



C&T Navigates Challenging Year

The C&T Program successfully completed the classing of the 2020 cotton crop around mid-May with a total of 13.6 million Upland bales and nearly 532,000 Pima bales, for a total of approximately 14.1 million bales classed. Faced with a smaller crop and many challenges due to COVID-19, including operating with a limited workforce and operating only two shifts in all locations, we were pleased with our Program's ability to maintain grading operations with minimum disruptions. Despite COVID-19, we were able to realize the following accomplishments:

- We were able to keep all classing offices operational throughout the season and delivered services within two days 90 percent of the time.
- Our Market News Division delivered all reports 97.5 percent of the time with an accuracy rate of 99.26 percent, despite the challenges in collecting market information due to the pandemic.
- All Research and Promotion functions continued throughout the year with the Cotton Board, Cotton Incorporated, and USDA effectively conducting meetings and communications virtually.
- Our customers made over 265,000 connections to retrieve nearly 50 million classing data records without any disruption with the connections.
- C&T's Standardization and Engineering Division continued to provide cotton standards and materials to its customers both domestically and internationally. From March 2020 through March 2021 we shipped approximately 1,133 physical grade standards, 17,100 pounds of calibration cottons, 66,800 pounds of evaluation cottons, and 179 color calibration tile sets for the grading and marketing of cotton worldwide.
- Our Quality Assurance Division classed 28,300 samples submitted under Form D classification service, up nearly 10% from the previous season. (Form D classing determines the quality of the samples submitted to us, not the quality of the bale.)

It was a team effort to provide our services at the high level expected by our stakeholders during an unprecedented series of events. Like most of the world, our Program had to adjust to a virtual communication process during the COVID pandemic. Most stakeholder meetings, market news collections, communications with the agency and Department, and internal Program meetings and training were conducted virtually.

While we never stopped our operations and continued to be present in our facilities, we adjusted to the new methods and were able to conduct communications efficiently. With

the implementation of safety features and protocol, our dedicated staff was able to provide seamless service to our customers. However, as are many others, we are looking forward to more in-person meetings with stakeholders and Program staff in the future.

