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Cotton Exchange Building, 2nd Floor, Cotton Green, Mumbai - 400 033
Telephone: 8657442944/45/46/47/48 Email: cai@caionline.in
www.caionline.in

Securing Indian Cotton

- Multiple Technologies to Accelerate Sustained Production Growth in Sustainable Ways

Shri. Chandrashekar, Economist, Senior Editor, Policy Commentator and Trainer, is a global agribusiness and commodities market specialist. He provides policy inputs for the government through his columns in The Hindu Business Line newspaper and on business television. Currently, he is Economic Advisor, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

EXPERT'S Column



He speaks regularly within India and outside on a range of topics

Shri. G. Chandrashekar
*Economic Advisor,
IMC Chamber of Commerce
and Industry*

including Indian macro-economy, food and nutrition security, trade and investment opportunities, and commodity market outlook covering crude oil, metals and major agriculture.

Shri. Chandrashekar holds many public positions including: Member, SEBI Commodity Derivatives Advisory Committee; Consultant, United Nations International Trade Centre, Geneva; Visiting faculty in a number of reputed B-Schools.

For centuries, cotton – the white gold - has been a critical cash crop for our country. Given the nature of utilisation, cotton may be called an industrial crop. It is not only a fibre but also provides food and feed.

The importance of cotton has increased in the last 15 years with massive expansion in planted area and output. That India is currently ranked # 1 in area planted (13 million hectares) and # 1 in production (34-37 million bales) while being # 3 in export of cotton (behind USA and Brazil) is well recognised.

Despite recent gains, productivity levels have tremendous scope for further increase. At roughly three bales a hectare or 500 kilograms a hectare, our yields are below the global average of over 750 kg/ha and just one-third that of major origins like China and Brazil.

Newer challenges may stymie India's future growth. Land constraints, water shortage and climate change are challenges the cotton sector will have to overcome. It is likely that the area available for cotton cultivation is nearing a saturation point. We cannot expect unlimited area expansion in the years to come.

Some crystal gazing: In the next 8-10 years, world cotton production is expected to grow at a slower pace than consumption. Cotton yields are set to grow more slowly, as production gradually shifts from high-yield origins such as China to relatively low-yielding ones in South Asia and West Africa. World cotton use is set to grow at less than one percent due to slower economic growth and slower population growth. Raw cotton processing in China will continue its long-term downward trend. At the same time, higher mill use is envisaged in India, Vietnam,

Bangladesh, Indonesia and Turkey. World trade's ongoing shift towards value-added cotton yarn and manmade fibres will continue. Competition from synthetic fibre will make cotton less-competitive. Crude oil rates will impact synthetic fibre prices.

My research shows, over the next 8-10 years, crude oil prices will gradually weaken as fossil-fuel consumption demand begins to shrink, with the world moving towards decarbonisation and electrification taking precedence. Falling crude oil price will reduce agricultural production costs including that of cotton in industrialised economies. This can potentially impact India's cotton competitiveness.

Where does India stand? Barring years of drought, India will remain the world's largest cotton producer. According to OECD-FAO projections, by 2030:

- India is expected to contribute 41-42 million bales or close to 25 percent of the projected world output.
- India's mill consumption will become the world's largest with over 40 percent increase to about 38 million bales by that time.
- Consumption will be driven by income increases, demographic pressure and current low per capita usage.

The emerging scenario poses a challenge for all stakeholders in the cotton value chain to ensure that domestic demand is fully met and genuine export surplus is created. Remunerative prices alone will keep growers motivated.

Infusion of multiple technologies is the way forward for Indian agriculture in general and for cotton in particular, in order to leverage the record area under cultivation. Adoption of information technology, agri-biotechnology, satellite technology, nuclear agricultural technology and nanotech can deliver improved farm productivity as well as better quality.

Precision agriculture using these multiple techs should be promoted. The government has recently recognised the role drones can play in agriculture.

The potential of agri-tech market can be segmented into: supply chain and output market linkages; financial services; precision agriculture and farm management; quality management and traceability; and farm input market linkages.

Going forward, I envisage increased digitalisation of the supply chain. Automation, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Block-chain tech for export-import trade all will receive a boost. These will advance traceability and compliance needs, providing end-to-end solutions.

The user industry must de-risk itself from the vagaries of production, quality and price. Contract farming is an opportunity for the user industry to ensure stable supplies of raw material. The user industry must strive to establish backward linkages. Contract farming will free the user industry of market price volatility and quality issues. Contracting with FPOs will provide scale economies and encourage adoption of technologies.

Although cotton currently faces challenges from synthetics, the world is decidedly moving towards 'green', 'natural', 'renewable' and 'biodegradable' materials. So, cotton as a natural fibre will continue to enjoy consumer support. The world market is increasingly looking for green products.

Cotton as a natural fibre can help advance many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations. My sense is that cotton can contribute to advancing as many as ten of the UN's 17 SDGs.

