

**NOTES ON HISTORY, GUIDELINES, AND
PROCEDURES FOR THE COTTON ECONOMICS
AND MARKETING CONFERENCE**
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The purpose of this document is to provide perspective and background for the operation of the Cotton Economics and Marketing Conference. The following description mixes elements of historical background on the Conference and operating procedures as they have evolved.

The Cotton Economics and Marketing Conference is one of several technical cotton conferences sponsored by the National Cotton Council of America. The first Economics and Marketing Conference was held in 1977. There was a Proposed Organization Plan drafted by Earl Stennis, O.A. Cleveland, and Don DeBord, who was then on the National Cotton Council staff. That document, while not a binding set of By-Laws, is the only operating document for the Conference to date. (This paper expands on that initial Plan by describing practices as they have evolved.) The mission of the Economics and Marketing Conference was, and continues to be, to provide a forum for presentation of research results and discussion of issues related to the economic aspects of production, marketing, processing, and use of cotton.

The group functions with an "open door" philosophy, inviting and attempting to include all parties interested in the economic aspects of the cotton industry. A concerted effort is made to avoid technical research jargon to the extent possible in the meetings so as to not discourage non-economists from participation. The papers published by the National Cotton Council in the Beltwide Cotton Conferences Proceedings, Cotton Economics and Marketing Section, often contain more technical jargon and analytical detail than is included in the oral presentations. The consensus continues to favor this approach because it fosters the participation of a more diverse group of people with a wider range of perspectives.

Leadership of the group is largely voluntary, with those showing willingness to work and contribute being given responsibility and authority. The "offices" held are Chair, Vice-Chair, a Steering Committee, and Historian. The Historian position was added at the 1995 meeting to help provide the "institutional memory" for the group. At the business meeting held during each year's conference, a new Vice-Chair is elected. The sitting Vice-Chair automatically becomes the new Chair the following year. The Steering Committee consists of the Chair, Vice-Chair, the three

previous Chairs, and the Historian, a non-voting member. The Historian is elected for an indefinite term--for as long as he/she is willing to fill the role. The Chair uses the Steering Committee when questions of policy must be resolved and to serve as a nominating committee for the Vice-Chair position. The agreed-upon tradition has been to rotate the Chair position among certain generally designated "groups" within cotton economics. Initially, the rotation was USDA-University Research-Extension on a 3-year basis. This rotation has since evolved to a USDA-University-Industry 3-year rotation. The purpose of this rotation is to avoid any particular "bias" in the conference or in the philosophy guiding the programs.

The procedure followed from the inception of the conference in 1977 has been to accept all papers proposed for presentation as long as they can be included within the two-day format for the conference. In instances when too many submissions are received, the Chair has authority to determine, with advice from the Steering Committee if he/she wishes, which papers must be foregone. The Chair also has general authority to guide appropriate papers toward presentation in a poster format when deemed appropriate. Poster sessions were initiated in 1993.

Traditionally, the Vice-Chair has had the responsibility of organizing a Panel Discussion on a topic of current interest that has become a standard component of each year's program. Another standard component of each conference is the opening "outlook" presentations, the speakers being traditionally recruited by the Chair.

A competition among graduate students was held between 1990 and 1994 in order to promote interest in the conference and encourage graduate student research in cotton economics. Dee Gandy provided the leadership in implementing the graduate paper competition and most of the organizational and operational details were handled by him and Carlton Davis. An award of \$500 and a plaque were presented to the winning student each year based on the rigor of the research and the quality of the oral presentation. The awards were sponsored by the American Cotton Shippers Association. Each year, a panel of five judges was recruited by the conference Chair. Graduate student papers were submitted in advance, giving judges time to read the papers. The judging panel met at the end of the graduate student session on the first day of each conference and reached a decision; the awards were announced during the second day of each conference. While successful, the Quality Graduate Student Presentation was discontinued after 1994; the American Cotton Shippers Association decided that the proportion of papers focused on research specific to cotton marketing issues was lower than they wished.

Prior to each annual meeting, the Conference Chair meets with National Cotton Council staff and the other conference chairs to plan for the upcoming Beltwide Conferences. The

Conference Chair, with assistance from the Steering Committee, arranges for session chairs for the various sessions within the Conference. As with all the conferences in the Beltwide Cotton Conferences, papers are to be submitted to the Chair by authors at the Conference. The Chair assembles, edits, if necessary, and transfers the papers (both hard copy and diskette copy) to the National Cotton Council for inclusion in the Proceedings. A list of Chairs since the Conference began is shown in the Appendix.

Appendix

Cotton Economics And Marketing Conference Chairs

<u>Year</u>	<u>Chair, Affiliation</u>
1977	Earl A. Stennis; Mississippi State Univ.
1978	O.A. Cleveland, Jr.; Mississippi State Univ.
1979	William D. Eickhoff; Cotton Incorporated
1980	John R. Brooker; Univ. of Tennessee
1981	Edward J. Glade, Jr; Economics and Statistics Service, USDA
1982	Kenneth W. Paxton; Louisiana State Univ.
1983	Irving Starbird; Economic Research Service, USDA
1984	O.A. Cleveland, Jr.; Mississippi State Univ.
1985	Don E. Ethridge; Texas Tech Univ. and Texas Agr. Exp. Station
1986	Russell G. Barlowe; World Agr. Outlook Board, USDA
1987	Carl G. Anderson; Texas A&M Univ.
1988	Earl A. Stennis; Mississippi State Univ.
1989	Sam Evans; Economic Research Service, USDA
1990	Terry P. Townsend; International Cotton Advisory Committee
1991	Dewell R. Gandy; Dunavant Enterprises, Inc.
1992	Carolyn L. Whitton; Economic Research Service, USDA
1993	C.W."Bill" Herndon, Jr.; Mississippi State Univ.
1994	John F. Denison; Northeast Louisiana Univ.
1995	David C. Camp; Staplcotn
1996	Keth Henley; Cotlook, Ltd.
1997	Leslie Meyer; Economic Research Service, USDA
1998	Eduardo Segarra; Texas Tech Univ. and Texas Agr. Exp. Station

Endnotes

1. The initial rotation began to falter in the late 1980s due to a decline in the number of extension economist positions in the U.S. that emphasized cotton. The latter rotation evolved as a consensus solution.
2. The winners were as follows: 1990, Stephen Brown, Auburn University; 1991, Ping Zhang and Carlos Engels, Texas Tech University; 1992, Ping Zhang, Texas Tech University; 1993, Elizabeth Hassler, Texas Tech University; and 1994 Daniel Bluntzer, Texas A&M University.