



The University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension Service
 College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences



Georgia Cotton

November 7, 2003

<http://www.griffin.peachnet.edu/caes/cotton>

Crop Situation at Mid-Harvest	1
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Cotton Variety Survey	1
2003 Georgia Cotton Quality Greatly Improved	3
Stink Bug Damage Obvious	6

Crop Situation at Mid-Harvest. (*Brown*) As of November 2, about half the Georgia crop has been harvested. USDA is estimating the state's production to be just over 2 million bales, with a state average of 763 lb/A. Optimism still exists that the final numbers will significantly eclipse that mark. Parts of the state are more than 75 percent harvested, while east Georgia is well behind the mark of 48 percent estimated by the Agricultural Statistics Service.

We've had at least three significant rainfall events during the harvest season, but fall weather in 2003 has been considerably better than 2002. Near ideal growing conditions and reasonable harvest conditions have produced better than average fiber quality.

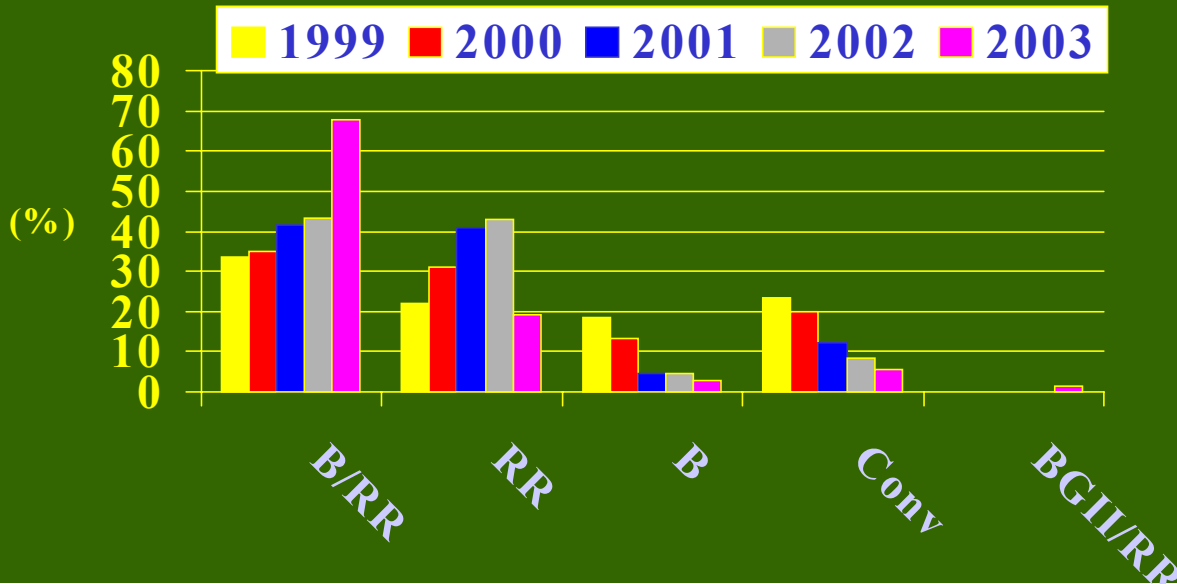
Table 1. Fiber Quality of Bales Classed at the Macon Classing Office

Color Grade 41 or better (% of Crop)	Bark/Grass Level 1 (% of Crop)	Avg Staple	Avg Leaf Grade	Avg Strength	Avg Mic	Avg Uniformity
93.8	1.1 /0.2	34.4	3.3	28.1	4.45	80.4

Based on 556,640 bales classed through October 30, 2003

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Cotton Variety Survey. (*Brown*) In September, USDA released the annual Cotton Varieties Planted survey. The entire report can be accessed at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/cotton/mncs/index.htm>. Below are the top 10 varieties in 2003 based on technology category (with percentages). Historical changes in technology are reflected in the second chart below, revealing a large shift to Bollgard/Roundup Ready cultivars.

