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FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2009

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N.C. boll weevil assessment for 2009 is \$1.25 per acre

RALEIGH – The board of the Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation of North Carolina has set the boll weevil assessment for 2009 at \$1.25 per acre of cotton. The amount is unchanged from 2008.

The fee supports the foundation's efforts to monitor cotton acreage for any re-introduction of the boll weevil and to respond promptly with eradication treatments if necessary.

"Cotton is still a significant crop in our state," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "We need to continue to protect our cotton by making sure the boll weevil doesn't come back to North Carolina."

The boll weevil was eradicated in North Carolina in 1986. Since then, only minor re-introductions have occurred, and a system of traps has been useful for monitoring and early detection, Troxler said.

Contractors will install and monitor traps from late summer until after harvest and frost. Because the focus of North Carolina's program has shifted from eradication to monitoring, farmers should anticipate the number of traps in fields will decrease. As such, each trap will be critical, and farmers are encouraged to contact the foundation if traps are damaged or knocked down.

More than 11,000 traps were placed and maintained in North Carolina in 2008, with each trap monitoring an average of 48 acres. Farmers in 54 counties grew more than 420,000 acres of cotton last year. Counties with the highest acreage were Halifax, Northampton and Martin.

To allow for trapping and monitoring, cotton growers are required to certify cotton acreage information with their local U.S. Farm Service Agency office by June 30.

To learn more about the boll weevil monitoring program, go online to www.ncagr.com/plantind/plant/entomol/BW.htm.