



November 2, 2017

To: Cotton and Tobacco Program Gin Customers
From: Ronald F. Robbins
Associate Deputy Administrator
USDA AMS Cotton and Tobacco Program
Subject: Plastic Contaminants in Cotton Samples

The AMS Cotton and Tobacco Program would like to bring to your attention a matter of serious concern. In the process of classing this season's crop, we are witnessing a significant increase in the number of samples that contain plastic contaminants. All samples found to have plastic are identified as extraneous matter code "61-Other" or "62-Other", depending on the level of contamination. The current CCC Loan Schedule of Premiums and Discounts for Upland cotton lists the discount for "Other" extraneous matter as -455 points per pound for Level 1 and -695 points per pound for Level 2. We understand this is a serious matter and we wanted to bring it to your attention.

Each Classing Office has been instructed to save samples with plastic contaminants to allow for further review and educational purposes. Through November 1st, we have identified 237 samples with plastic while classing the 2017 crop. In comparison, for the 2016 crop we estimate 25 samples of the extraneous matter "61-Other" calls were due to plastic. We have also informed the Classing Offices to contact the Gin ASAP if samples are identified as containing plastic extraneous matter. Please contact or visit your local Classing Office to discuss and/or examine cotton samples determined to contain plastic.

Several pictures of 2017 crop samples that contain plastic are listed below for your review.

