

Harvest All You Grow

--- *Increase Profits*



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MANAGEMENT

IS THE KEY

— TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY —
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MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY

THE COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE facing U.S. cotton was never greater. And no end is apparent to the relentless competition from synthetics and foreign-grown cottons. Cotton can meet this challenge better by reducing costs. And the way to reduce costs is to capitalize on the tremendous cost-cutting opportunities available through research and the speedy application of research results.

Close the Gap

In many cotton producing areas, a significant gap exists between the technology available and the technology actually used. The job is to close these gaps. One is in mechanical harvesting. More cotton must be put into the trailer and less left in the field.

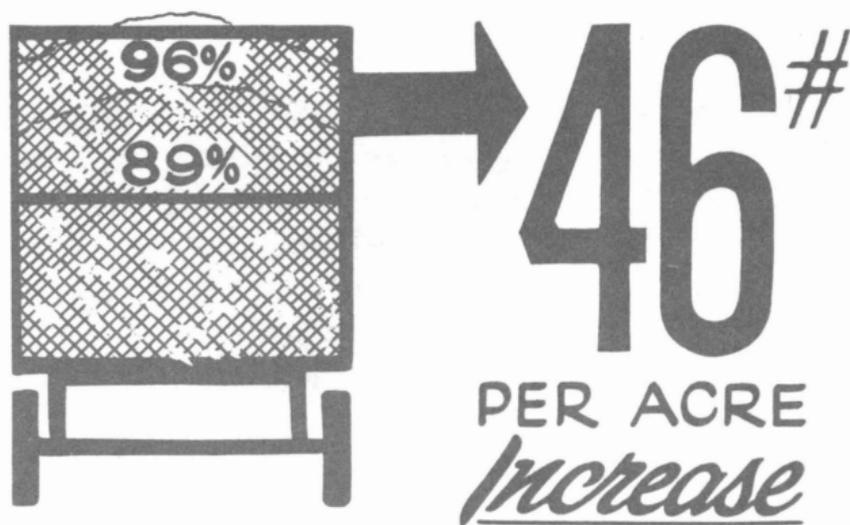
Studies of actual farm records and research findings indicate that approximately 89 percent of the nation's machine-picked cotton reaches the trailer and about 11 percent is left in the field. The loss range is from 3 to 30 percent. Losses of 15 to 20 percent are common.

These losses are important when expressed either in pounds of lint or dollar value. The 11 percent average loss breaks down like this:

2.2% Pre-harvest	
5.4% Ground	= 11%
3.4% Stalk	

2.2 percent is cotton which has fallen to the ground before the mechanical picker enters the field; 5.4 percent is cotton knocked to the ground by the picker; and 3.4 percent represents cotton left on the stalk. The 3-year average total yield on machine-picked acres is estimated at 658 pounds. Eleven percent of that amounts to 72 pounds of lint left in the field.

658# Average total yield
× 11% Field loss
72# Lint left in field



One hundred percent efficiency probably will never be achieved. However, many producers have shown it is possible to increase the amount harvested from 89 percent to 96 percent. This means an increase of 46 pounds more lint per acre saved off every planted acre. At 21 cents per pound, it means \$9.66 additional cotton income per acre. When the harvesting cost is deducted, a net gain of \$8.05 an acre — more than 1.2 cents per pound — is realized. This requires the maximum use of technology, supervision, and management.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 21¢ \\
 \times 46\# \\
 \hline
 \$ 9.66 \\
 - 1.61 \text{ Harvesting cost} \\
 \hline
 \$ 8.05 \text{ Net gain per acre}
 \end{array}$$

Management Is the Key

How can this be done? The answer is good management. Good management is the successful combining of resources such as land, labor, capital and materials for greatest efficiency. It is the producer who uses his resources in the most efficient way who makes the biggest profit. Good management for harvesting efficiency is, likewise, the deciding, the planning, the timing and the controlling to make certain that all practices used help reach the goal. No practice can be better than the skill with which it is

applied. *Good management is the key* to efficient harvesting.

Many practices are involved in the production and harvesting of cotton which have an important effect on the harvesting efficiency of spindle pickers. These include drainage, row-layout, variety, plant uniformity, row shape, weed control, machine repair, machine adjustments, machine operation, operator training and others. Costly field losses can usually be reduced by the timely application of the proper practices. For example, the loss of cotton from only 2½ feet of the row at the end of a 250-foot row amounts to a 10 pound or \$2.10 per acre loss on bale-per-acre cotton. Therefore, it is important to have turnrows 25 to 30 feet wide. Irregular row profiles which necessitate raising the picker 1 inch can lower picker efficiency as much as 4 percent. There are many similar examples.

The American cotton producer today finds himself in an ever-tightening cost-price squeeze with fierce fiber market competition. The answers come from the greater use of science and technology. This makes efficient management all the more necessary.

In the case of mechanical harvesting, remember that the same resources are invested in producing the cotton that is left in the field as that which is harvested, ginned and marketed. Practically every phase of the cotton production program influences how much of the cotton yield can be put in the trailer and how much is left on the ground at harvest time. *Good management is the key.*

The information in this leaflet was prepared by State and Federal Extension Specialists with the assistance of the National Cotton Council.