

COTTON VARIETY IMPROVEMENT

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Again, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Donna, thank you for your introduction.

In some remarks I made earlier this morning, I attempted to convey several thoughts, which we cannot afford to ignore.

One. My industry will have to make more changes towards efficiency and productivity in the next few years than it has over the past 10 to meet global challenges. We plan to do that.

Two. Productivity gains are directly related to technology improvements. Higher-speed, more demanding equipment. It is here today. It will be faster and better tomorrow.

Three. The advantages of technology improvements cannot be maximized without corresponding enhancement in fiber properties.

Fourth. Your textile customers have serious concerns with fiber quality trends. Remember those eight charts I shared with you earlier? They showed:

- Large variations in micronaire, to the course edge of acceptable.
- Decreasing staple length.
- Decreasing strength and
- Uniformity shy of the range of textile mill needs.

Those are important concerns for textile mills. They can impact us all, very seriously.

Last year, the American Textile Manufacturers Institute's Cotton Committee, which I chair, took on an initiative to develop a program to evaluate cotton varieties on various spinning platforms and then feed the results back directly to you; seed breeders, geneticists, producers and ginners.

Our project began taking form late in the year.

It took a name: Cotton Variety Processing Task Force.

To it have been assigned, initially, a small group of forward thinking textile manufacturers, enthusiastic cotton leadership from the Department of Agriculture, and progressive cotton producer representatives. Their assignment is to put this program together. Do it right, from a customer-to-supplier perspective. Do it as quickly as possible. Do not get side-tracked.

Here is what we will do. We will examine existing cotton varieties, with respect to their spinning value. We will identify those that provide needed properties. We will identify those that do not. Then, we give you the results.

Here is our preliminary plan of action:

- At least 20 acres will be planted in two existing varieties, side-by-side, in locations in the southeast, mid-south and West Texas.

- These varieties will include a typical one for that region and a different one that seems to have the potential to provide those targeted fiber properties I discussed in my earlier presentation.
- The cotton will be grown, harvested and ginned under the same conditions, on a commercial scale.
- The cotton will be checked on both H-V-I and A-FISS equipment to determine fiber properties.
- The cotton will be spun into yarn, on three types of spinning equipment: Ring, open-end and the new vortex. This will be done in U-S-D-A's Pilot Spinning Plant at the Clemson cotton research facility.
- Yarn will be tested for all quality characteristics.
- You will receive feedback annually, perhaps here at this outstanding Beltwide Conference. Our purpose is to tell you specifically which varieties produce competitive quality yarn in our plants, and, which do not.

Please remember: The success of cotton production and textile manufacturing in the United States largely depends upon how well we work together. Our annual 10-million bales of consumption of your cotton, hinges, in no small way, on how well that cotton meets our competitive challenges and opportunities.

Thank you.