

Specifications for Permanent Bale Identification Bale Tags

The cotton industry has developed a Permanent Bale Identification (PBI) system that enables a unique number and standard barcode to accompany a bale of cotton from the gin to the textile mill. This document is intended to provide you with the details of the PBI system as well as define AMS requirements for the Classing Identification Coupon, which accompanies the tag placed on the bale by the gin.

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I. PBI NUMBER

The PBI number will include the gin code and gin bale numbers as a single, 12-digit number, which will be displayed in both a barcode and an eye-readable format on the bale tag. The 5-digit gin code component of the PBI number will be assigned by USDA AMS. The 7-digit gin bale component of the PBI number will be determined by the individual gins or warehouses. In order to avoid duplicate numbers across multiple crop years, gins will not be able to repeat their numbering series each year. To ensure that no duplicates exist, AMS will monitor PBI numbers in [five-year cycles](#).

II. SPECIFICATION FOR PBI TAGS

A. Individual Tags/Labels (see attachments 1a-c)

- 1. Color:** White, salmon, buff, yellow, orange, light blue (excluding Pantone 306C), pink, lilac, red and light green.
- 2. Ink:** Permanent Ultra Violet Black Ink to withstand various conditions
- 3. Adhesive:** Must be aggressive, durable and permanent
- 4. Thickness:** Must be 0.013 inches (175 lb.) to 0.015 inches (200 lb.) for necessary durability and usability. Other thicknesses or constructions must be approved by the Director of the Grading Division before printing.
- 5. Barcode:** Must be code 128 subset C that incorporates a check digit, minimizing misreads.
- 6. Width:** 3-1/2 inches.

B. Tags/Labels on Rolls (see attachment 2a-b)

1. Color: White, salmon, buff, yellow, orange, light blue (excluding Pantone 306C), pink, lilac, red and light green.
2. Ink: Permanent Ultra Violet Black Ink to withstand various conditions
3. Adhesive: Must be aggressive, durable and permanent
4. Thickness: Must be 0.013 inches (175 lb.) to 0.015 inches (200 lb.) for necessary durability and usability. Other thicknesses or constructions must be approved by the Director of the Grading Division before printing.
5. Barcode: Must be code 128 subset C that incorporates a check digit, minimizing misreads.
6. Width: 3-1/2 inches.

C. AMS Classing Identification Coupon

1. Ink: Permanent Ultra-Violet Black Ink to withstand various conditions.
2. Thickness: Must be 0.013 inches (175 lb.) to 0.015 inches (200 lb.) for necessary durability and usability. Other thicknesses or constructions must be approved by the Director of the Grading Division before printing.
3. Barcode: Must be code 128 subset C that incorporates a check digit, minimizing misreads.

III. TAG/LABEL LAYOUT

A. Minimum PBI Tag Components (may be a hang tag or adhesive label):

1. The top part of the tag is marked with the header:
**** DO NOT REMOVE ****
2. Directly to the left of the traditional tag hole is the "USA" designation.
3. On a separate line below the tag attachment hole are the words "Permanent Bale ID" identifying it as the permanent bale identification tag.
4. The next line contains two fields – the words "Gin Code" followed by the 5-digit gin code number; and the words "Gin Bale" followed by the 7-digit gin bale number.
5. The next line contains the barcoded, 12-digit PBI number (gin code and gin bale number) using code 128 subset C printed with a 25 mil. narrow bar width, creating a barcode measuring 1.0 x 3.0 inches. There should also be a minimum of 0.25 inches white space on both sides of the barcode.
6. Following the barcoded number is the 7-digit gin bale number printed in large 1 inch high format.
 - a. Color coding the background of this area by the last digit of the PBI number is an acceptable practice used to help warehouses increase efficiencies in picking bales.
 - b. Dashes or spaces separating the eye-readable gin bale number is an acceptable practice used to help warehouses increase efficiencies in picking bales.
7. The 0.03 inch below the number should be used for the gin name.

8. The 2.0 inch space is for internal business use by gins, warehouses, and mills. This is intended to allow the application of an adhesive label that can be used to designate bale location, bale category, etc.
9. OPTIONAL: Two coupons (A & B) for use by mills would consist of:
 - a. Code 128 subset C barcode containing the 12-digit, PBI number.
 - b. Human readable 12-digit, PBI number.
 - c. A letter designation in the right-hand corner. Coupon "A" is intended for use at the mills during consumption, and coupon "B" is intended for use at the mill during bale receipt.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO GIN / WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS

Warehouses who order tags for gins may continue to include a coupon containing the warehouse code (6-digits) and the bale number (7-digits) as separate barcodes. This information may be necessary for the coordination of shipments.

B. Minimum AMS Classing Identification Coupon Components

1. Will include code 128 subset C barcode containing the 12-digit, PBI number which will be positioned 3/8 inch from the top edge of the coupon, not exceeding a 1/32-inch variance. The vertical lines of the barcode shall be a minimum of 3/8 inch in height and the barcode itself a minimum of 2 ½ – 3 inch width.
2. Will include human readable 12-digit, PBI number with a space between the 5th and 6th digits.
3. Will include language as follows:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
COTTON IDENTIFICATION COUPON
4. Will include name and address of gin.
5. Will be at least 2.25 inches in length.
6. Will be printed on Clay-Coated Tag Stock for tags on rolls and individual hang tags
7. The total length of the PBI "minimum" components and the AMS Classification Coupon is 5 inches.

Additional coupons necessary for gin and warehouse operations may need to be included.

IV. PBI TAG/LABEL PLACEMENT (see attachment 3)

- A. PBI Tags will be placed on the top of the rounded (crown) side of the bale between the first and third bale strap below the head closure.
- B. A numerically matching safety tag will be placed opposite the PBI tag on the back rounded side of the bale.

V. INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAG MANUFACTURERS

Tag manufacturers receiving orders from ginners shall submit to the Director of the Grading Division the following information for verification before printing:

1. Gin Name
2. Gin Address
3. Gin Code Number
4. Quantity of Tags Ordered
5. Sequence Numbers of Tags

Upon receipt of this information, the Director of the Grading Division will furnish the manufacturer any corrections or additions to this information. On the first order, for a new ginning season, the printer shall submit a proof of the proposed card and sample of the stock for checking. When printing is completed on each order, the printer shall mail to the Director of the Grading Division two (2) specimen copies and give high and low bale numbers in the series.

On shipment to the customer, PBI tags and USDA classing coupon cards must be packaged in the same box to help prevent tag number mismatching.