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Southeast Fiber Quality, Summary of 2006 Crop To-Date

Thus far, the quality of the Southeast cotton crop is stacking up pretty well compared to the previous 2 years. The crop was much improved in 2004 and 2005 and, despite this year's drought conditions, the 2006 crop looks like it will fair much better fiber quality wise than anticipated. Timely late season rains followed by very good harvest conditions have aided both yield and fiber quality of this years crop-- reducing boll rot, allowing top bolls to mature, and allowing the crop to "fluff out" and pick well.

Comparison of "High Quality Characteristics", 2005 Crop and 2006 Crop % of Bales To-Date, By Classing Office- Southeast

	% Color 31 or Better		% Staple 35 or Longer		% Strength 29 or Higher		% Uniformity 80.5 or Higher	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
Birmingham	66.9	58.1	48.7	25.7	60.0	42.5	59.7	53.2
Florence	10.1	26.6	67.8	74.4	45.2	75.8	77.8	88.9
Macon	44.7	65.4	56.0	37.4	67.5	48.9	37.6	43.5

SOURCE: USDA/AMS- Cotton Program, Memphis. 2006 fiber quality through 11/16/06.

Thus far (through 11/16/06), overall the crop has been better than last year on Color Grade. Thanks to good picking conditions, almost 60% or more of Macon and Birmingham bales classed have been Color 31 or better. Florence has been better than last year on longer Staple and higher Strength. Macon and Birmingham, however, are running behind last year on "long and strong" fiber. Thus far, the proportion of cotton with higher fiber length Uniformity (80.5 of better) is running about the same or ahead of last season.

Fiber Quality of Southeast Cotton, 2005 and 2006 To-Date, By Classing Office

	Birmingham		Florence		Macon	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
% Color 31 or Better	66.9	58.1	10.1	26.6	44.7	65.4
% Color 41	28.0	30.9	43.4	67.8	49.1	32.6
Average Staple	34.5	33.6	35.0	35.2	34.7	34.2
Average Strength	29.0	28.3	28.4	29.7	29.2	28.5
Average Uniformity	80.8	80.6	81.4	81.9	80.2	80.4
Average Micronaire	4.4	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.8
% Mike 5.0 or Higher	4.6	28.2	9.7	12.7	4.5	32.2

SOURCE: USDA/AMS- Cotton Program, Memphis. 2006 fiber quality through 11/16/06.

The percentage of bales grading 41 or better Color is around 90% (Birmingham) to almost 100% (Macon). Thus far this season, at Birmingham and Macon, average Staple has been shorter than last year. Average Uniformity, however, is actually running a little better (higher) than last year at Florence and Macon. Fiber Strength has been better than last year at Florence but lower at Birmingham and Macon. As expected, due to

drought effects on fiber development, micronaire is running higher than last season. Almost 1/3 of bales classed at Macon have been high-mike (5.0 and higher).

