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Master Trash System Total Particulate Emission Factors and Rates for Cotton Gins: Method 17

J.Clif Boykin, Michael D. Buser*, Derek P. Whitelock, and Gregory A. Holt

ABSTRACT

This report is part of a project to characterize cotton gin emissions from the standpoint of stack sampling. The impetus behind this project was the urgent need to collect additional cotton gin emissions data to address current regulatory issues. A key component of this study was focused on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) total particulate emission factors. EPA AP-42 emission factors are generally assigned a rating, from A (Excellent) to E (Poor), to assess the quality of the data being referenced. Current EPA total particulate emission factor ratings for cotton gins are extremely low. Cotton gin data received these low ratings because the data were collected almost exclusively from a single geographical region. The objective of this study was to collect additional total particulate emission factor data for master trash systems from cotton gins located in regions across the cotton belt using EPA-approved stack sampling methodology. The project plan included sampling seven cotton gins. Key factors for selecting specific cotton gins included: 1) facility location, 2) production capacity, 3) processing systems and 4) abatement technologies. Five gins with master trash system exhausts were sampled. The average production rate during testing for the five gins was 34.4 bales/h. The average master trash system total particulate emission factor based on five tests (15 total test runs) was 0.187 kg/227-kg bale (0.411 lb/500-lb bale). This average total particulate emission factor was less than that currently published in 1996 EPA AP-42, which was 0.24 kg/bale (0.54 lb/bale).The master trash system emission rate test averages ranged from 1.92 to 11.06 kg/h (4.23-24.39 lb/h).

United States (U.S.) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emission factors published in EPA's Compilation of Air Pollution Emission Factors, AP-42 (EPA, 1996b) are assigned a rating that is used to assess the quality of the data being referenced. Ratings can range from A (Excellent) to E (Poor). Current EPA emission factor quality ratings for total particulate are extremely low. Cotton gin data received these low ratings because they were collected almost exclusively from a single geographical region, far western United States (EPA, 1996a). Cotton ginners' associations across the cotton belt, including the National, Texas, Southern, Southeastern, and California associations, agreed that there was an urgent need to collect additional cotton gin emissions data to address current regulatory issues. Working with the cotton ginning associations across the country and state and federal regulatory agencies, Oklahoma State University and United States Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) researchers developed a proposal and sampling plan that was initiated in 2008 to address this need for additional data. This report is part of a series that details cotton gin emissions measured by stack sampling. Each manuscript in the series addresses a specific cotton ginning system. The systems covered in the series include: unloading, 1st stage seed-cotton cleaning, 2nd stage seed-cotton cleaning, 3rd stage seed-cotton cleaning, overflow, 1st stage lint cleaning, 2nd stage lint cleaning, combined lint cleaning, cyclone robber, 1st stage mote, 2nd stage mote, combined mote, mote cyclone robber, mote cleaner, mote trash, battery condenser and master trash. This report focuses on total particulate emissions from master trash systems.

The 1996 EPA AP-42 average total particulate emission factor for the master trash fan was 0.24 kg (0.54 lb) per 217-kg [480-lb] equivalent bale with a range of 0.060 to 0.57 kg (0.13 to 1.3 lb) per bale (EPA, 1996a, 1996b). This average and range was

J.C. Boykin, USDA-ARS Cotton Ginning Research Unit, 111 Experiment Station Road, P.O. Box 256, Stoneville, MS 38776; M.D. Buser* Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Oklahoma State University, 214 Agricultural Hall; Stillwater, OK 74078; D.P. Whitelock, USDA-ARS Southwestern Cotton Ginning Research Laboratory, 300 E College, P.O. Box 578, Mesilla Park, NM 88047; and G.A. Holt, USDA-AR Cotton Production and Processing Research Unit, 1604 E FM 1294, Lubbock, TX 79403
*Corresponding autor: buser@okstate.edu

based on four tests conducted in one geographical location. The EPA emission factor quality rating was D, which is the second lowest possible rating (EPA, 1996a).

