

SECTION 8
PROCESSING &
MARKETING

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FIBREpak, new guide to improve cotton quality

A guide designed to help the Australian cotton industry improve the quality of the fibre it produces has been released by CSIRO and the Cotton Catchment Communities CRC (Cotton CRC).

“FIBREpak contains information for managing fibre quality at every step, from variety choice and crop management through to harvesting and ginning,” says project leader, CSIRO Plant Industry’s Dr Mike Bange.

“Australian cotton is regarded worldwide as an excellent fibre and, to enhance its competitiveness, CSIRO and the Cotton CRC with the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) continue to invest in research that aims to improve fibre quality,” Dr Bange says.

“FIBREpak represents one part of this overall effort, with investment in plant biotechnology, plant breeding, crop production and post-harvest research conducted in Narrabri, Geelong and Canberra.”

Variety, seasonal conditions, crop and harvest management, and ginning can all determine whether or not commercial spinners’ requirements are met.

While some of these factors cannot be controlled, others such as; the use of better varieties, management for each region’s climate and processing to minimise fibre damage, present opportunities to improve fibre quality.

“FIBREpak will improve the understanding of all those involved in producing cotton fibre regarding what aspects of fibre quality they can influence, qual-

ity management options and the needs of the other participants in the supply chain,” Dr Bange says.

FIBREpak was developed by CSIRO with support from the Cotton CRC and is available from the Cotton CRC’s website: <http://www.cottoncrc.org.au>

World cotton trade falls

According to the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), world cotton trade declined by almost a quarter during 2008–09 to 6.4 million tons, the lowest level since 2001–02 and the sharpest decline since the Second World War. Reduced demand by major importing countries experiencing a major economic recession caused a sharp decline in cotton trade.

This level is well below the record of 9.6 million tons in 2005–06. Imports are expected to increase moderately to 6.8 million tons in 2009–10 as a result of demand improvement.

China (Mainland), Bangladesh, Turkey and Pakistan, are the largest cotton importers accounting for 50 per cent of the world total in 2008–09. Less than 10 years ago, these four countries accounted for only 12 per cent of cotton imports.

A smaller share of world production, estimated at 27 per cent, was traded internationally during 2008–09, resulting in larger stocks. This share is projected to reach 29 per cent during 2009–10.

Substantial changes in cotton trade flows have occurred during the past decade. Industrial countries (North America, Western Europe, Australia and Japan) accounted for 28 per cent of world imports and 36 per cent of world exports in 1998–99. The decline in mill use in industrial countries, and the rapid expansion in Asia, led to a major shift in the destination of world imports. By 2008–09, industrial countries accounted for only six per cent of world cotton imports, but 53 per cent of world exports.

Asia has become the primary destination for cotton shipments during the past decade. In 1998–99, Asia accounted for 58 per cent of world mill use, 47 per cent of world imports and four per cent of world exports. By 2008–09, Asia accounted for 76 per cent of world mill use, 69 per cent of world imports and 10 per cent of world exports.

While Asia’s share of world mill use and imports is likely to remain unchanged in 2009–10, its share of exports is projected to increase to 22 per cent, largely because of the boom in exports from India.

Over the past decade, Africa’s share of world exports has fallen from 23 per cent to 14 per cent.

Manually decontaminating cotton before processing at an Indian spinning mill

