



### Cotton Newsletter, August 2012, Volume 3, Number 2

The cotton season took off on a good note from a production standpoint. There has been no major problem with diseases or insects and we recently had some rains especially in the southwest that will prove useful for cotton. In contrast, lint prices have not been so encouraging, with nearly a 17% fall in price between January and July 2012. However, there are some indicators pointing to stronger cotton prices in the months ahead. These indicators include possible reduction in 2011-12 carryover and lower than expected cotton production in India. The situation will become more clear toward the end of the year.

Please feel free to send your comments, information and contributions to John Idowu (email: [jidowu@nmsu.edu](mailto:jidowu@nmsu.edu); phone: 575-646-2571).

If you are interested in previous editions of the Cotton Newsletter, please feel free to download at <http://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/ifcpm/cotton-production.html>

### Picking Dry Cotton

One of the main topics of cotton growing season conversation across the cotton belt this year, just like last, has been way too much or way too little water and what to do about it. While talking about picking dry cotton during a drought may seem ridiculous, anything can happen during harvest season and often does. It is already August and it won't be long before the pickers are in the field once again. I want to talk about water in cotton and how important it is for the producer to pick dry cotton for good handling of the seed cotton in the gin.

All cotton gins are equipped to handle too much water by some type of seed-cotton drying and most are equipped to handle too little water by some type of moisture restoration. Drying and/or moisture restoration both can significantly affect fiber quality, must be properly handled, and every ginner out there worth their salt already knows that. I hope every cotton producer this season has a clear open harvest season so that every ginner has nothing but smooth running dry harvested, well moduled cotton with good covers that has been picked dry and life is good.

#### NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

**PICKING DRY COTTON**

**NMSU CENTENNIAL FIELD DAY**

**COTTON INC. STATE SUPPORT**

**COTTON PRICES**

However, as we in the Southwest know, Mother Nature can be very fickle and we may, through no fault of our own, have to deal with significant amounts of wet cotton from rain or heavy dew. By wet cotton, I mean seed cotton in the range that is either going to spoil or at least discolor the lint if stored for very long in a module. In some wetter parts of the cotton belt, wet cotton is seed cotton whose seed is soft and doesn't crack when you bit on it and may already be spoiling on the stalk. However for the Southwest, wet cotton is usually seed cotton whose seed has dried after opening, but whose fiber is still too wet from a recent rain or picked too early in the morning after a heavy dew. Depending on the amount of moisture, harvesting and moduling wet cotton will always result in some level of decreased fiber quality – usually worse HVI color and higher trash content – as well as increased processing problems at the gin.

Not everyone agrees on the best way to dry seed cotton as there are at least a dozen or more drying systems or system variations that are currently being used in U.S. cotton gins. However, any effective drying system must quickly mechanically open up and keep open the seed cotton to allow heated air to move through the fiber and carry away moisture. In addition, any effective system must allow enough time for this moisture transfer to take place. Laboratory tests have shown that heated air at 200EF moving through individual locks of seed cotton at 1200 feet per minute can take fiber moisture from 20% to 8% in ten seconds. The point is that it doesn't take very long or very hot air to dry wet cotton fiber under very open ideal conditions. However wet cotton does not come into the gin under ideal conditions and is very difficult to initially mechanically open. About the only tools a ginner has to handle wet cotton is to either decrease seed cotton throughput rate to help open up the cotton or increase drying temperature or some combination of these. Cotton feed rate can be decreased which might help the feed works initially open up the seed cotton a little better which will improve drying but decrease bales per hour ginning rate and increase ginning costs. The primary tool a ginner has to use is turning up the drying temperature. Increased drying temperatures increase fuel consumption and the costs of ginning but can also easily get the fiber too hot which can affect fiber length, uniformity, strength and short fiber content when compared to seed cotton harvested at 6% fiber moisture and ginned with little or no heat.

Therefore, if moisture and wet cotton are issues when it comes harvest time this year, keep the picker out of the field and let the cotton dry on the stalk as much as possible. By bringing dry cotton to the gin you will improve your grades and help the gin do a better job of efficiently ginning your cotton. Here is hoping for a good dry harvest season this fall after some good rains in August.

Contribution by Ed Hughs - Supervisory Agricultural Engineer, USDA/ARS Southwest Cotton Ginning Research Laboratory, Las Cruces, NM.

## **NMSU Leyendecker Plant Science Center Centennial Field Day**

The general public is invited to attend this family-friendly event! Lunch will be available for purchase between the morning historical session and the afternoon of demonstrations and displays.

DATE: August 25, 2012; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday,

VENUE: Leyendecker Plant Sci. Research Center, 7215 Plant Science Circle, Las Cruces, NM

### JOIN US IN CELEBRATING

- The New Mexico Statehood Centennial
- The history of agriculture in New Mexico
- NMSU's agricultural tradition
- Current NMSU research and Extension initiatives

For more information, contact 575-646-2281.



## **Cotton Incorporated State Support Funding**

*Call for Proposals-Cotton Incorporated State Support Program - 9/7/2012 Deadline*

Each year 7.5% of grower contribution into the Research and Promotion Program is made available for the Producer State Support Program (SSP). These funds are divided among the states according to production. Within each state is a grower led committee that sets priorities, request proposals from their local research institutions and allocates their share of the SSP funds.

All projects proposed by the Support Program Committee(s) must adhere to the overall objective of the Cotton Research and Promotion Program. Essentially, that the overall objective is to improve the profit opportunities of U.S. cotton producers and importers through programs that:

1. Improve producer profitability,
2. Strengthen cotton's competitive position,
3. Expand (and/or maintain) domestic and global markets and uses for cotton, and
4. Are consistent with the strategies and activities of the core program.

Please submit proposals to be reviewed by the State Support Committee to:

rflynn@nmsu.edu

No Later than September 7, 2012, Noon, MDT.

Each project submitted must include:

- Descriptive title of the project
- Name of the Principal Investigator and Cooperators
- Name of the Performing Institution, Company, or Organization
- Name of the Responsible Financial Officer
- Objective
- Justification
- If appropriate, a review of related research
- An outline of the plan of work
- A budget
- Qualifications of the principle investigator and cooperators
- Budget should not exceed \$7,000.

## **Cotton Prices**

	Prices Received by Farmers (Upland cotton)* cents/pound	Cotton "A" index* cents/pound
January	90.3	101.1
February	92.4	100.7
March	90.2	99.5
April	90.9	100.1
May	84.6	88.53
June	77.3	82.18
July	76.6	83.97

\*Source: National Cotton Council of America

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