

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE BALE PRESS CAPACITIES**Ross D. Rutherford****Lummus Corporation****Lubbock, TX****Thomas D. Valco****USDA, ARS/NIFA****Stoneville, MS****Harrison Ashley****National Cotton Council****Cordova, TN****Abstract**

Each year the National Cotton Ginners Association and UADA ARS Gin Labs host three regional Gin Schools to provide research and development updates. With support from industry partners, current topics to improve processing efficiency and operation are presented.

With the ever-increasing gin plant processing rates, there has been a need for many gins to increase the capacity of their bale presses. There are many means by which this can be accomplished. Some can be as simple as battery condenser relocation or installation of an effective lint cotton conditioning system. Other, more complex solutions, could include new hydraulic systems that replace or augment outdated pumping units, new press controls that replace hard-to-source or obsolete electronics, or installation of an automatic tying system that can reduce labor and speed the tying cycle time. Seasonal bale volumes processed through bale presses today necessitate a much more focused effort on proper maintenance and adjustment, in order to minimize downtime and eliminate the possibility of catastrophic component failure during the season. All the strategies discussed facilitate getting more bales pressed in a given timeframe, which lowers cost and increases overall gin plant efficiency.

Gin Schools offer other important training for gin managers, owners and certified ginners. For additional information on dates and locations of these training activities go to <http://www.cotton.org/ncga/ginschool/index.cfm>.