

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
COTTON DIVISION

A CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF MAJOR
EVENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF U. S.
COTTON STANDARDS

Cotton Division
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A Chronological Summary of Major Events in the Development of U.S. Cotton Standards

- 1909 - First official United States cotton standards were established. The nine grades were: Middling Fair, Strict Good Middling, Good Middling, Strict Middling, Middling, Strict Low Middling, Low Middling, Strict Good Ordinary and Good Ordinary.
- 1914 - Official cotton standards of the United States were promulgated on December 15, 1914 under authority of the United States Cotton Futures Act of 1914. The grade names were the same as the 1909 standards.
- 1916 - Standards for 11 grades of colored cotton were established in January 1916 to be added to the nine White grades established in 1914. There were five grades of Yellow Tinged, Good Middling through Low Middling; three grades of Yellow Stained, Good Middling through Middling; and three grades of Blue Stained cottons, Good Middling through Middling. This made a total of 20 grade standards represented in physical form.
- 1918 - First official standards for American Egyptian and Sea Island cotton were established effective October 25, 1918. American Egyptian grades were numbered 1 through 5 and "below grade 5" with intermediate grades identified by "1/2". Grades 1 through 5 were physical while the intermediate "1/2" grades and "below grade 5" were descriptive. Sea Island grades were numbered 1 through 6 and "below grade 6". Split grades were designated by "1/2". Standards for grades 1 through 6 were represented in physical form while the other grades were descriptive.
- 1918 - First official staple standards were promulgated effective October 25, 1918. The following lengths were established: Below 3/4", 3/4" to 1 inch in 1/16" graduations and 1 inch to 1-3/4" in 1/32" graduations. Nine lengths were represented by physical types: 3/4", 7/8", 1", 1-1/8", 1-1/4", 1-3/8", 1-1/2", 1-5/8" and 1-3/4". The other lengths were descriptive.
- 1921 - The official standards for length of staple were amended August 4, 1921 to include three more lengths in physical types: 1-1/16", 1-3/16" and 1-5/16". This made 12 staple standards represented by physical types.
- 1922 - The official grade standards for American upland cotton were revised in July 1922 to become effective August 1, 1923. The color and leaf of the physical grades were changed to better represent the current crops. In addition, 12 descriptive grades were promulgated - three Gray, five Spotted, three Light Stained, and Strict Good Middling Yellow Tinged. This made a total of 32 grade standards for American upland cotton, 20 represented in physical form and 12 descriptive.
- 1922 - The official grade standards for American Egyptian cotton were revised in July 1922 to be effective August 1, 1923. The physical grades were revised to more nearly reflect current American Egyptian crops which had less reddish color than in previous years.

- 1923 - United States Cotton Standards Act was passed March 4, 1923 to establish and promote the use of the official cotton standards of the United States in interstate and foreign commerce; to prevent deception therein and provide for the proper application of such standards; and for other purposes.
- 1923 - A cotton standards conference was held in Washington, D. C. in July 1923 to consider revision of the official grade standards for upland cotton. The grade standards were revised effective August 1, 1924. The color and leaf were changed in four grades - Good Middling, Strict Middling, Middling and Strict Low Middling.
- 1923 - The Universal Standards Agreement was made with European cotton trade organizations in 1923 to provide for the use of Universal Standards of Grades for American upland cotton.
- 1924 - A supplemental agreement was made in 1924 between the USDA and the European cotton associations to hold annual cotton standards conferences to examine and approve copies of the original Universal Standards.
- 1924 - American Egyptian grade standards were revised effective August 1, 1925 to correspond to the original grade standards established in 1918. Grades 1 through 5 were represented by samples, the intermediate 1/2 grades, and "below grade", were descriptive.
- 1924 - The official staple standards were amended September 18, 1924 to include 15/16" as a physical type. This made 13 lengths represented by physical types.
- 1925 - The first Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D.C. in March 1925 to examine and approve copies of the original standards. Later, the supplemental agreement was amended to provide for biennial meetings, beginning in 1927.
- 1925 - The official staple standards for length of staple were amended on July 31, 1925, effective August 1, 1926, to provide for 17 physical types of American upland cotton and four of American Egyptian. American upland: 3/4", 7/8", 15/16", 1", 1-1/32", 1-1/16", 1-3/32", 1-1/8", 1-5/32", 1-3/16", 1-7/32", 1-1/4", 1-9/32", 1-5/16", 1-11/32", 1-3/8" and 1-1/2". American Egyptian: 1-1/2", 1-9/16", 1-5/8" and 1-3/4".
- 1925 - Linters grade standards were established effective August 1, 1926. The grades established were: 1 through 7 and Hull Fiber (lower than grade 7).
- 1926 - The official grade standards for American upland cotton were revised in March 1926 to become effective August 1, 1927. The revisions added five physical grades of Extra White cotton to the existing standards. These grades were: Good Middling Extra White, Strict Middling Extra White, Middling Extra White, Strict Low Middling Extra White and Low Middling Extra White.
- 1927 - The second Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D.C. March 14, 1927 to inspect and approve copies of the Universal Standards.

