

COTTON INDUSTRY



US COTTON INDUSTRY

The United States is the world's leading cotton exporter, providing approximately 35 percent of global cotton exports in recent years. Through its participation in global trade, the United States supports global textile industries and provides opportunities for domestic farmers to market their cotton to the world.

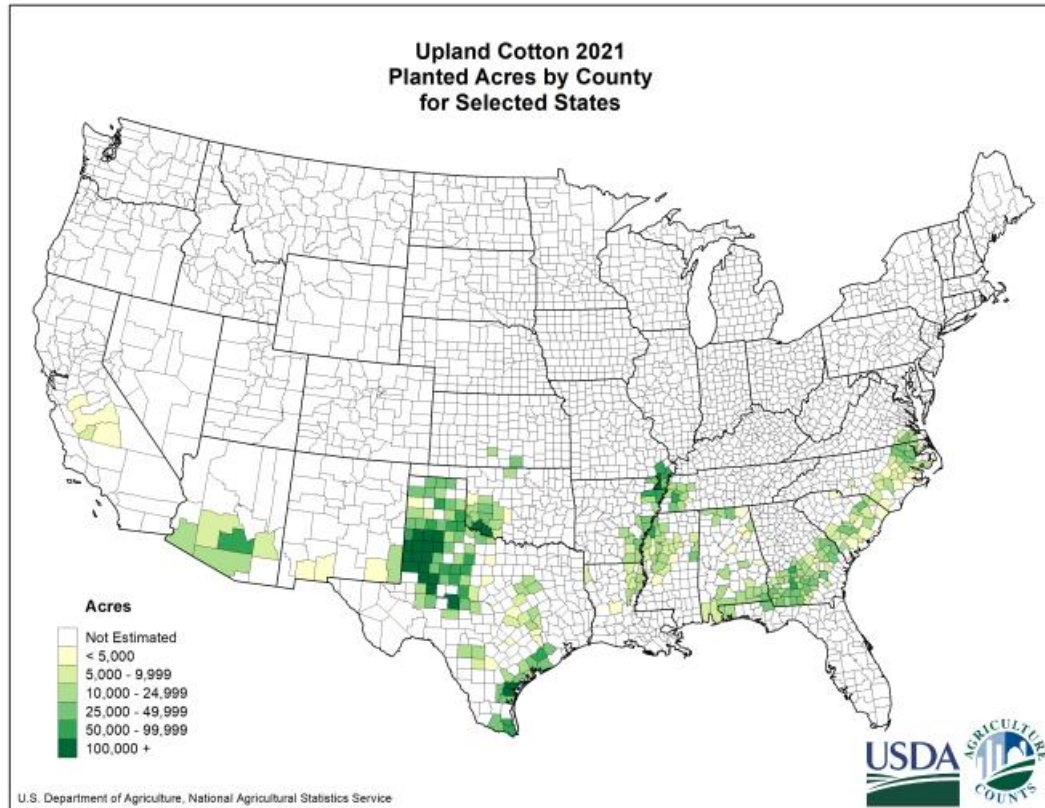


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One bale of cotton—approximately 480 pounds of cleaned cotton lint—can make more than 200 pairs of jeans or 1,200 t-shirts. In the United States and around the world, there are two main species of cotton cultivated for commercial use: upland cotton and Pima (extra-long staple) cotton. Upland cotton comprises the vast majority of production. The primary difference between species is fiber length, with other small differences in growing conditions and end uses.

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U.S. cotton is grown predominantly in 17 southern-tiered “Cotton Belt” States—from Virginia to California. Cotton is planted from March to June and harvested from August to December. Among the U.S. States, Texas is the largest producer, contributing approximately 40 percent of U.S. cotton production in recent years. Other top cotton producers include Georgia, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Within Texas, most production is concentrated in the High Plains region, as cotton is particularly suited for that area’s climate.

HOW IT IS GROWN

U.S. cotton is mechanically sown and harvested using specialized equipment. Seed cotton—fluffy white fiber that includes seeds—is harvested from the field and pressed into round bales or large modules for transport to a gin. During the ginning process, cotton fibers are separated from the seeds, cleaned of foreign material, and pressed into bales of lint.

