

Egypt Opens Import Market for Increased U.S. Cotton Exports



Thanks to a recent change in Egypt's cotton import policy, future U.S. Upland and Pima cotton exports to Egypt could reach 500,000 bales.

In December 2010 Egypt announced a change in its import requirements, which permits imports of U.S. cotton from all areas declared free of boll weevil. This change in policy follows nearly 10 years of coordinated education by CCI in close cooperation with USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) and Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and the National Cotton Council (NCC) to persuade Egyptian officials of the safety of all U.S. cotton in terms of spread of cotton related pests, especially the boll weevil.

Following two trade delegations in 2001 and 2005, CCI and FAS began a third initiative in 2009. Egyptian traders and spinners were looking for alternative suppliers of both medium and extra-long staple cottons to supplement their local supplies and limited imports from neighboring countries.

CCI conducted ministerial discussions and high-level government technical briefings, including viewing the video "Pest-Free U.S. Cotton Through Control, Ginning and Compression." This science-based approach highlights the stringent controls the U.S. cotton industry has in place to keep all U.S. cotton

safe and pest-free for its global customers.

As a final step, CCI assisted USDA in organizing a visit by a team of Egyptian phytosanitary officials to the U.S. in September 2010 to visit farming, harvesting, ginning and warehousing facilities. During that visit, the Egyptian delegation met with technical experts from the NCC for an extensive briefing and field tour. The group also met with USDA to learn about control systems in place to keep U.S. cotton pest-free.

At each step of the visit, Egyptian officials had transparent discussions with U.S. cotton industry leaders about the controls used to eliminate the possibility that cotton pests could survive compression within a universal density bale or travel to Egypt on the exterior of U.S. grown, ginned and baled cotton.

Following the visit, the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation held extensive internal meetings and announced in December 2010 its agreement to import all growths of U.S. cotton from areas declared free of the boll weevil.

The Egyptian textile industry is facing fiber shortages due to a reduction in domestic cotton production by more than 50 percent since 2000 and increased demand for quality cotton fiber as its domestic textile industry expands.

PEST-FREE U.S. COTTON

The U.S. cotton industry showed Egyptian officials its control systems to keep U.S. cotton free of pests.