Indian cotton and products must become globally competitive. I would define global competitiveness as 'the ability to produce globally acceptable quality at globally comparable cost'.

Because India enjoys varied agro-climatic and other natural endowments, a natural fibre such as cotton is an extraordinary gift of nature. Because it is nature's gift to India, let us make cotton and cotton-based products 'India's gift to the world'.

As closing remarks, I would highlight, land constraints, water shortage and climate change are real challenges for India. We need sustained growth in production in sustainable ways. The only way to ensure sustained availability of cotton (without undue reliance on the world market) is to work towards enhancing yields by investing cotton cultivation with multiple technologies.

The last three years have shown how vulnerable Indian cotton is to weather aberrations. It is for all stakeholders to recognise the looming threat of climate change and work towards de-risking this critical sector that generates jobs, incomes and exports.

It devolves on responsible leadership of industry and trade bodies as well as policymakers to deliberate and design proactive policies that encourage research and investment in the entire value chain – from farm to fashion, as it were.

*Source : CAI Centenary Special 2022
(The views expressed in this column are of the author
and not that of Cotton Association of India)*

Sr. No.	Parameters	Grade				Staple				Micronaire	
		Premium		Discounts		Premium		Discounts		Micronaire	Discount
		Grade	Premium Amount	Grade	Discount Amount	Staple	Premium Amount	Staple	Discount Amount		
16	M/M(P)	Superfine	+1000	Fully Good	-900					3.0 - 3.2	-1200
	ICS-105										
	(Staple length 29mm)										
	Micronaire 3.7 - 4.5	Extra S. Fine	N.A.	Good	-1200				3.3 - 3.4	-800 (1.23)	
	(Grade:Fine)										
Trash-3.5%Strength/GPT28				(1.84)					3.5 - 3.6	-400 (0.61)	
17	SA/TL/K	Superfine	+1000	Fully Good	-900					3.0 - 3.2	-1200
	ICS-105										
	(Staple length 29mm)										
	Micronaire 3.7 - 4.5	Extra S. Fine	+1200 (1.84)	Good	-1200 (1.84)				3.3 - 3.4	-800 (1.23)	
	(Grade:Fine)										
Trash - 3% Strength/GPT 28									3.5 - 3.6	-400 (0.61)	
18	GUJ	Superfine	+1000	Fully Good	-900	30	+900			3.0 - 3.2	-1200
	ICS-105										
	(Staple length 29mm)										
	Micronaire 3.7 - 4.5	Extra S. Fine	+1200 (1.84)	Good	-1200 (1.84)				3.3 - 3.4	-800 (1.23)	
	(Grade:Fine)										
Trash - 3% Strength/GPT 28									3.5 - 3.6	-400 (0.61)	
19	M/M(P)	Superfine	+1000	Fully Good	-900					3.0 - 3.2	-1200
	ICS-105										
	(Staple length 30mm)										
	Micronaire 3.7 - 4.5	Extra S. Fine	+1200	Good	-1200				3.3 - 3.4	-800 (1.23)	
	(Grade:Fine)										
Trash-3.5%Strength/GPT29		(1.84)		(1.84)					3.5 - 3.6	-400 (0.61)	
20	SA/TL/K/O	Superfine	+1000	Fully Good	-900					3.0 - 3.2	-1200
	ICS-105										
	(Staple length 30mm)										
	Micronaire 3.7 - 4.5	Extra S. Fine	+1200	Good	-1200				3.3 - 3.4	-800 (1.23)	
	(Grade:Fine)										
Trash - 3% Strength/GPT 29		(1.84)		(1.84)					3.5 - 3.6	-400 (0.61)	
21	M/M(P)	Superfine	+1000	Fully Good	-900					3.0 - 3.2	-1200
	ICS-105										
	(Staple length 31mm)										
	Micronaire 3.7 - 4.5	Extra S. Fine	+1200	Good	-1200				3.3 - 3.4	-800 (1.23)	
	(Grade : Fine) Trash - 3% Strength/GPT 30										
		(1.84)		(1.84)					3.5 - 3.6	-400 (0.61)	
22	SA/TL/K/TN/O	Superfine	+1000	Fully Good	-900					3.0 - 3.2	-1200
	ICS-105										
	(Staple length 31mm)										
	Micronaire 3.7 - 4.5	Extra S. Fine	+1200	Good	-1200				3.3 - 3.4	-800 (1.23)	
	(Grade : Fine) Trash - 3% Strength/GPT 30										
		(1.84)		(1.84)					3.5 - 3.6	-400 (0.61)	