Seed-cotton is a perishable commodity that has no real value until the fiber and seed are separated (Wakelyn et al., 2005). Cotton must first be processed or ginned at the cotton gin to separate the fiber and seed, producing 227-kg (500-lb) bales of marketable cotton fiber. Cotton ginning is considered an agricultural process and an extension of the harvest by several federal and state agencies (Wakelyn et al., 2005). Although the main function of the cotton gin is to remove the lint fiber from the seed, many other processes also occur during ginning, such as cleaning, drying, and packaging the lint. Pneumatic conveying systems are the primary method of material handling in the cotton gin. As material reaches a processing point, the conveying air is separated and emitted outside the gin through a pollution control device. The amount of dust emitted by a system varies with the process and the condition of the material in the process.

Cotton ginning is a seasonal industry lasting from 75 to 120 days, depending on the size and condition of the crop. Although the trend for U.S. cotton production remained generally flat at about 17 million bales per year during the last 20 years, annual production varied greatly for various reasons, including climate and market pressure (Fig. 1). The number of active gins in the U.S. has not remained constant, but has steadily declined to fewer than 700 in 2011. Consequently, the average volume of cotton handled by each gin has risen and gin capacity has increased to an average of about 25 bales per hour across the U.S. cotton belt (Valco et al., 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012).

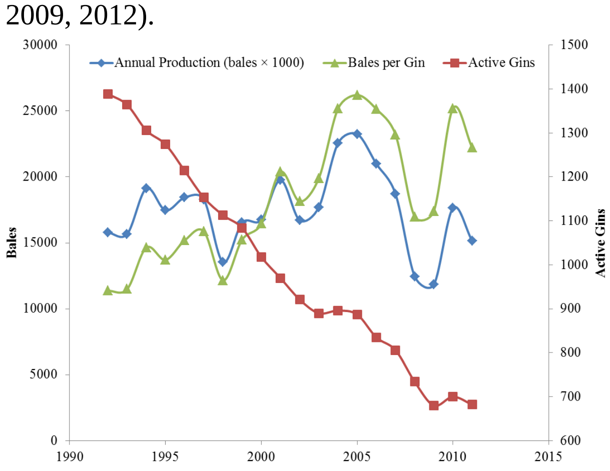

Figure 1. Annual U.S. cotton production, active U.S. gins, and average ginning volume (bales per gin) (NASS, 1993-2012).

The typical cotton gin facility includes: unloading system, dryers, seed-cotton cleaners, gin stands, overflow collector, lint cleaners, battery condenser, bale packaging system, and trash handling systems (Fig. 2); however, the number and type of machines and processes varies. Each of these systems serves a unique function with the ultimate goal of ginning the cotton to produce a marketable product. Raw seed-cotton harvested from the field is compacted into large units called modules for delivery to the gin. The unloading system removes seed-cotton either mechanically or pneumatically from the module feed system and conveys the seed-cotton to the seed-cotton cleaning systems. Seed-cotton cleaning systems dry the seed-cotton and remove foreign matter prior to ginning. Ginning systems also remove foreign matter and separate the cotton fiber from the seed. Lint cleaning systems further clean the cotton lint after ginning. The battery condenser and packaging systems combine lint from the lint cleaning systems and compress the lint into dense bales for easy transport. Gin systems produce some type of by-product or trash, such as rocks, soil, sticks, hulls, leaf material, and short or tangled immature fiber (motes), as a result of processing the seed-cotton or lint. These streams of by-products must be removed from the machinery and handled by trash collection systems. These trash systems typically further process the by-products (e.g., mote cleaners) and/or consolidate the trash from the gin systems into a hopper or pile for subsequent removal.

