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Memphis

Sampling Guidelines
Task Force on CSITC
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Sampling of bales at source for classification is mostly carried out either at or by the gins or the owners of the cotton. Nevertheless, we have reviewed sampling procedures on different Continents, finding that aside from the US, which is efficient and highly regulated, and China, where there is a valid standard - procedures in most other countries appear to have simply evolved over time, mostly without regulation. In our opinion, it will be impossible to propose a unified system of sampling and we consider that in the first instance it may be better to look at guidelines for each step of the procedures.

ACTUAL SAMPLING

Recommendations

- Encourage mechanical sampling at gin/press. Discourage sampling at lint slides.
- Samples should be drawn from pressed bales either at or immediately after ginning.
- Remove surface cotton and draw samples from within both sides of each bale.
- The combined weight of each sample should not be less than 200 grams.

Problems

There are two countries where bales are bound with spiral bands – only a small percentage of bales are sampled due to the difficulties in removing/repairing bands from bales for sampling.

Bale identification marks/numbers are stenciled on one side of each bale. Owners of bales therefore only permit samples to be drawn from the unmarked side of bales.

Tradition. Traditionally, some countries only sample 2 %, 5% or 10 % of the bales from each lot.

PACKING OF SAMPLES

- Samples should be packed immediately after sampling without any other kind of handling.
- Packages and samples should be clearly identified by gin, lot and bale numbers.

Problems

Packing materials vary from country to country or producing area to producing area, eg Central Asia packing materials vary from paper, cotton bags/cloth to plastic.

Number of samples per package varies, from 20 to 75 samples being the average.

DESPATCH OF SAMPLES

In general, samples appear to be forwarded to the classing/testing facilities shortly after they are packed, probably for sound economic reasons.

- We recommend that samples should be forwarded within specified time frames.

GENERAL

In our opinion the Expert Panel on CSITC may wish to recommend a Sampling Protocol of guidelines for each producing country based on the following:

1. Aim to achieve 100% sampling of all bales by either mechanical or physical (hand cut) within specified dates.
2. Aim to achieve 100% mechanical sampling within specified dates.
3. Mark bales in such a way that both sides of each bale may be physically sampled without losing the bales identity. (Encourage the use of bale tags, with removable sections - bale tags should be bar coded.)
4. All sampling to be completed within 3 days of ginning and a bar coded tag placed within the sample.
5. Samples to be wrapped in packages of no more than 100 samples per package. Where smaller individual packages are used, they may be combined into bundles consisting of no more than 10 packages. Each bundle to be wrapped with approved covers.
6. Samples only to be packed in approved paper or cotton covers.
7. Each package and each bundle to be clearly marked with gin I/D, lot number and bale numbers.
8. Samples to be forwarded to the classing/testing facility within 5 days of completion of sampling.