is clear that farmers will be very reluctant to prefer cotton farming over food crops. Therefore, a huge cut in cotton areas can be anticipated in the forthcoming season.

