



## ***In 2004 the National Cotton Council Quality Task Force issued the following notice:***

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*In recognition of current National Cotton Council Policy that recommends moisture levels in cotton bales at the gin not exceed 7.5%, the Quality Task Force urges diligence be exercised to minimize the possibility of fiber quality deterioration due to excessive water and concentrated wet spots; this is a special concern with gins that use liquid spraying systems.*

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As giners prepare for the 2005-2006 season, we need to take note of the importance of managing moisture in a responsible manner. In issuing the notice we are reminded that:

- 7.5% moisture should be considered a ceiling not a target.
- An average level of 7.5% could be excessive if the moisture is not uniformly distributed.

Adding moisture to obtain optimum levels can be a good idea. The right amount of moisture:

- Reduces bale press forces extending press life
- Lowers energy costs
- Lessens tie breakage
- Enhances turnout
- Minimizes weight fluctuation during storage

Spray systems, if properly monitored, can do a good job applying water across a cotton batt at the lint slide. However, the mechanics involved in the feeding and tramping may result in wet spots within the bale if not managed carefully. Regardless of what moisture systems are used, bales should be monitored and inspected paying special attention for wet spots,

Potential impacts of excessive bale moisture:

- The integrity of official grade samples may be compromised
- USDA AMS classing protocols cannot be met
- Loss of confidence in HVI measurements
- Claims due to hidden damage
- Mills changing their buying patterns