- 1928 - Two descriptive staple lengths, 29/32" and 31/32", were added to the list of staple standards effective November 16, 1929.
- 1929 - The third Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D. C. March 16, 1929 to inspect and approve copies of the Universal Standards for American upland cotton.
- 1929 - The American Egyptian grade standards were revised effective August 1, 1930 to more closely represent the current crop. Grades 1 through 5 were represented by samples and "Below Grade No 5" was descriptive. There were no descriptive half grades.
- 1930 - The American Egyptian grade standards were amended in July 1930 to re-establish half grades for describing American Egyptian cottons intermediate between grades 1 to 5.
- 1931 - The fourth Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D.C. May 9, 1931 to examine and approve copies of the original standards.
- 1933 - The fifth Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D. C. March 16, 1933 to inspect and approve copies of the Universal Standards.
- 1933 - The United States Staple Standards were amended effective August 1, 1933 to provide physical types for 13/16", 29/32" and 31/32" staple lengths.
- 1936 - The Universal Cotton Standards for upland cotton were revised effective August 20, 1936 to more closely fit the current crops. This revision reduced the total number of grades from 37 to 32 and the physical grades from 25 to 13. The new standards included grades for White, Extra White, Gray, Spotted, Tinged and Yellow Stained.
- 1936 - The sixth Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D. C. in March 1936 to examine and approve key sets of copies of the original official standards for grade of American upland cotton, as established to be effective August 20, 1936. At this conference, it was agreed that subsequent conferences would be held at three-year intervals.
- 1938 - Official standards for Sea Island cotton were re-established August 10, 1939. Six grades, Nos. 1 to 6, were represented by samples, with descriptive 1/2 grades and a descriptive "Below Grade 6". Staple standards for Sea Island cotton were established in physical form for four lengths: 1-1/2", 1-9/16", 1-5/8" and 1-3/4".
- 1939 - The seventh Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D. C. March 13, 1939 to examine and approve key sets of copies of the official grade standards.
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- 1940 - Two sets of official grade standards for American Egyptian cotton were established in 1940 effective March 20, 1941. One set of standards represented the American Egyptian Pima variety and the other set represented the SXP variety. These standards provided for nine physical grades of each variety and a descriptive grade for "Below Grade No. 5". The physical grades were numbered 1 through 5 with 1/2 grades in between.
- 1943 - The United States Staple Standards for American Egyptian cotton were amended effective August 10, 1943 to provide physical types for the 1-3/8" and 1-7/16" staple lengths.

