

A GUIDE FOR COTTON BALE STANDARDS



PREFACE

This Guide's goal is to provide individuals and companies involved in handling cotton bales a communication tool depicting bale conditions generally acceptable to receiving warehouses and textile mills.

The first publication of "A Guide for Cotton Bale Standards," in 1982, was developed due to the lack of clear definitions for those bale conditions expected by U.S. textile mills. That Guide successfully communicated those definitions among ginners, warehousemen, shippers and receivers. Photographs of many common bale defects were used to visually explain inferior bale standards. Photographs of exceptional bale conditions were displayed as the conditions the textile community desired.

Since 1982, bale conditions have changed significantly. Flat and compressed bales were the norm while gin universal density and gin standard density bales were few in number. Now, gin UD bales make up all of the U.S. crop. Sampling processes have become less destructive to the bale package. Instead of cutting through the bag to collect samples, most samples are cut and pulled at the press before the bale is covered. These fundamental changes in practices have improved the initial package conditions – thus raising the standard. Plastic strapping is overtaking wire tires as the dominant bale strapping material, providing a safer opening process.

Advances in baseline standards justified updating the communication tool upon which industry segments rely. With continued improvements to packaging materials and further automation of bale handling and processing, the Joint Cotton Industry Bale Packaging Committee (JCIBPC) will continue to inform keep the industry updated on key developments including providing this "A Guide for Cotton Bale Standards."

GRADING SYSTEM

These standards are a visual grading system for evaluating cotton bale conditions and are applicable for all.

Bales are to be placed into one of three categories—Grade A, Grade B and Other—by comparison with the photographic standards.

Grade A conditions are sought after for each and every bale ginned in the United States, by all people involved in delivering and receiving cotton. Grade A bales are always considered acceptable and are characterized by complete enclosure among other things. Complete coverage is the goal of bale packaging and is desirable for optimum prevention of cotton contamination from dirt, grime, oil, and grease.

Grade B bales fundamentally differ from Grade A bales by the lack of complete coverage. Since Grade B bales allow for exposed cotton, there is the potential for lint contamination from dirt, grime, oil and grease. Grade B bales may be considered acceptable provided exposed lint is clean, and heads and sample holes are completely covered.

Conditions other than Grade A or B represent a poor level of packaging coverage and restraint. Bales fitting this characterization should be repaired or repackaged with JCIBPC approved materials so as to improve conditions to Grade B or better. If improvements are not made, bales will be subject to rejection.

If bales must be rejected, it is recommended that action be taken immediately upon arrival at the receiving facility. This Guide may be utilized not only at U.S. textile mills but also at warehouse facilities. In addition, if unacceptable bale conditions are created solely by failure of an experimental material approved for tests and identified with the JCIBPC, a waiver of these standards is recommended. In those cases, failure should be reported to the JCIBPC for its consideration in future decisions involving those materials.

Developed by the JCIBPC, these definitions and photographs are meant to assist in the trade of cotton. These Grades may be used by textile manufacturers and warehousemen as requirements in contracts along with other conditions such as bale size and a no contamination designation. Characterizations of these Grades refer to the most recent annual publication of “Specifications for Cotton Bale Packaging Materials,” published by the JCIBPC. A copy may be obtained online or by contacting the National Cotton Council.

GRADE A



Grade A bales are characterized by the following:

- Completely covered
- Covered with JCIBPC approved packaging and recommended patching material
- JCIBPC specified number of ties
- Wire knots on ball of bale
- All ties recessed into flat side of bale
- Square (level) heads
- Permanent Bale Identification (PBI) tag on bale

Grade A bales are always considered acceptable. The recipients of cotton bales expect Grade A conditions and many times specifically require Grade A conditions in contracts.



GRADE A



GRADE A



Repaired bales must be restored to initial configuration prior to occurrence of broken ties or torn bagging.

◀ Bale configuration repaired adequately.



◀ JCIBPC recommended patching material completely covers clean cotton.

GRADE B

Grade B bales are characterized by the following:

- Completely covered heads
- Sample holes covered with JCIBPC recommended patching material
- Some exposed lint, if free of contaminants
- Covered with JCIBPC approved packaging
- JCIBPC specified number of ties
- Wire knots on ball of bale
- Identification on bale

EXCEPTIONS: Bales with broken tie(s) in which the basic configuration is unchanged are allowed a variance from this standard.

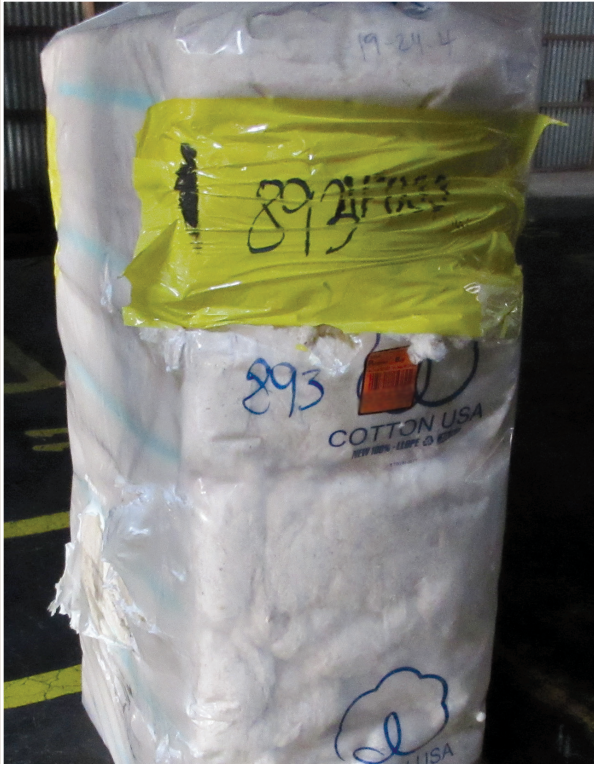


Sample holes are covered. ▶



Heads are completely covered. ▶

GRADE B



◀ The PBI tag is torn off or unreadable, however the bale must still be identifiable.

