

# TALKIN' COTTON

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Localized wind and hail storms, too much rainfall in some areas, and not enough rain in others have been the reason for most of the calls this week. I have observed a lot of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> leaf cotton that has been damaged by the storms. Even though moisture came with the storm, it came so fast, and the dry wind in following days was so severe, that some producers do not have enough moisture to replant. This is late enough in the planting season that if at all possible, we need to try to keep the stand we have. When evaluating damage, we need to look at the terminal for initiation of new growth, and the plant needs to have a root free of seedling disease to be able to recover. If the terminal is lost, the plant will utilize vegetative branches to build the plant. Cotton with four true leaves will have the potential to produce three vegetative branches below the terminal. Each of these branches will essentially develop into a cotton plant, causing the plant to be more “bushy” than a normal plant. Cotton in the cotyledon stage that loses its terminal will not develop into a plant. If you observe plants with extremely large cotyledon leaves with absence of terminal growth, the plant has lost its terminal and will not survive. It is best to wait a few days following a storm to evaluate the cotton to allow the plant to start initiation of new terminal growth. Many times when looking across a field of damaged cotton, you can observe the light green color of new terminal growth. Count plants with new terminal growth and if you can count 16,000 plants on dryland or 20,000 plants per acre on irrigated, and if there are not too many skips over three feet on adjacent rows, the crop is normally worth taking to harvest. On 40 inch rows, you can measure 13.1 feet of row, count the plants, and multiply your count by 1,000 to determine the number of plants per acre. For 36 inch row spacing, measure 14.5 feet, and for 30 inch rows, measure 17.4 feet and multiply your counts by 1000.