Technology Distribution (%) of 1999 - 2003 GA Crop



Top 10 Varieties in 2003 GA Crop

B/RR

DP 555 BR

(33.5)

DP 458 BR

(19.4)

DP 451 BR

(4.7)

ST 4892 BR

(2.9)

FM 989 BR

(1.9)

RR

DP 5415 RR

(6.0)

DP 5690 RR

(6.0)

FM 989 RR

(2.2)

DP 436 RR

(1.8)

B

NuCOTN 33B

(2.6)

USDA AMS Survey, September 2003

2003 Georgia Cotton Quality Greatly Improved. (*Shurley, Brown, and Jost*) In recent years, Georgia cotton producers have often suffered from both low yields and reduced quality. Last year, price deductions for quality cost Georgia cotton producers \$42.4 million. The largest losses have been due to poor Color and high Micronaire. For the 3-year period 2000-2002, quality losses have averaged \$16 per bale or \$21 per acre harvested.

Estimated Farm Income Losses ¹ From Price Discounts For Quality, By Quality Factor

	Color	Staple	Strength	Mike	UI ²	EM ³	Total
2000	\$9,349	\$8,269	\$1,469	\$3,133	\$194	\$1,736	\$24,149
2001	\$2,771	\$11,666	\$1,063	\$4,202	\$320	\$927	\$20,950
2002	\$16,489	\$8,178	\$815	\$15,920	\$267	\$754	\$42,423

^{1/} Based on CCC Loan Schedule. Losses expressed in thousand dollars

^{2/} Uniformity Index

^{3/} Extraneous Matter

Thanks to ample and timely rainfall during the growing season and good harvesting conditions as well, the quality of this year's crop is greatly improved and quality discounts should be minimal. Thus far, cotton producers are enjoying good yields, quality, and prices. Color grades are the best in many years, fiber strength is improved, and with very few exceptions micronaire has been within the acceptable range. Thus far, 93.5% of bales classed have been base grade Color 41 or better and 84.8% of bales have been Staple 34 or longer. Again, favorable weather has resulted in improved quality pretty much across the board.

Percentage of Bales Discounted For Quality, By Quality Factor, Macon Classing Office.

	Color	Staple	Strength ¹	Mike	UI ²	EM ³
1998	45.8	28.0	1.0	12.8	n/a	5.7
1999	25.5	37.6	.6	19.9	n/a	2.7
2000	26.2	24.2	18.2	9.8	6.7	5.0
2001	7.6	26.5	9.7	9.2	8.2	2.0
2002	49.2	32.1	13.4	48.2	9.5	2.4
2003 ⁴	6.5	15.2	4.0	1.7	18.1	1.8

^{1/} Base standard for strength increased from 23.5 grams/tex to 25.5 grams/tex in 2000

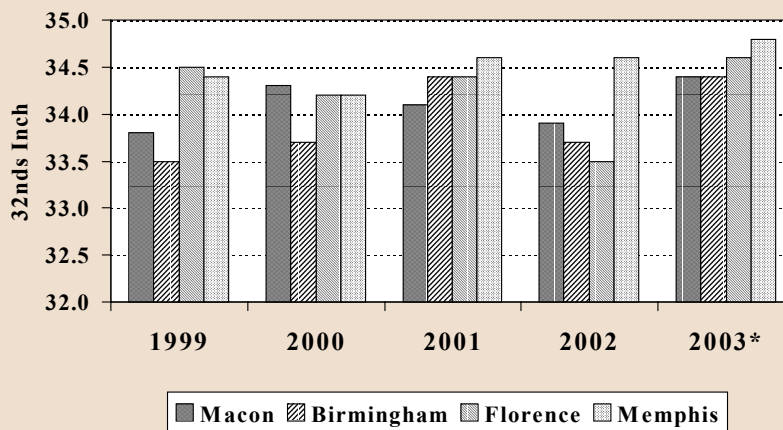
^{2/} Uniformity Index. Not a quality factor for price premium or discount prior to 2000.