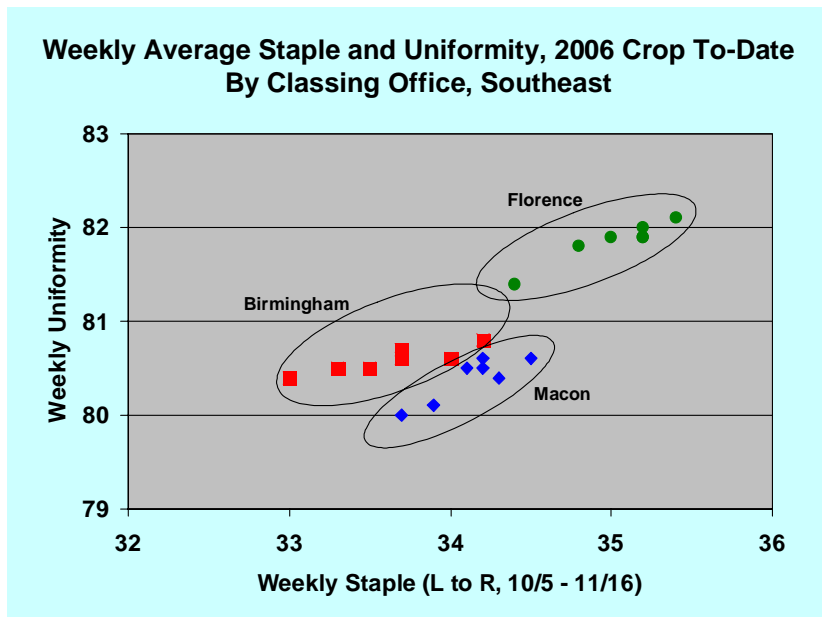
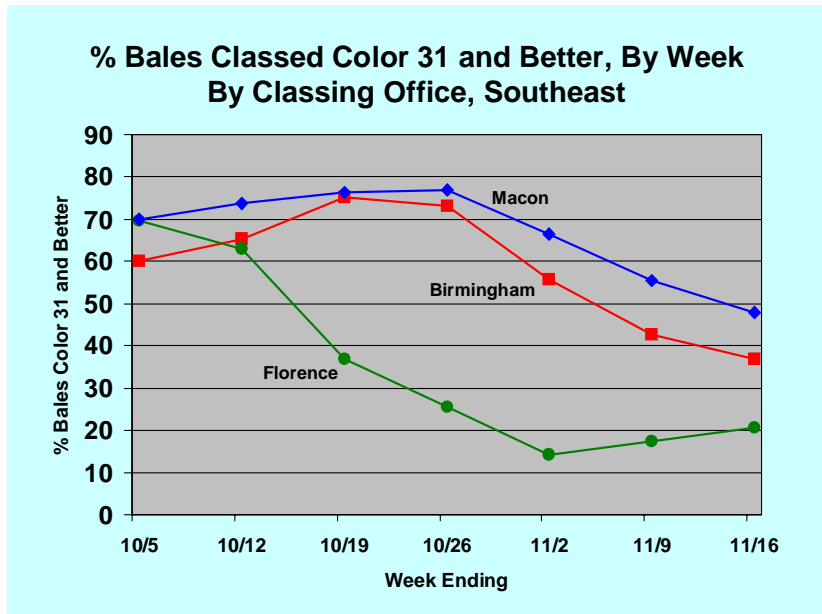
Fiber quality is a function of many factors including variety (genetic potential), production practices, ginning practices, management, timeliness, and of course weather. Individually, and in combination, these factors can impact both yield and quality. UGA research, for example, has demonstrated the impact of defoliation and harvest timing, stink bug control, etc. on fiber quality.

The first chart on the right shows the percentage of bales grading Color 31 and better, weekly from October 5 through November 16. At each classing office, Color grade has generally declined as the harvest season has progressed. Color grade at Macon and Birmingham remained highest during October but has declined during November. Color grade at Florence has improved over the past couple of weeks but has declined throughout the season. Color grade is largely a function of timing and weather.

The next chart shows the average Staple and Uniformity by week at each classing office. These are “paired observations”—i.e. each dot represents the average staple and uniformity for that week and the season progresses from October 5 to November 16 as we move from left to right. For example, the average Staple was 33.7 and average Uniformity 80.0 for Macon for the week ending Oct 5 and was 34.5 and 80.6 for the week ending Nov 16.

What the chart illustrates is that (1) as the season has progressed, both Staple and Uniformity have trended upward at all 3 locations and (2) as Staple has improved, so has fiber length Uniformity. This improvement could be a function of better cotton being picked as harvest has progressed as well as other factors.

The current spot (cash) market premium for Color 31/Staple 35 is 1.25 cents/lb. The discount for short Staple (33), however, is 1.75 cents per pound. The current premium for Strength is .25 cents/lb for 29.5 to 30.4. The discount for high micronaire is currently 1.75 cents/lb and the discounts for low uniformity are .25 cents/lb for 79.5 to 80.4 and 1 cent/lb for 78.5 to 79.4 (USDA-AMS, Cotton Program). A Color 31 “long and strong” bale is paid a premium of \$7.50 per bale. A Color 41-Leaf 3 bale with short staple (33) and high micronaire (5.0 to 5.2) is discounted \$16.25 per bale.



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