

**NATIONAL COTTON COUNCIL'S  
STICKY COTTON TASK FORCE**

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Chairman, SCTF**

The U.S. cotton industry is committed to dealing with the issue of sticky cotton. Today's session is clear evidence of that fact. The National Cotton Council's Sticky Cotton Task Force, formed in 1997, also provides assurance that the industry is tackling the issue of sticky cotton on all fronts.

Sticky cotton has been with us, in various forms, for a number of years. The modern era of sticky cotton began about ten years ago in Arizona. Cotton Incorporated's Sticky Cotton Action Team was formed in response. The Sticky Cotton Action Team has worked hard dealing with intervention, education, research and management issues.

The Council's Sticky Cotton Task Force is charged with looking at these same issues on an industry-wide basis.

The reports we have heard today remind us that sticky cotton and its related issues must continue to be addressed. Why is this the case? Let me share with you some insights from my trip to southeast Asia as part of a Cotton Council International Executive Trade Delegation. This delegation called on U. S. cotton customers in 1996. You may recall that this means that we were making these visits on the heels of the renowned 1995 West Texas sticky cotton crop. In the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia the message was the same from our customers -- we like west Texas cotton, but we cannot tolerate excessive stickiness such as we experienced with the '95 crop, and cannot afford to go through a similar experience in the future. Our message that the U.S. cotton industry is deeply interested and committed to addressing any issue that adversely affects the utilization of U.S. cotton was consistently repeated during our time overseas.

I have visited with a number of U.S. mills and have heard similar comments. Our task force members representing the textile industry have been brutally frank in describing the effects of sticky cotton on their processing and bottom-lines. Our mill members have stated clearly that their number 1 priority is to be rid of the problem forever. In the meantime, while work continues to accomplish this goal, the task force is charged with dealing with the issues of measurement, intervention and education.

The Sticky Cotton Task Force is committed to doing all it can to seeing to it that the U.S. cotton producer maintains a marketing advantage. Due to the reputation of U.S. cotton quality, the promotional efforts of Cotton Incorporated and

Cotton Council International and sanctity of contracts, U.S. cotton producers realize an advantage of about 4 cents per pound over the average of other world growths.

Anytime there is a perception of, or risk of, a contaminated input, we risk losing the marketing position we currently enjoy. The theme of this Beltwide is Managing Resources for Profitability. As we are looking to improve profitability, getting a reputation for sticky cotton is simply a risk we cannot afford. That's the reason the council is boosting the attention this subject is getting through its industry-wide committee.

Let me also take a moment to emphasize that the Task Force recognizes the importance of the U.S. cotton grower having at his or her disposal every tool available to combat insects, the number 1 cause of sticky cotton. This includes plant protection compounds. The Council remains diligent in working on behalf of the industry to ensure that these control products remain available.

I have been preceded on the program today by a blue-ribbon group of people working on behalf of the U.S. cotton industry. This group represents the finest researchers and extension personnel in the industry. They are representative of many more who are working on this difficult problem. If you looked in Earl Williams job description, you would probably not find a statement specifically about educating California's cotton growers on whitefly, aphid and sticky cotton. Yet Earl, Executive Vice President of California Cotton Growers Association, worked tirelessly to get the word out on the need for late-season insect control throughout California's San Joaquin Valley in 1997. Earl reminded growers that to be lulled into a sense of complacency on this issue could put their crops and reputation as quality cotton producers at risk.

On behalf of the National Cotton Council's Sticky Cotton Task Force, I wish to applaud Cotton Incorporated for putting this session together and thank the Beltwide Planning Committee for recognizing the importance of addressing this issue here today.

Thank you.