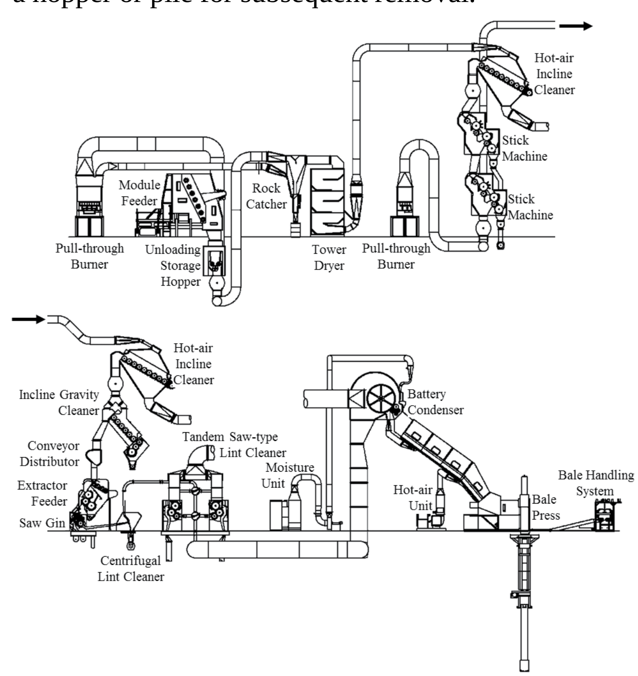

Figure 2. Typical modern cotton gin layout (Courtesy Lummus Corporation, Savannah, GA).

Many of the gin systems produce some type of by-product or trash as a result of processing the cotton, lint, or further processing a by-product. In each case, the stream of trash must be removed from the machinery and handled by trash systems (Fig. 3). Typically, all trash at gins is consolidated into one storage area for subsequent removal. In some cases, the particulate abatement cyclones for different gin systems are located over a trash hopper and thus a main trash system is not necessary. In many other cases, a master trash system will pull trash from systems throughout the gin – precleaning systems trash conveyors, gin stands trash conveyor, and the main trash conveyor often located under the unloading system, seed-cotton cleaning system, overflow system, and other systems particulate abatement cyclones. The trash is pneumatically conveyed to one or two master trash cyclones located over either a storage hopper or a trash pile. The material handled by the master trash cyclones typically includes any and all types of trash encountered by the gin systems (rocks, soil, sticks, hulls, leaf material, and lint) and these cyclones are often quite heavily loaded. A photograph of the material typically collected by the master trash system is shown in Fig. 4.

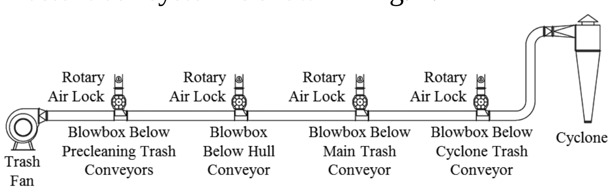

Figure 3. Typical cotton gin master trash system layout (Courtesy Lummus Corporation, Savannah, GA).

Figure 4. Photograph of typical trash captured by the master trash system cyclones.

Cyclones are the most common particulate matter (PM) abatement devices used at cotton gins. Standard cyclone designs used at cotton ginning facilities are the 2D2D and 1D3D (Whitelock, et al., 2009). The first D in the designation indicates the length of the cyclone barrel relative to the cyclone barrel diameter and the second D indicates the length of the cyclone cone relative to the cyclone barrel diameter. A standard 2D2D cyclone (Fig. 5) has an inlet height of D/2 and width of D/4 and design inlet velocity of 15.2 ± 2 m/s (3000 ± 400 fpm). The standard 1D3D cyclone (Fig. 5) has the same inlet dimensions as the 2D2D or may have the original 1D3D inlet with height of D and width D/8. Also, it has a design inlet velocity of 16.3 ± 2 m/s (3200 ± 400 fpm).