- 1946 - The eighth Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D.C. April 1946. A new set of grade boxes was prepared to match the 1935 standards as closely as possible. The proposed standards were revised effective August 1, 1947. Strict Low Middling Gray was added as a descriptive grade. This made a total of 33 grades, 13 in physical form, and 20 descriptive.
- 1950 - The ninth Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D. C. May 1, 1950 to examine and approve copies of the Universal Standards.
- 1951 - Official grade standards for American Egyptian cotton were revised in 1951 effective August 1, 1952 to supersede and replace the grade standards for American Egyptian Pima and SXP cotton which were promulgated in 1940. The revised standards provided for nine physical grades numbered 1 through 9 and a descriptive grade for Grade No. 10.
- 1953 - Official grade standards for American upland cotton were revised effective August 15, 1953. This revision included the following changes:
(1) Middling Fair, Strict Good Middling and all Extra White grades were eliminated.
(2) Good Middling White and Good Middling Tinged were made descriptive. The upland standards were reduced to 10 physical grades and 14 descriptive grades.
- 1953 - The tenth Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D.C. in May, 1953 to examine and approve copies of the revised standards for American upland cotton promulgated in August 1952 to be effective August 15, 1953. Good Middling was made a physical standard effective August 1954.
- 1954 - A special conference was held in Washington, D. C. June 7, 1954 to inspect sets to match the original Good Middling standard approved at the 1953 conference.
- 1955 - A Cotton Linters Conference was held in Washington, D. C. on May 9, 1955 to consider revising the linters standards to more closely represent current linters production and processing methods. The linters grade standards were revised effective July 1956 and linters staple standards were promulgated in 1956 effective June 1957. The revised grade standards provided for seven physical grades numbered 1 through 7 and a descriptive grade for "Chemical Grade" which represents linters which are below Grade 7. The staple standards provided for seven physical staple types numbered Staple 1 through Staple 7 and a descriptive length for "Below 7 staple".
- 1956 - The 11th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D.C. in May 1956 to examine and approve copies of the 1953 standards. In addition, a proposal to establish a descriptive grade for Strict Good Middling was approved and this standard became effective August 1, 1957.
- 1956 - An American Egyptian Grade Standards meeting was held in Washington, D. C. in May 1956. It was proposed to change the American Egyptian grade standards to better represent the varieties currently being grown. This proposal was accepted and the American Egyptian grade standards were revised effective August 1, 1957.

- 1959 - The 12th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D. C. in May 1959 to examine and approve copies of the 1953 standards and to consider the promulgation of additional grades. It was agreed that the following standards be promulgated effective August 1, 1960: (1) Official physical standards for Strict Middling Spotted through Low Middling Spotted, with Good Middling Spotted to remain descriptive; (2) Official descriptive standards for Good Middling Light Spotted through Low Middling Light Spotted; (3) Official descriptive standards for Middling Plus through Good Ordinary Plus; (4) Official descriptive standards for Good Middling Light Gray through Strict Low Middling Light Gray; and (5) An official definition for Below Grade cotton. This made a total of 39 grades for American upland cotton, 15 in physical form and 24 descriptive.

- 1962 - The 13th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Washington, D.C. in May 1962 to approve key sets of copies of the 1953 standards and to consider revising the 1953 standards. It was proposed to revise the physical grade standards to correspond more closely to the current crops which contained less trash and fewer identifiable spots than the 1953 standards. This proposal was accepted and the standards were revised effective June 15, 1963.

- 1963 - A cotton standards meeting was held in Washington, D. C. in May 1963 to examine and approve sets of Universal Cotton Standards revised effective June 15, 1963.

- 1965 - The 14th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Memphis, Tennessee in June 1965 to examine and approve key sets of Universal Cotton Standards for official use during the next three years. Proposals to establish standards for Strict Good Ordinary Spotted and Light Spotted grades were opposed by all industry representatives except the producers and ginners.

- 1966 - Official U. S. Cotton Standards for grade and staple length were revised effective June 1, 1966 to include micronaire readings as a third factor of cotton quality.

- 1968 - The 15th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Memphis, Tennessee in May 1968 to examine and approve key sets of Universal Cotton Standards for official use during the next three years. The signatories proposed that a set of physical standards be established for Light Spotted grades. This proposal was opposed by all other industry groups at the conference.

