

**ANALYZING THE CURRENT RETURNS AND POTENTIAL MARKET BY HARVESTING METHOD FOR WEST TEXAS****COTTON****Janani R. Thapa****Conrad P. Lyford****Eric Hequet****Jeff Johnson****Texas Tech University****Lubbock, TX****Abstract**

A key decision in cotton production is harvest method. This choice surprisingly has many economic consequences by altering not only economic returns but also the quality of final product. In particular, picker harvesting and ginning practices may be useful to preserve and enhance the fiber quality of long staple varieties widely in use in West Texas. This article looks at differences in cost and price premium for sample drawn from cotton bales produced at commercial quantities that were ginned based on harvest method, and evaluated in the years 2009, 2010 and 2011. Results suggest cotton farmers and markets may want to reconsider typical stripper harvesting and ginning practices for irrigated cotton because there seems to be potential for reaching higher market segments. Comparatively picker harvesting is costly but provides the quality of yield in demand by higher end market segments, especially in demand for ring spinning purposes.

This paper will be submitted to a journal for peer review. To get a complete version contact [conrad.lyford@ttu.edu](mailto:conrad.lyford@ttu.edu).