

# Contamination & stickiness decreasing in cotton globally: ITMF Survey



February 02, 2023 - Global

Cotton Contamination Survey 2022 by the International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF) shows that the level of contamination of raw cotton by foreign matters and stickiness have decreased compared to 2019. At the same time the appearance of seed-coat fragments has remained the same. The survey reveals significant differences between cotton varieties.

The Cotton Contamination Survey n°16/2022 covered 104 spinning mills located in 21 countries which evaluated 78 different cotton growths, ITMF said in a media release.

The level of cottons moderately or seriously contaminated as perceived by the spinning mills from around the world dropped from 25 per cent in 2019 to 22 per cent in 2022. A closer look at the extent of the contamination shows that 6 per cent of all cotton evaluated were seriously contaminated by some sort of foreign matter whereas 16 per cent were only moderately contaminated.

As the summary data are arithmetic averages of the different contaminants, the extent of contamination is fully illustrated by the results for the individual contaminants. They range from 5 per cent of all cottons processed being moderately or seriously contaminated by 'tar' to 43 per cent of them being moderately or seriously contaminated by 'organic matter', i.e., leaves, feathers, paper, leather, etc. Other serious contaminants are 'strings made of plastic film' (31 per cent), 'fabrics made of plastic film' (39 per cent), 'strings made of woven plastic' (30 per cent) as well as 'inorganic matter - sand/dust' (29 per cent).

The 10 most contaminated cotton descriptions considered for the survey originated in India (India-Others, MCU-5, DCH, Shankar-4/6, J-34), Pakistan (NAIB, MNH93), Afghanistan, Togo and Tanzania (Coastal). The 10 least contaminated raw cottons were produced in Spain, China (Anhui, Shandong), Australia, US (Memphis Territory, Pima, Arizona, South-Eastern) and Mexico (Juarez).

The presence of sticky cotton as perceived by the spinning mills has been decreasing for almost 10 years (i.e., 23 per cent in 2013 vs 12 per cent in 2022) and remains at the lowest level since 1989. The 10 descriptions that were most affected by stickiness originated from Afghanistan, the US (Pima, Arizona), Tajikistan (Medium Staples), Cameroon, Brazil, Argentina, India (DCH), Sudan (Barakat) and Zimbabwe. On the other end of the range, cottons from Pakistan (MNH93), China (Shandong, Anhui, Hebei), Greece, South Africa, Mozambique, Sudan (Sudan-Others), the US (Memphis Territory) and Uganda were not or hardly affected by stickiness, the release added.

The appearance of seed-coat fragments in cotton growths remains an issue for spinners around the world. About 33 per cent of all cotton growths consumed contained moderate or significant amounts of seed-coat fragments (same as 2019). The 10 origins most affected by seed-coat fragments are Afghanistan, Pakistan (MNH93, NAIB), India (MCU-5, DCH, Shankar-4/6), Tanzania (Coastal), Egypt (Egypt-Other), Turkiye (Turkiye-Other), and Togo. The 10 cotton growth with the least presence of seed-coat fragments are Sudan (Sudan-Other, Barakat), Cameroon, Australia, Greece, Spain, China (Shandong, Hebei, Anhui), and Mexico (Mexico-Other).