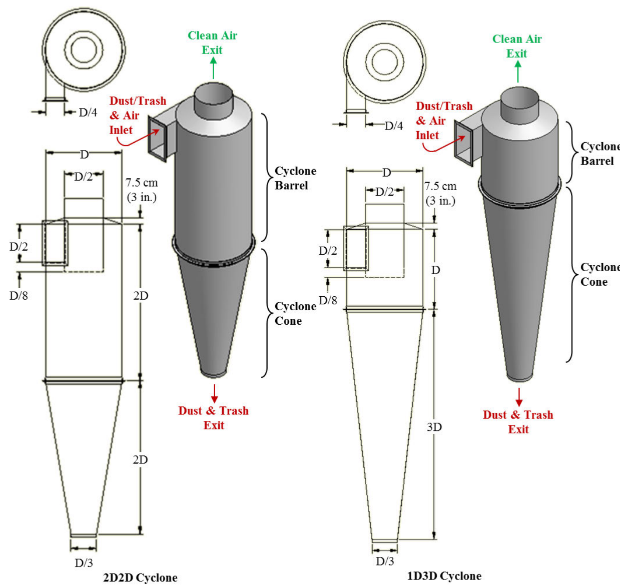

Figure 5. 2D2D and 1D3D cyclone schematics.

The objective of this study was to collect additional total particulate emission factor data for master trash systems with cyclones for emissions control at cotton gins located in regions across the cotton belt based on EPA-approved stack sampling methodologies.

METHODS

Two advisory groups were established for this project. The industry group consisted of cotton ginning industry leaders and university and government researchers. The air quality group included members from state and federal regulatory agencies, and university and government researchers. Both groups were formed to aid in project planning, gin selection, data analyses, and reporting. The project plan was described in detail by Buser et al. (2012).

Seven cotton gins were sampled across the cotton belt. Key factors for selecting specific cotton gins included: 1) facility location, 2) production capacity,

3) processing systems and 4) abatement technologies. Operating permits, site plans, and aerial photographs were reviewed to evaluate potential sites. On-site visits were conducted at all candidate gins to evaluate the process systems and gather information including system condition, layout, capacities, and standard operation. Using this information, several gins from each selected geographical region were selected and prioritized based on industry advisory group discussions. Final gin selection from the prioritized list was influenced by crop limitations and adverse weather events in the region.

Based on air quality advisory group consensus, EPA Method 17 (CFR, 1978) was used to sample the master trash system at each gin. Method 17 was selected over Method 5 (CFR, 1987) because of the relatively low stack temperatures found at cotton gins. Method 5 requires a heated glass probe and filter holder to maintain the sampled gas temperature of 120°C (248°F). Key benefits of using Method 17 over Method 5 occur when particulate concentrations are independent of temperature and the sampled gas contains no liquid droplets or is not saturated with water vapor, the heating systems can be eliminated and sampling can occur at stack temperature with an in-stack filter. Methodology for sampling total particulate called for withdrawing particulate-laden stack gas isokinetically (the velocity of the gas entering the sampler was equal to the velocity of the gas in the stack) through a button-hook nozzle and then collecting particles on an in-stack filter (Fig. 6). The methods for retrieving the filter and conducting acetone washes of the sampling nozzle are described in Method 17 (CFR, 1978). The mass of particulate on the filter and in the nozzle wash was determined by gravimetric analyses. The total particulate mass was determined by summing the mass of particulates on the filter and the front half wash. Stack gas temperature and moisture content were also measured using EPA Method 17.

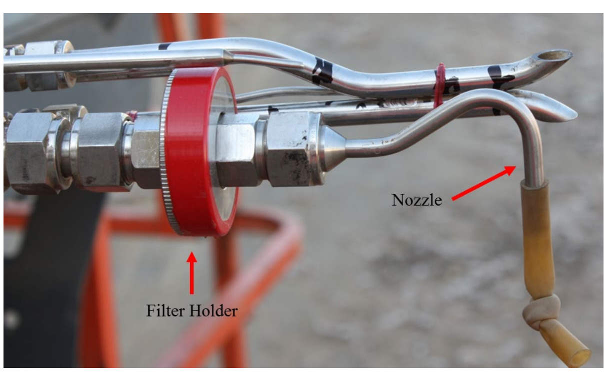

Figure 6. EPA Method 17 total particulate button nozzle and in-stack filter holder photograph.

