

RELEASE OF NEW MEXICO SEA ISLAND 1331

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Abstract

Sea Island cotton (*Gossypium barbadense* L.) has a reputation for superior and quite unique fiber properties. A diverse population of Montserrat Sea Island was introduced into New Mexico in 1988. The population was found to be extremely heterogenous. The dominant plant type was similar to that described for Sea Island. The most definitive character is large boll size. The bolls are broad and beaked rather than long and tapered. Boll with four locules are common and lint percent is higher than other Sea Island types. NMSI1331 was selected and selfed from MSI. This strain was released a cultivar representing a new class of cotton, New Mexico Sea Island. Fiber length of NMSI1331 averages 1.48in versus 1.40 for Pima S-6. It is about 0.4 units below Pima for micronaire, which illustrates the risk for discounts in some environments. The fiber strength of NMSI1331 is significantly below Pima S-6, 38.0 versus 40.0 HVI. During yield evaluations in 1993-1995, NMSI averaged 89% lint yield of Pima S-6 and 82% of Pima S-7. Lint percentage is significantly lower than Pima S-6 and S-7. The maturity is about 5d later than S-6 and the plant shape and growth habit is more compact than typical Sea Island. Even with these characteristics, the grower assumes the risk of discount for low micronaire and insect damage when growing NMSI1331. All acreage in New Mexico is currently grown under contract and the contract price in 1996 was 1.50 cents per pound.