

Foreword

The cotton sector is of major economic and social importance to many developing countries. It provides employment, income and export earnings. As a natural product, cotton is subject to the uncertainties inherent in agricultural production. While chemicals are being applied to contain pests to a certain extent, there is no all-effective protection. The project concentrated on how best to deal with a specific problem, namely stickiness in cotton caused by the sugary excretions of aphids and whiteflies (*Aphis gossypii* and *Bemisia tabaci*). Stickiness affects about one-fourth of all cotton production.

Research is being undertaken on how best to protect cotton against stickiness when in the field (e.g. in the framework of a completed CFC-financed project, entitled Integrated Pest Management for Cotton with a focus on Whitefly and Aphids). Less work has been done on what use can still be made of cotton which is affected by stickiness. As stickiness disrupts the modern, high-speed spinning processes, cotton producers are faced with severe price discounts when selling cotton that originates from an area which is suspected to be contaminated. As stickiness is difficult to identify by visual inspection, price discounts are applied indiscriminately, thus also affecting clean cotton produced in an affected area.

The current project specifically aimed at developing reliable methods to determine the level of stickiness in cotton bales and to establish, under factory conditions, different thresholds for spinning cotton with different levels of stickiness. An economic evaluation of the process of "grading" stickiness in cotton bales for use in day-to-day operations of a cotton trading company was included in its design.

The project started in 1997 and has been implemented under the overall responsibility of the Sudan Cotton Company Ltd, working in very close collaboration with the Cotton Technology Laboratory of the Centre de cooperation internationale en recherche agronomique pour le developpement (CIRAD). Technical supervision and guidance was provided by the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC).

This Technical Paper is a reflection of the results obtained during the project. It is being published, in line with the Fund's practice, in order to share the experiences gained in this project with other Common Fund Member Countries that have an interest in this matter.

It is the hope of the Common Fund for Commodities that this publication will be of practical use to parties in both the Government as well as the private sector, who are active in the field of cotton production and trade.



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