Only one stack from each master trash system was tested. For systems with multiple stacks, it was assumed that emissions from each stack of the system were equivalent. The total particulate emissions for the system were calculated by multiplying the measured emission rates by the total number of cyclones used to control the process tested (EPA, 1996a). To obtain reliable results, the same technician from the same certified stack sampling company (Reliable Emissions Measurements, Auberry, CA), trained and experienced in stack sampling cotton gins, conducted all the tests at all the cotton gins.

All stack sampling equipment was purchased from Apex Instruments (Fuquay-Varina, NC) and met Method 17 specifications. The sampling media were 47 mm Zefluor filters (Pall Corporation, Port Washington, NY) and the sample recovery and analytical reagent was American Chemical Society certified acetone (A18-4, Fisher Chemical, Pittsburgh, PA – assay ≥ 99.5%). Filters and wash tubs and lids were pre-labeled and pre-weighed and stored in sealed containers at the USDA-Agricultural Research Service Air Quality Lab (AQL) in Lubbock, TX, and then transported to each test site. Prior to testing, the technician calibrated all sampling equipment according to EPA Method 17.

Each cyclone selected for testing was fitted with a cyclone stack extension that incorporated two sampling ports (90° apart) and airflow straightening vanes to eliminate the cyclonic flow of the air exiting the cyclone (Fig. 7). The extensions were designed to meet EPA criteria (EPA, 1989) with an overall length of 3 m (10 ft) and sampling ports 1.2-m (48-in) downstream from the straightening vanes and 0.9-m (36-in) upstream from the extension exit.

The tests were conducted by the technician in an enclosed sampling trailer at the base of the cyclone bank (Fig. 8). Sample retrieval, including filters and nozzle acetone washes, was conducted according to Method 17. After retrieval, filters were sealed in individual Petri dishes and acetone washes were dried on-site in a conduction oven at 49°C (120°F) and then sealed with pre-weighed lids and placed in individual plastic bags for transport to the AQL in Lubbock, TX for gravimetric analyses. During testing, bale data (ID number, weight, and date/time of bale pressing) were either manually recorded by the bale press operator or captured electronically by the gin's computer system for use in calculating emission factors in terms of kg/227-kg bale (lb/500-lb bale). Emission factors and rates were calculated in accordance with Method 17 and American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) Standard S582 (ASABE, 2005).

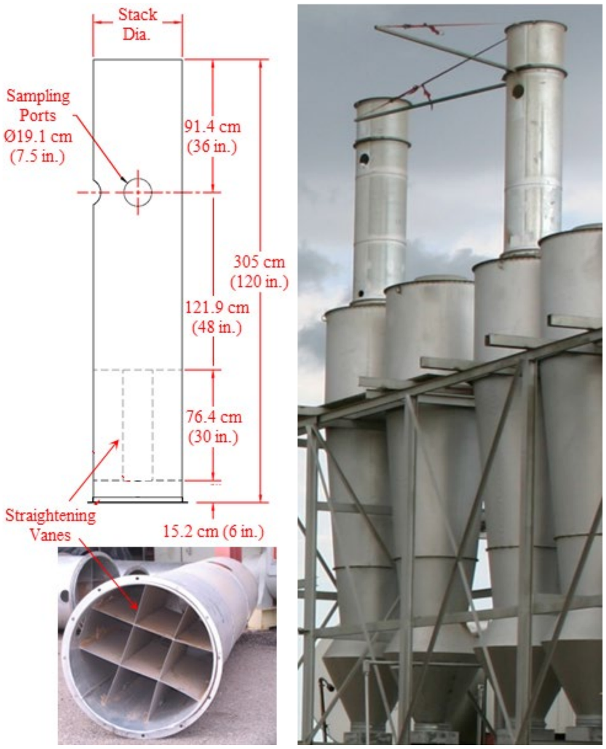

Figure 7. Schematic and photographs of stack extensions with sampling port and staightening vanes (rail attached to extension above sampling port, at right, supports sampling probe during testing traverse).

