



2021 Standards Matching Continues In-Person

The USDA, AMS Cotton & Tobacco Program (C&T) welcomed representatives from the cotton industry to review and approve the 2021 standard grade boxes for Upland and American Pima cotton. This is an important annual event, and industry participation is key to the process. In 2020 industry members and C&T staff made the difficult decision to postpone the 2020 Upland and Pima matching due to COVID-19 restrictions. Leading up to the 2021 matching event there was a lot of anticipation from the industry. There has only been one other interference that has disrupted the traditional matching process. With C&T staff making slight changes to the process, the 2021 matching was able to proceed in-person following CDC recommendations.



Industry representatives visually inspect each Upland grade box. (Memphis, TN)

The Upland Grade Standards and Guide Box Review was held on June 15, 2021 at the C&T facility in Memphis, TN while the American Pima Grade Standards and Guide Box Review was held on July 7, 2021 at the classing office in Visalia, CA. During each event, six standard guide boxes were visually inspected and approved by the industry. The approved guide boxes were then used as the reference to

match the 2021 Upland and American Pima Grade Standards. The approved standard grade boxes can now be distributed to cotton industry users around the world.

For the first time in several years, the Upland matching was attended by industry stakeholders representing all applicable segments who review the standards - cotton producers, ginner, merchants, manufacturers, cooperatives, and international signatories. The matching process was slightly different from previous years because instead of using multiple tables, the standard grade boxes were displayed across one table and changed out as they were reviewed and approved. This was a well-received change

because participants were able to view each individual grade box instead of only viewing the boxes that were displayed on the table they were in front of. In total, there was 1,480 grade boxes approved.

Several industry stakeholders participated in the review and approval of the six Pima standard guide boxes and 150 Pima grade boxes. There were a few industry members that attended the matching event this year that had never participated before. Overall, matching the standards is an essential process and being able to have the matching in-person with industry representation is critical.



Industry representatives visually inspect the Pima 2021 grade boxes against the approved 2021 guide box. (Visalia, CA)

