



Southern Cotton Ginners Association

874 Cotton Gin Place Memphis, TN 38106

Phone: 901.947.3104 Fax: 901.947.3103

www.southerncottonginners.org

For Immediate Release

Contact: Tim Price

901.494.6977

tim.price@southerncottonginners.org

Rising Costs and Global Competition Push U.S. Agriculture Toward Breaking Point

New survey shows U.S. farmers highly concerned about future competitiveness in a changing global market

Memphis, Tennessee – March 26, 2026 -- U.S. farmer competitiveness in the global marketplace, the cost-price squeeze of inputs and commodity prices, and market consolidation and corporate power, were top of mind concerns for most individuals responding to a recent survey conducted by the Southern Cotton Ginners Association of attendees to the Mid-South Farm & Gin Show.

The survey was just one component of efforts to take the pulse of producers at a critical time in the agriculture cycle. The Mid-South Farm & Gin Show created a forum for producers and industry representatives to come together around the concerns identified in the survey. A panel of ag lenders, seed, crop protection, and marketing specialists outlined ways they are working with producers and ginner. Featured speakers also highlighted efforts that can help address some of the issues facing farmers.

"Farmers are usually optimistic in the spring with planting, but we're seeing cautious pessimism about the future," said Tim Price, Southern Cotton Ginners Association Executive Vice President and Mid-South Farm & Gin Show manager. "In the survey, expert presentations and in conversations throughout the event, people pointed to the need for improved competitiveness in a dynamic global market."

The top concerns and potential solutions to what many call an expanding crisis in American agriculture were crystallized through the feedback in our survey, Price says. "Even with substantial federal aid and significant movement toward much-needed legislation, more must be done to correct the inequity in global agriculture."

Key findings in the survey included:

- **Cautiously Pessimistic Outlook** – More than half of respondents (52.1%) expect to be worse or much worse off over the next two years and only 9.0% expect improvement. Part of the reason for pessimism was stated clearly by an ag banker who said, "Many farmers are not going to get operating loans this year."
- **U.S. Agriculture Losing Global Competitiveness** – More than 75 percent responded that U.S. agriculture has declined in competitiveness over the past 5 years. Multiple respondents cited Brazil's competitive advantages - double-cropping capability, lower input costs, fewer regulations, and aggressive expansion. One landowner who recently visited Brazil reported: "Just spent two weeks in Brazil during their soybean harvest and cotton and corn planting season. Amazing what they are doing. And really scary when you look at their scale and advancements."

- **The Cost-Price Squeeze** is presenting an existential crisis. More than 80 percent of respondents identified commodity prices as a top concern, and 60.1% flagged input costs creating an unprecedented margin squeeze. "Don't foresee us farming in 10 years, no money to be made. Will probably auction off everything and file bankruptcy," according to one respondent.
- **Market Consolidation and Corporate Power** – A major recurring theme was the concentration of market power among agricultural input suppliers. One respondent said: "Big fertilizer companies need to be investigated heavily for market manipulation."
- **Rural Communities in Decline** –The economic hits are taking a toll on local economies and services. A quarter of respondents identified land going out of production as a top concern. A cotton farmer said "We are losing local farmers at a fast pace and our communities are dying off... larger producers swoop in and rent it up. They aren't from our state and have no investment into our communities that is why our communities are failing."

Other concerns: global trade challenges – 39%; legislation/regulatory policy – 29%; farm labor shortages – 29%; stress and mental health – 20%, which is especially notable given the farming culture; and succession planning – 19%. An [executive summary](#) is posted on the Southern Cotton Ginners Association website.

"There was rich dialog among attendees at the Mid-South Farm & Gin Show on how to address the current agriculture situation, and what it means for the future," Price says. "There were recommendations specific for the cotton industry. For example, the Buying America Cotton Act (BACA), bipartisan legislation introduced in January, would establish a tax credit to incentivize the consumption of products made with American-grown cotton. Additional opportunities include incentivizing domestic cotton use over synthetic fibers, addressing the technology fee burden on U.S. cotton farmers, and restoring the cotton gin infrastructure."

The Trump administration is considering several other remedies, Price says, including additional financial aid. "Even with the substantial financial support already distributed and movement toward much-needed legislation, that will not make us whole," he says. "The entire cost of production structure needs to be evaluated in view of the U.S. farmer's competitiveness. That is the larger question coming out of the survey responses, presentations, and farmer-to-farmer discussions."