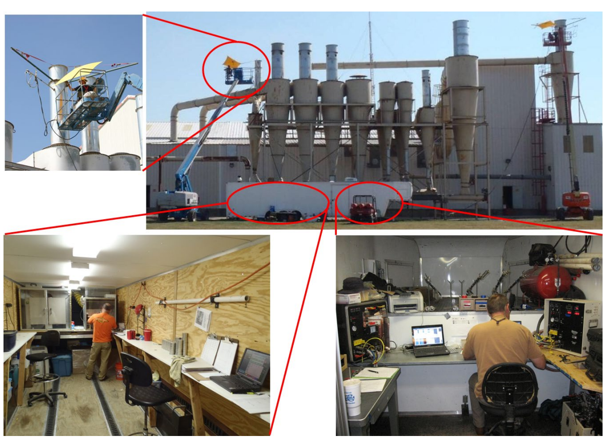

Figure 8. Clockwise from top right: cotton gin stack sampling with air quality lab trailer and technicians on lifts; certified stack sampling technician in the trailer control room conducting tests; sample recovery in trailer clean room; technician operating the probe at stack level.

All laboratory analyses were conducted at the AQL. All filters were conditioned in an environmental chamber (21 ± 2°C [70 ± 3.6°F]; 35 ± 5% RH) for 48 h prior to gravimetric analyses. Filters were weighed in the environmental chamber on a Mettler MX-5 microbalance (Mettler-Toledo Inc., Columbus, OH – 1 µg readability and 0.9 µg repeatability) after being passed through an anti-static device. The MX-5 microbalance was leveled on a marble table and housed inside an acrylic box to minimize the effects of air currents and vibrations. To reduce recording errors, weights were electronically transferred from the microbalance directly to a spreadsheet. Technicians wore latex gloves and a particulate respirator mask to avoid contamination. AQL procedures required that each sample be weighed three times. If the standard deviation of the weights for a given sample exceeded 10 µg, the sample was reweighed. Gravimetric procedures for the acetone wash tubs were the same as those used for filters.

In addition to gravimetric analyses, each sample was visually inspected for unusual characteristics, such as cotton lint content or extraneous material. Digital pictures were taken of all filters and washes for documentation purposes. After the laboratory analyses were completed all stack sampling, cotton gin production, and laboratory data were merged.

Five of the seven gins (B, D, E, F and G) had master trash systems. The master trash systems sampled were typical for the industry, but varied among gins. The master trash systems at gins B, E, F, and G handled all the material generated from processing the cotton through the gin that was considered trash. This material was picked up at individual machines within the gin plant and/or at the main trash auger under the cyclones outside of the gin and pneumatically conveyed to one or more cyclones above a trash pile or trash hopper. The master trash system at gin D did not handle trash from all of the gin systems, but consolidated and conveyed material from the unloading systems, two second stage seed-cotton cleaners, four feeder and gin stand systems, and four centrifugal lint cleaners before the first stage lint cleaning systems.

Four of the five master trash systems (B, D, F and G) sampled utilized 1D3D cyclones to control emissions (Fig. 5), but there were some cyclone design variations among those gins (Table 1 and Fig. 9). The system airstream for gins B and G was exhausted through a single cyclone. Gins D and F split the system exhaust flows between two cyclones in a dual configuration (side-by-side as opposed to one-behind-another). Inlets on the master trash cyclones for gins B, D, F, and G were 2D2D type. Expansion chambers were present on master trash cyclones at gins B and D. The cyclones on the master trash systems for gins F and G had standard cones. All of the cyclone variations outlined above, if properly designed and maintained, are recommended for controlling cotton gin emissions (Whitelock et al., 2009). The cyclone on the master trash system for gin E was not a 1D3D cyclone (Fig. 9). This cyclone had proportional dimensions of about ½D2D with a square inlet that measured approximately ¼D on each side and had a standard cone with a narrow trash exit. Although the gin E master trash system was not equipped with a 1D3D cyclone, the system was sampled and included in the emissions analyses with the other four master trash systems that were equipped with 1D3D cyclones.

