

## Cotton & Tobacco Program



# Traditional Module Averaging: 2025 Season Updates and FAQs

### What is traditional module averaging?

Traditional module averaging is a voluntary program offered by the USDA, AMS, Cotton & Tobacco Program since 1991 to all customers at no additional charge. It began as an effort between the USDA and an industry taskforce group to improve the accuracy of the strength measurement. The success of the initial program led to the inclusion of micronaire, length, and length uniformity in 1992. These four measurements have been included in the traditional module averaging program since that time.

### What are the rules of traditional module averaging?

- Bales designated as part of a module are identified by the gin customer.
- All bales in the module are HVI tested exactly as those not averaged.
- Only factors of micronaire, length, strength, and length uniformity are averaged.
- Outliers are identified by the program and handled according to a very strict set of criteria and rules.
- The bale units will share the same module number.

### What changes does the industry have to make for the change in module size for the 2025-2026 season?

None. Customers can continue to submit modules of up to 50 bales, and USDA will automatically group the bales in modules of no more than 20 to determine the average measurements.

For example, a submission of 50 bales would be broken down into two 20-bale modules and one 10-bale module. All 50 bales will retain the *same original module number*, but the three groupings will have *their own module-averaged measurements*.

### What is the basis for traditional module averaging?

Traditional module averaging is based purely on statistics. Traditional module averaging utilizes the fiber qualities of the bales within a module (more than one bale) and the fact that modules are typically homogenous and well-blended to determine a more accurate classification. The averages of the measurements for micronaire, length, length uniformity, and strength for the bales collectively within a

module provide a better statistical representation of each of the bale's individual measurements. This data is more reproducible and reliable than that of just a single bale test.

### **Is module averaging accepted across the industry segments?**

Yes. Since its introduction in 1991, voluntary module averaging has gained widespread acceptance by all segments of the cotton industry for its reliability. In crop year 2024, 67 percent of all bales classed were module averaged.

### **What are the benefits of traditional module averaging to the cotton industry?**

- Improved accuracy in quality measures to customers that are more stable, reproducible and repeatable, statistically reliable, and consistent for all data users.
- Increased data reliability and confidence.
- Enhances warehouse storage, staging, shipping and marketing options.
- Stands up to scrutiny, challenges and re-class both domestically and internationally.
- Positive economic value (on average).

### **Why should I consider module averaging?**

Research shows that the quality measurements of traditional module averaged bales are more accurate and reproducible than a single bale test, which can enhance the value of the bales. Additionally, there are significant advantages for staging and shipping once the bales have been stored.

### **What is the gin required to do?**

The gin will continue to do two things:

1. Specify the permanent bale identification (PBI) numbers to be included in each module for module averaging.
2. Submit 2 to 50 bale ranges electronically with the letter "M" to designate them for traditional module averaging.

### **What should the gin expect from USDA?**

USDA will test the bales according to the traditional module averaging program criteria and release the data to the gin once all bales in the module are received and classed.

**More questions?** Contact the Cotton Grading Division: **901-384-3010**. Deputy Director: Byron Cole; [Byron.Cole@usda.gov](mailto:Byron.Cole@usda.gov). Assistant to the Director: Ray Scroggins; [Ray.Scroggins@usda.gov](mailto:Ray.Scroggins@usda.gov).