

Greg Parle report on 14th meeting of CSITC held in Lubbock, Texas September, 2010

1. International Instrument Testing of Cotton Best Practices Guide

There was consensus at the CSITC meeting in Bremen that there should be one instrument testing manual based on harmonisation of the existing ITMF and USDA guidelines.

The guide at the moment is very much in draft form. CSITC are looking for input from a range of organisations from instrument manufacturers to mills. I have put my name down for input. It is important that this guide conforms with the CCAA BMP so Australian input is important. Some of the requirements are as follows:

- Sampling at gin including sample weight and dimensions
- Calibration material – some countries still using ICC calibration cottons which can test differently to HVI calibration cottons. India producing and testing using ICC calibration cottons
- Laboratory environment including conditioning, space for instruments, lab design and sample conditioning
- Calibration, sample testing and quality of data
- Participation in CSITC round trials & qualification of instruments

Recommendation- CCAA to go through draft at next CCAA meeting in February 2011.

2. Reports on 2010 round trials

Results from RT 2010-3 show that a record number of labs and instruments participated. There were 77 labs and 123 instruments. Results for 2010 show no difference in variation from previous years.

CSITC would like all labs to send their results for future round trials electronically via CSITC website. Results can be sent directly from instrument software which is preferred option. Instructions for this will be with samples for RT 2010-4.

RT 2010-4 will include optional Leaf area % and Leaf count for data input.

RT 2010-4 will include HVI calibration micronaire low and high cottons if required.

3. Interpreting CSITC combined properties measurement and measurements for each parameter

CSITC looking at new system that avoids rating labs but provides additional information on consistency and repeatability. This was brought about by some labs not understanding the current CSITC round trial results system and not knowing whether they are testing within acceptable tolerances.

4. Discussion on Instrument colour

It was discussed whether instrument colour Rd & +b values could be traded in the future rather than the current instrument colour grade system or visual classification. The Zimbabwe representative was against instrument Rd & +b values, believing that this could discount cotton from this region given their high +b readings. It was decided as a project that Axel would look at the variability and repeatability of both Rd & +b values and what tolerances could be used if trading on instrument colour. The CCAA is looking at Australian colour grade chart for instrument testing to replace the existing US colour grade chart. Trials are still continuing in this area.

Should Australia look at trading on Rd & +b values rather than instrument or visual colour grades?

5. Election of Chair of CSITC

Andrew Macdonald was voted as CSITC chair for the next two years.

Visit to USDA Classing Facility in Lubbock

I visited Lubbock classing facility with Jimmy Knowlton. Unfortunately there was no classing with the crop in the High Plains due in the next couple of weeks.

Lubbock operates 24 hours 7 days a week employing 300 people over 3 shifts. The USDA class colour grade by Instrument and are looking at classing leaf grade by instrument. They plan to have all cotton classed for instrument colour grade and leaf grade by 2012. All facilities now testing with HVI 1000 and the USDA are happy with the leaf measurement on this instrument. They use software provided by Uster that measures leaf grade by both Area % and Count. The software we use in Australia only uses Area % for leaf grade. I will take this up with Uster representative in Australia to find out if we can trial the USDA software.

The Manual class will only be checking for extraneous matter.
USDA qualify all their instruments before each classing season.
The USDA has not performed any study on variation between round and conventional modules. At this stage they do not see any reason for this given they test every bale within a module.

Interesting Breakout Sessions during ICAC included:

- Improving industry efficiency in storage, transportation and handling
- Best Practices in Cotton ginning – I attended this session and included guidelines that ginning BMP in Australia has in place

Greg Parle
October 2010