- 1970 - Official cotton standards for American Egyptian cotton were revised effective July 1, 1970 to more nearly reflect the color, leaf and preparation of current crops. The revisions also included changing the name of American Egyptian cotton to American Pima cotton.

- 1971 - The 16th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Memphis, Tennessee in May 1971 to examine and approve key sets of the Universal Cotton Standards for use during the next three years.
- 1974 - The 17th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Memphis, Tennessee in May 1974. Delegates to the conference agreed to revise the Universal Cotton Standards as follows: (1) revoke the descriptive standard for Strict Good Middling cotton; (2) revoke the descriptive standard for Good Middling Tinged cotton; (3) change the physical standard for Strict Middling Tinged to a descriptive standard; and (4) revoke the descriptive standard for Good Middling Yellow Stained cotton. These revisions were effective July 1, 1975.
- 1977 - The 18th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Memphis, Tennessee in May 1977 to examine and approve key sets of the Universal Cotton Standards for use during the next three years. Proposals to eliminate the four descriptive standards for Gray cotton (Good Middling Gray, Strict Middling Gray, Middling Gray and Strict Low Middling Gray) and the descriptive standards for Good Middling Light Gray, Good Middling Light Spotted and Good Middling Spotted were opposed. The proposal for changing the physical standard for Strict Middling Spotted cotton to a descriptive standard was opposed.
- 1980 - The 19th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Memphis, Tennessee in May 1980 to examine and approve Key Sets of the Universal Cotton Standards for official use during the next three years. Proposals to change the Good Middling standard from a physical to a descriptive standard, revoke the descriptive standards for Good Middling Light Spotted, Good Middling Spotted, Good Middling Light Gray and Good Middling were opposed. The proposal to adopt the 6-sample standard box in lieu of the 12-sample standard box was also opposed.
- 1981 - The grade and staple standards for Sea Island cotton and the tentative preparation standards for upland long-staple cotton were discontinued in June. These standards were inactive and had not been prepared in several years due to the lack of production of Sea Island cotton and improved ginning.
- 1983 - The 20th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Memphis, Tennessee in June 1983 to examine and approve Key Sets of the 12 sample box of Universal Cotton Standards for official use during the next year. The proposal to adopt the six-sample box as the standard size instead of the 12 sample box was adopted, effective August 16, 1984. The proposals to adopt a "Strict Good Ordinary Spotted" physical standard and a "Strict Good Ordinary Light Spotted" descriptive standard for American Upland cotton was accepted as a tentative basis effective August 16, 1984.
- 1984 - A cotton meeting was held in Memphis, Tennessee in May 1984 to examine and approve Key Sets of six sample Universal Cotton Standards which included the tentative Strict Good Ordinary Spotted standard, revised effective August 16, 1984 for use during the next two years.

- 1985 - Official Staple Standards of American Upland Cotton were revised effective July 12, 1985. The pervious official staple length standards were represented by actual quantities of cotton selected by cotton classification experts when the only measurement aid available was the common 1 inch ruler. With this revision, the staple standards for American Upland cotton were established and are maintained by an instrument specifically designed to measure cotton fiber, the Suter-Webb Duplex Cotton Fiber Sorter. These changes make the standards linear and increase their precision and accuracy. See Table 14.
- 1986 - Official Grade Standards of American Pima revised effective July 1, 1986. The number of physical grade standards for American Pima cotton was reduced from nine to six. Below grade 7 is a descriptive grade. This revision involved consolidating some of the existing grades. Each of the physical grade standards were revised to include a wider range of color to cover the color range of the crop as a more creamy variety is now being produced.
- 1989 - The 22th Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in Memphis, Tn in June 1989 to examine and approve key sets of the Universal Cotton Standards for use during the next three years. No major changes were made during this Conference.
- 1992 - The 23rd Universal Cotton Standards Conference was held in June in Memphis, Tn to examine and approve the key sets of the Universal Cotton Standards for use during the next three year. The "grade" will be separated into color and leaf starting with the 1993 crop.