▼ Small tears are acceptable if exposed lint is free of contaminants.



▲ Bale has non-level heads.

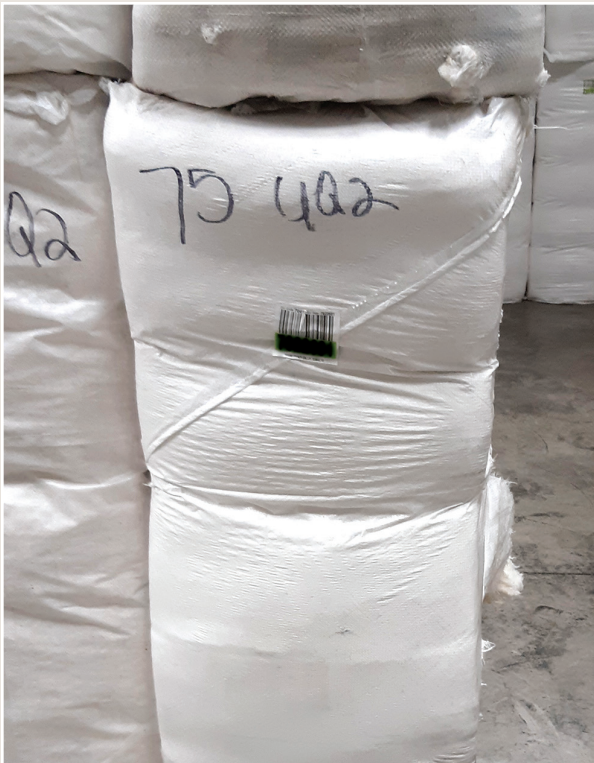


GRADE B

Improper tag placement under bagging. ►



Ties are not recessed causing bag tears. ▼



▲ Exception: Broken ties are not altering bale configuration.

Oil/grease on bagging. ▲

OTHER



All other bale conditions are inadequate for protecting cotton bales from contamination and in some cases hinder processing or consumption. Any bales with unacceptable conditions should be repaired or repackaged with JCIBPC approved materials so as to improve conditions to Grade B or better.

- ◀ Not JCIBPC approved bagging — black sewing thread unacceptable.
- ▼ Rust from ties is on lint.



- ▲ Wire knots are on flat side of bale.



OTHER

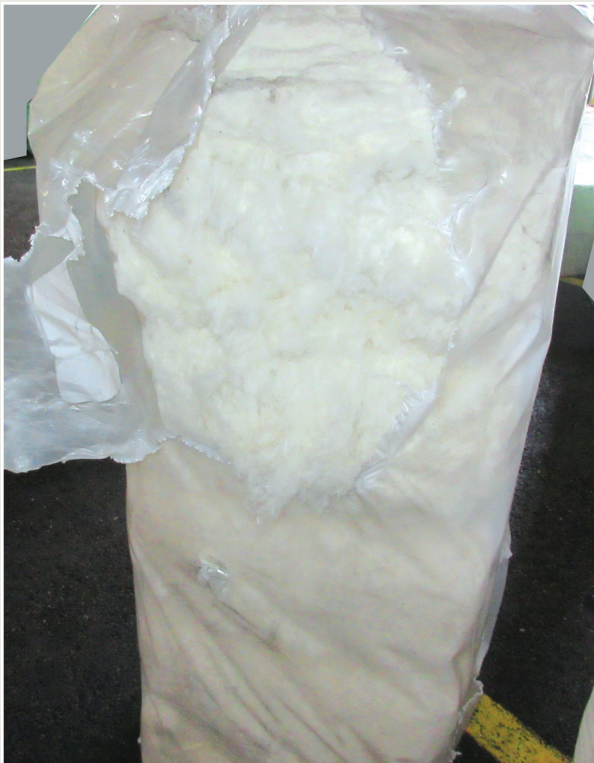
Contamination is unacceptable. ▼



▼ Open heads expose lint to contaminants.



▼ Bale lacks bagging.

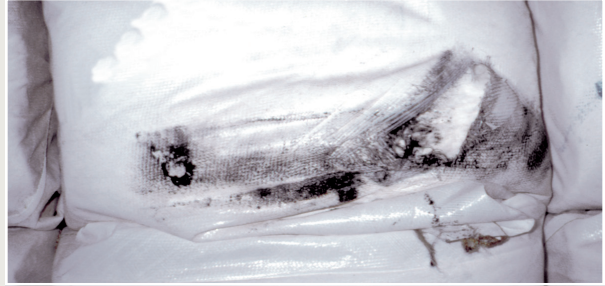


OTHER

Excessive floor dirt is on lint. ▼



▼ Grease is on lint.



Large tears exposing lint are unacceptable. ▼



▼ No identification is found on bale.



OTHER

Base configuration is significantly altered. ▼



▼ Fire damage.



Bale configuration is not repaired adequately. ▼



▼ Water damage.





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