^{3/} Extraneous Matter

^{4/} Through October 30, 2003

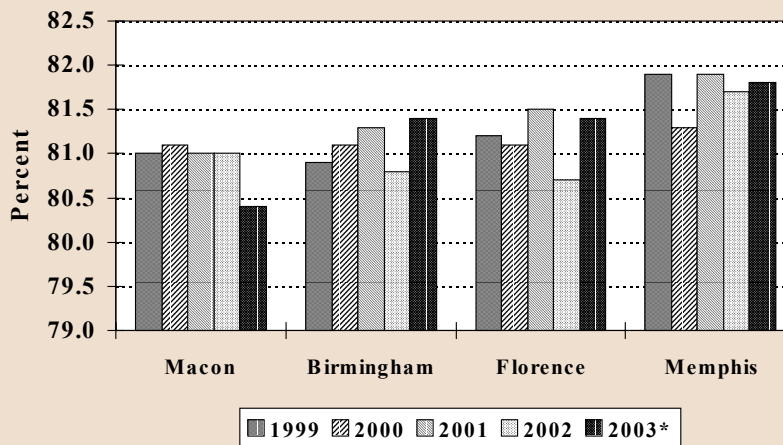
Some of the factors that, according to merchants and mills, continue to be a pesky problem for Georgia cotton are Staple (fiber length) and Uniformity (a measure of length variability and short fiber content). Even in a relatively very good year like 2003, about 1 out of 7 bales have been discounted for short Staple and almost 1 out of 5 have been discounted for Uniformity. Surprisingly, the percentage of bales discounted for Uniformity has increased significantly this year compared to last year despite better Staple. This can only mean that for some reason, despite favorable growing conditions and improved fiber length, that variability of fiber length within the bale (and perhaps within the field and even within the plant) has increased.

Comparison of Average Staple, By Classing Office, 5 Years 1999-2003



* Through October 30, 2003

Comparison of Uniformity, By Classing Office, 5 Years 1999-2003



* Through October 30, 2003

Often times, it seems to growers that mills look for any excuse to discount cotton and buy it cheaper. Staple and length Uniformity affects yarn evenness and strength, and the efficiency of the spinning process. Cotton with low Uniformity is likely to have a higher percentage of short fibers and, therefore, produce a lower quality yarn.

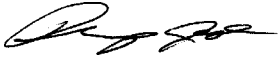
The Staple of Georgia cotton (Macon) has compared mostly favorable to or better than other Southeast cotton (Birmingham and Florence classing offices) but has not compared favorably to the Mid-South (Memphis classing office). As far as Uniformity, Georgia and the Southeast has been less than the Mid-South.

In recent years, most US cotton is now exported– purchased for use in foreign mills. For 2003, two-thirds of all US cotton is expected to be exported. A question arises as to whether or not this fundamental change in demand (and any differences in foreign mill spinning technology and fiber requirements) will have an impact on price and price premiums and discounts. On a per pound basis, the largest price discounts for quality are on Color, Staple, Micronaire, and to a lesser degree Strength – which also are the quality factors Georgia growers have to deal with most often. Perhaps the best strategy to take is to select varieties that tend to have the best of these characteristics, manage them well, and then hope for good weather.

Stink Bug Damage Obvious. (*Roberts*) As we travel the state, it is obvious that stink bugs were a formidable foe during 2003. The “who dids” and “who did nots” concerning stink bug management are easily differentiated by the presence of knotty bolls and buggy whip cotton. Stink bug is very obvious on field margins, especially those which bordered peanuts. Fortunately most producers addressed stink bugs effectively, but significant yield loss has occurred on some fields. In a few isolated fields, cotton which was infested with high populations of stink bugs and was never treated will not be picked.

Without question stink bugs were present at the highest and most widespread levels we have seen in recent history, perhaps since the advent of synthetic insecticides. It is likely we will average two sprays per acre for stink bugs in Georgia this season. The number of sprays ranged from zero up to four plus applications. Recently I was posed with the question, “Is this the new norm?” The answer is no. However, since 1996 we have observed fields in various parts of the state which have suffered significant yield loss to stink bugs. Rather than localized areas experiencing heavy pressure, stink bugs were widespread during 2003. Without question stink bugs are a pest which require management. Good scouting and reacting appropriately when thresholds are exceeded will be needed to maximize profits.

Edited by: **Philip H. Jost**, Extension Agronomist-Cotton & Soybeans



Contributions by:

Steven M. Brown, Extension Agronomist-Cotton,

Philip H. Jost, Extension Agronomist-Cotton & Soybeans

Phillip Roberts, Extension Entomologist - Cotton

Don Shurley, Extension Economist – Cotton

Putting knowledge to work

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, COLLEGE OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES, SWARNELL SCHOOL OF FOREST RESOURCES, COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SCIENCES
The University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University, the U. S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating, The Cooperative Extension Service offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. An equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force.