Figure 9. Cyclone design variations for the tested systems (left to right): dual configuration that splits flow between identical 1D3D cyclones with 2D2D inlets; 1D3D cyclone with 2D2D inlet and expansion chamber on the cone; 1D3D cyclone with 2D2D inlet and standard cone; ½D2D cyclone with a square inlet measuring about ¼D on a side.

RESULTS

Table 2 shows the test parameters for each Method 17 test run for the master trash systems sampled at the five gins. The system average ginning rate for the five gins was 34.4 bales/h and the test average ginning rate at each gin ranged from 22.5 to 46.5 bales/h (based on 227-kg [500-lb] equivalent bales). The 1D3D cyclones were all operated with inlet velocities within design criteria, 16.3 ± 2 m/s (3200 ± 400 fpm), except the test runs at gin D due to limitations in available system adjustments. The inlet velocities for test runs conducted on the ½D2D master trash cyclone at gin E were low compared to the 1D3D cyclones and ranged from 9.0 to 9.8 m/s (1,768 to 1,932 fpm).

There are criteria specified in EPA Method 17 for test runs to be valid for total particulate measurements (CFR, 1978). Isokinetic sampling must fall within the EPA defined range of 100 ± 10%. All tests met the isokinetic criteria (Table 2). The stack gas temperatures ranged from 22 to 40°C (71 to 105°F) and moisture content ranged from 0.1 to 3.5% wet basis (w.b.).

Total particulate emissions data (emission rates and corresponding emission factors) for the master trash system are shown in Table 3. The system average emission factor was 0.187 kg/bale (0.411 lb/bale). The test average emission factors ranged from 0.053 to 0.326 kg (0.118-0.720 lb) per bale. The test average emission factor for gin E with the ½D2D cyclone with the low inlet velocity was 0.326 kg/bale (0.720 lb/bale). If the gin E tests were dropped, the system average would be reduced to 0.152 kg/bale (0.334 lb/bale). The average master trash system total particulate emission factor for this project was about 76.2% (with gin E included in the average) and 61.9% (without gin E included in the average) of that published in the current 1996 EPA AP-42 for the master trash fan, which is 0.24 kg/bale (0.54 lb/bale) (EPA, 1996a, b). The range of average total particulate emission factors determined for this project and the AP-42 emission factor data range overlapped. The test average emission rates ranged from 1.92 to 11.06 kg/h (4.23-24.39 lb/h).

Table 1. Abatement device configuration[z] for master trash systems tested.

Gin	Cyclone Type	Inlet Design[y]	Systems per Gin	Cyclones per Gin	Configuration	Cone Design	Trash Exit[x]
B	1D3D	2D2D	1	1	single	expansion chamber	auger
D	1D3D	2D2D	1	2	dual	expansion chamber	hopper
E	½D2D	square	1	1	single	standard	auger
F	1D3D	2D2D	1	2	dual	standard	auger
G	1D3D	2D2D	1	1	single	standard	hopper

[z] Figures 5 and 9

[y] Square inlet design had cross-section approximately one-fourth the cyclone diameter on a side

[x] Systems to remove material from cyclone trash exits: hopper = large storage container directly under cyclone trash exit; auger = enclosed, screw-type conveyor

Table 2. Cotton gin production data and stack sampling performance metrics for the master trash systems.

