

COTTON PHYSIOLOGY TODAY

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CONTAMINATION — A COTTON QUALITY CONCERN

Doug Herber

An often overlooked enemy of cotton quality, and many times one of the worst, is contamination. Any time grease, oil, dirt, or foreign objects like plastic, rubber, or pieces of bale ties are allowed to get into the fiber, serious problems are created in textile processing. Contaminants may end up in finished fabrics and create seconds or defective materials which are costly to textile mills and cotton producers.

Mills frequently express concerns about contamination. In some cases, mills have traced specific problems back to a gin and/or producer and have indicated that, if the problem persists, they will discontinue purchasing cotton from these individuals. So contamination does have a definite effect on the producer. Contamination problems can be greatly reduced through simple, inexpensive, yet effective procedures. A National Cotton Council brochure entitled "Prevent Lint Contamination," identifies various causes of contamination and explains techniques to prevent them from occurring. These guidelines are fairly simple and by following them producers can reduce the possibility of their cotton becoming contaminated.

To reduce the possibility of contamination resulting from inferior bale packaging, cotton should be packaged in only those materials which meet the "Specifications for Bale Packaging Materials." These specifications contain descriptions of bale packaging products which, after numerous studies and extensive testing, have been approved by the Joint Cotton Industry Bale Packaging Committee and adopted by USDA. You also should remember that your cotton must be packaged in specification materials to be eligible for the Commodity Credit Corporation loan.

Making and keeping U.S. cotton a top quality product requires teamwork and we must remember that contamination is a quality factor. Providing contamination-free, high quality cotton helps to ensure that textile mills can continue to produce high quality cotton yarns and fabrics.

About the Authors

Doug Herber is Manager of Marketing/Processing Technology in the National Cotton Councils Technical Service Department. Doug has primary responsibilities in cotton quality including bale packaging, contamination, and cotton grading systems. Growers and ginners with specific questions in these areas are encouraged to reach Doug at the Memphis office.

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The National Cotton Council (NCC) is the central organization representing all seven sectors of the U.S. cotton industry: producers, ginners, warehousemen, merchants, cottonseed crushers, cooperatives and manufacturers. A majority of elected delegates from each sector must approve all NCC policies, thus assuring unity of purpose and action.

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