



NEWS RELEASE

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Cotton fiber quality at this time has been high with only a small portion receiving discounts for high leaf content. This late in the season, the only quality measurements we can influence are fiber micronaire and trash content. Fiber strength is primarily influenced by cotton variety, and fiber length is influenced by variety and the amount of stress the plant received at approximately 16-18 days following bloom. Short fiber length results from plant stress during this period.



Low micronaire results from the top bolls not reaching maturity. This can be due to early fall weather, or late planted cotton that did not have time to mature the top bolls. High micronaire normally results from cotton that has been subjected to a severe cutout in mid-August which caused a shedding of developing bolls in the top of the plant. This top crop did not have time to re-develop, resulting in only the mature bolls being harvested.

High micronaire in picker harvested cotton can result when the cotton is harvested too quickly following defoliation before the top bolls have had a chance to open. Low micronaire can be caused by immature cotton subjected to cool fall weather, or a harvest aid application that has been applied before the cotton was ready. Since the fiber grows on the seed, low number of seeds per lock usually results in lower cotton yields. Stressful conditions just prior to pin head square can result in a low number of seeds per lock. Neps, or undeveloped seeds, are usually caused by stress during pollination. High trash content usually results from poor defoliation, weed cotton or a hard freeze prior to defoliation. The price we receive for our crop is highly influenced by fiber quality. It is to our advantage to try our best to maximize quality when we can.

COTTON HARVESTING continues in the Rolling Plains. In Kiowa County, near Snyder, Ok., Sonny Miller, Headrick custom harvester, is busy stripping dryland cotton. The cotton belongs to Kenneth Niebruegge, Snyder farmer. Miller's assistant stays busy hauling the harvested cotton from the stripper to the module builder. McDonald drives a tractor pulling a boll buggy. His activity allows Miller to stay busy harvesting.



After the cotton is poured from the buggy into the module builder, it is tamped down hydraulically until a firm mound of cotton, called a module, is formed. Once the module is formed, the builder is pulled away and another module is begun. The module is then covered with a tarpaulin and marked with an identifying symbol. Impervious to weather, the modules will be taken by a module hauler, a container trailer pulled by a truck-tractor, to the gin site to await ginning.

This modern cotton handling technology, developed in the 1970's by University of Arkansas and Texas A&M University agricultural engineers, does away with the old headaches of leaving cotton to deteriorate on the stalk or in an open trailer and also the problem of maintaining, moving and parking dozens of cotton trailers in the field and at the gin.

Cotton farmers are cautiously optimistic about the 2005 crop. The 2004 crop was a record one. Some of the more aggressive prognosticators say 2005 could well see more cotton harvested than last year. Miller, for instance, says the dryland cotton he is harvesting now "will probably make a bale and a quarter to a bale and a half per acre. That is really good for dryland cotton in Oklahoma."

Freedom from the depredations of the boll weevil, killed out thoroughly by the Oklahoma Boll Weevil Eradication Program headquartered at Hobart, Ok., coupled with the advantages offered by the new stacked gene cotton varieties and no-till cultural practices, are demonstrating to farmers that modern cotton farming is nothing like the toilsome effort they had to go through two decades ago.

FARMERS ARE PARENTS, too. To break away from field turn row worries, we take you to some definitions that both parents and grandparents can easily understand
Parent definitions:

1. Amnesia: condition that enables a woman who has gone through labor to have kids again.
2. Drooling: how teething babies wash their chins.
3. Feedback: the inevitable result when a baby doesn't appreciate the strained carrots.
4. Full name: what you call your child when you're mad at him.
5. Hearsay: what toddlers do when anyone mutters a dirty word.
6. Independent: how we want our children to be as long as they do everything we say.
7. Owww: the first word spoken by children with older siblings.
8. Sterilize: what you do to your first baby's pacifier by boiling it and to your last baby's pacifier by blowing on it.
9. Top bunk: where you should never put a child wearing Superman jammies.
10. Two-minute warning: when the baby's face turns red and he begins to make those grunting noises.

(Courtesy, rugerforum.com)

TALKIN' COTTON is a feature of NTOK Cotton, a cotton industry partnership which encourages increased cotton production on the Rolling Plains of North Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. For more in-depth information on the current cotton scene, check out our website, ntokcotton.org. For comments or questions about Talkin' Cotton, contact us at 580-569-4073 or lventerprise@westok.net.