Gin	Test Run	Ginning Rate, bales/h[z]	Cyclone Inlet Velocity,		Isokinetic Sampling, %	Stack Gas		
						Moisture Content, % w.b.	Temperature	
			m/s	fpm			°C	°F
B	1	14.8	16.7	3278	97	2.4	39	102
	2	28.9	16.8	3309	100	3.5	40	104
	3	23.7	16.9	3320	97	3.0	39	102
Test Average		22.5	16.8	3302				
D	1	36.8	14.0	2747	104	0.7	25	76
	2	35.6	14.0	2758	104	2.1	28	82
	3	35.3	14.0	2758	103	1.0	30	86
Test Average		35.9	14.0	2754				
E	1	34.5	9.8	1932	96	2.6	34	93
	2	33.6	9.0	1768	97	2.1	32	90
	3	33.8	9.2	1804	97	2.0	33	92
Test Average		34.0	9.3	1834				
F	1	49.5	14.5	2856	104	0.5	40	105
	2	45.2	16.3	3205	99	1.4	40	104
	3	44.7	15.4	3038	99	1.2	40	104
Test Average		46.5	15.4	3033				
G	1	25.7	15.3	3006	93	0.1	22	71
	2	35.5	14.7	2901	92	0.6	25	77
	3	38.6	15.3	3003	101	1.5	26	79
Test Average		33.3	15.1	2970				
System Average		34.4	14.1	2779				

[z] 227 kg (500 lb) equivalent bales

Table 3. Total particulate emissions data for the master trash systems.

Gin	Test Run	Emission Rate,		Emission Factor,	
		kg/h	lb/h	kg/bale[z]	lb/bale[z]
B	1	1.60	3.52	0.108	0.238
	2	8.10	17.87	0.281	0.619
	3	3.36	7.40	0.142	0.312
Test Average (n=3)		4.35	9.60	0.177	0.389
D	1	2.09	4.61	0.057	0.125
	2	1.68	3.71	0.047	0.104
	3	1.98	4.36	0.056	0.124
Test Average (n=3)		1.92	4.23	0.053	0.118
E	1	7.99	17.62	0.232	0.511
	2	11.08	24.42	0.329	0.726
	3	14.13	31.14	0.418	0.922
Test Average (n=3)		11.06	24.39	0.326	0.720
F	1	9.77	21.55	0.197	0.435
	2	8.90	19.62	0.197	0.434
	3	10.15	22.37	0.227	0.500
Test Average (n=3)		9.61	21.18	0.207	0.457
G	1	4.30	9.48	0.167	0.368
	2	7.32	16.15	0.206	0.455
	3	5.20	11.47	0.135	0.297
Test Average (n=3)		5.61	12.37	0.169	0.373
System Average (n=5)				0.187	0.411

[z] 227 kg (500 lb) equivalent bales

Figure 10 shows an example of samples recovered from a typical master trash system test run. Often, there were cotton lint fibers in the cotton gin cyclone exhausts. Therefore, it was not unusual to find lint fiber on the Method 17 filter or in the front half wash, which was included in the total particulate emissions.

Figure 10. Typical EPA Method 17 filter and sampler head acetone wash from the master trash system with lint fiber on the filter (indicated by arrow). From left to right: front half wash and filter.

SUMMARY

Five cotton gins with master trash systems were sampled using EPA Method 17 to collect additional data to improve the EPA AP-42 total particulate emission factor quality ratings for cotton gins. The tested systems were similar in design and typical of the ginning industry. All but one of the systems were equipped with 1D3D cyclones for emissions control with some variations in inlet and cone design. The average production rate during testing for the five gins was 34.4 bales/h. The average master trash system total particulate emission factor based on the five gins tested (15 total test runs) was 0.187 kg/227-kg bale (0.441 lb/500-lb bale). The average master trash system total particulate emission factor for this project was less than that currently published in the 1996 EPA AP-42, which is 0.24 kg/bale (0.54 lb/bale). The gin test average emission rates ranged from 1.92 to 11.06 kg/h (4.23-24.39 lb/h).

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DISCLAIMER

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