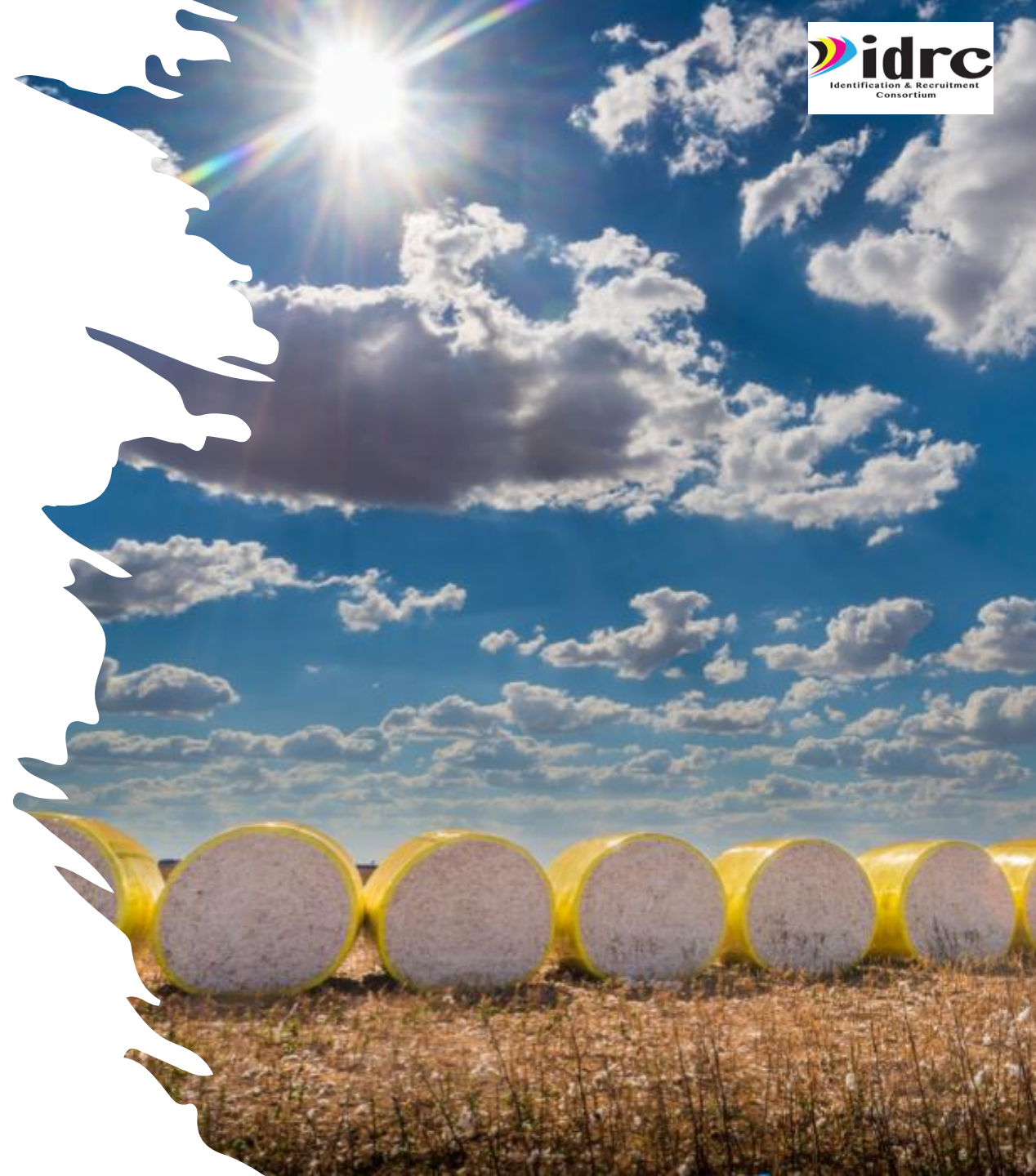


QUALIFYING WORK & ACTIVITIES

- Usually work at the gins is where most qualifying workers for MEP will be found. Often this work is very seasonal in nature and families and youth often travel from other areas to do the work.

QUALIFYING WORK ACTIVITIES

- Cleaning
- Ginning
- Harvesting
- Packing
- Sampling
- Transporting
- Unloading
- Unpacking



AFTER GINNING

After ginning, the cotton bales are ready for shipment—usually to a storage warehouse where bales are consolidated before being sent to a mill for further processing into textile and apparel products.



PRICE OF COTTON

- The price of cotton is also determined by other factors. Cotton prices are impacted by the price of other field crops that compete with cotton for area; producers will plant cotton instead of other field crops if it provides a relatively higher return, and vice versa.



PRICE OF COTTON

Common crop alternatives include corn, soybeans, and wheat, though regional crops—such as peanuts—can also be substituted for cotton. The cost of fiber substitutes (particularly polyester and other synthetics) also impacts the price of cotton. If cotton prices rise too high, manufacturers can substitute synthetics for cotton. Given the number and variety of alternatives, cotton producers face stiff price competition and continually operate in a competitive environment.



NATIONAL COTTON COUNCIL

The National Cotton Council website can be a good place to start learning more about cotton if it is a crop that is grown in your state.

<https://www.cotton.org/>

'23 NCC Planting Intentions Survey Results

Get survey results, the NCC's cotton economic outlook and other news from the NCC's recent 2023 Annual Meeting.

Learn more >