

Cotton Industry Research and Education Priorities

Farm Profitability

- High input costs are devastating cotton production. Research should quantify these cost increases, develop strategies to increase farm net income, and inform policy decisions.

Textiles, Human Health, and the Environment

- Investigate and report the effects of micro- and nanoplastics from textiles on human health and the environment, with public education initiatives as needed.

New or Invasive Cotton Pests

- Cotton seed bug (*Oxycarenus hyalinipennis*) was recently discovered in California. Research priorities include pest biology, spread, control, and economic impact.
- Two-spotted cotton leafhopper (*Amrasca biguttula*) recently infested cotton across the Southeast. Research should focus on its biology, spread, control, and economic effects.
- Extension outreach programs should be developed to disseminate information on new pests.

Cottonseed

- Cottonseed is vital to gin profitability. Expanding markets beyond dairy and seed oil is a priority. Research should also explore increasing seed size or yield per bale without compromising lint production.

Cotton Classing

- Advancing cotton classing science to improve fiber color, length, strength, uniformity, and maturity measurements is key to enhancing U.S. cotton's marketability. Understanding how fiber quality impacts finished textiles will support market growth.

Ginning Efficiency

- With rising costs, research should focus on improving energy efficiency, reducing labor, and enhancing gin output for both saw and roller ginning.

Packaging and Distribution

- U.S. cotton experiences slower port flow than competitors, with excessive handling before shipment. Research should aim to streamline logistics, reduce handling, and explore cost-effective, cotton bale bags to minimize plastic contamination.

Traceability

- Developing a commercially viable, cost-effective, and non-toxic tracer system for U.S. yarns and fabrics is essential for enforcing Customs regulations and preventing counterfeiting.

Plastic Contamination

- Research should focus on minimizing plastic contamination in cotton fiber.

Educational Outreach

- Consumer education programs should highlight cotton's health benefits, sustainability, and textile performance to compete with synthetic fibers.
- Regulatory education programs should improve agency understanding of policies affecting cotton.