Sr. No.	Parameters	Grade				Staple				Micronaire	
		Premium		Discounts		Premium		Discounts		Micronaire	Discount
		Grade	Premium Amount	Grade	Discount Amount	Staple	Premium Amount	Staple	Discount Amount		
23	SA/TL/K/TN/O	Superfine	N.A.	Fully Good	N.A.			31	N.A.	3.0 - 3.2	N.A.
	ICS-106										
	(Staple length 32mm)										
	Micronaire 3.5 - 4.2	Extra S. Fine	N.A.	Good	N.A.					3.3 - 3.4	N.A.
	(Grade : Fine) Trash - 3% Strength/GPT 31										
24	M/M(P)	Superfine	+1200	Fully Good	-1500	35	+2000	33	-2500	2.5 - 2.7	-700
	ICS-107										
	(Staple length 34mm)		(1.84)		(2.30)		(3.07)		(3.83)		(1.07)
	Micronaire 2.8 - 3.7	Extra S. Fine	N.A.	Good	-2000	36	+3200				
	(Grade : Fine) Trash - 4% Strength/GPT 33				(3.07)	(4.91)					
25	K/TN	Superfine	+1200	Fully Good	-1500	35	+2000	33	-2500	2.5 - 2.7	-700
	ICS-107										
	(Staple length 34mm)		(1.84)		(2.30)		(3.07)		(3.83)		(1.07)
	Micronaire 2.8 - 3.7	Extra S. Fine	N.A.	Good	-2000	36	+3200				
	(Grade : Fine) Trash - 3.5% Strength/GPT 34				(3.07)	(4.91)					
26	M/M(P)	Superfine	+1200	Fully Good	-1500	36	+1200	34	-2000	2.5 - 2.7	-700
	ICS-107										
	(Staple length 35mm)		(1.84)		(2.30)		(1.84)		(3.07)		(1.07)
	Micronaire 2.8 - 3.7	Extra S. Fine	N.A.	Good	-2000						
	(Grade : Fine) Trash - 4% Strength/GPT 35				(3.07)						
27	K/TN	Superfine	+1200	Fully Good	-1500	36	+1200	34	-2000	2.5 - 2.7	-700
	ICS-107										
	(Staple length 35mm)		(1.84)		(2.30)		(1.84)		(3.07)		(1.07)
	Micronaire 2.8 - 3.7	Extra S. Fine	N.A.	Good	-2000						
	(Grade : Fine) Trash - 3.5% Strength/GPT 35				(3.07)						

Conversion factor – 651.90 based on the RBI closing exchange rate of 1 US \$ = Rs.83.15 prevailing on 25th September 2023

Figures in bracket denotes value difference in Cents per Lb.

Note :

- (1) These Value Differences are applicable to domestic trade.
- (2) The above differences are merely indicative in nature. Cotton Association of India gives no warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of information contained herein and accepts no legal responsibility howsoever arising in relation to such information.
- (3) Premium and Discount mentioned in Indian Rupees above will remain constant for one month whereas the same mentioned in Cents per Lb. will vary as per the exchange rate fixed by the Reserve Bank of India.

UPCOUNTRY SPOT RATES (Rs./Qtl)													
Standard Descriptions with Basic Grade & Staple in Millimetres based on Upper Half Mean Length [By law 66 (A) (a) (4)]								Spot Rate (Upcountry) 2022-23 Crop October 2023					
Sr. No.	Growth	Grade Standard	Grade	Staple	Micronaire	Gravimetric Trash	Strength /GPT	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
1	P/H/R	ICS-101	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 – 7.0	4%	15		-	-	-	-	-
2	P/H/R (SG)	ICS-201	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 – 7.0	4.5%	15		-	-	-	-	-
3	GUJ	ICS-102	Fine	22mm	4.0 – 6.0	13%	20		13638 (48500)	13610 (48400)	13554 (48200)	13498 (48000)	13441 (47800)
4	KAR	ICS-103	Fine	22mm	4.5 – 6.0	6%	21	H	14510 (51600)	14482 (51500)	14426 (51300)	14369 (51100)	14341 (51000)
5	M/M (P)	ICS-104	Fine	23mm	4.5 – 7.0	4%	22		15607 (55500)	15522 (55200)	15466 (55000)	15410 (54800)	15353 (54600)
6	P/H/R(U) (SG)	ICS-202	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4.5%	26		-	-	-	-	-
7	M/M(P)/SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine	26mm	3.0 – 3.4	4%	25	O	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)
8	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4%	26		-	-	-	-	-
9	M/M(P)/SA/TL/G	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.0 – 3.4	4%	25		15185 (54000)	15016 (53400)	14875 (52900)	14875 (52900)	14875 (52900)
10	M/M(P)/SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	3.5%	26		15832 (56300)	15691 (55800)	15550 (55300)	15550 (55300)	15550 (55300)
11	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.5 – 4.9	4%	27	L	-	-	-	-	-
12	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	27		16506 (58700)	16366 (58200)	16225 (57700)	16225 (57700)	16225 (57700)
13	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	27		16563 (58900)	16422 (58400)	16281 (57900)	16281 (57900)	16281 (57900)
14	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	27	I	16844 (59900)	16788 (59700)	16647 (59200)	16591 (59000)	16591 (59000)
15	R(L)	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	28		-	-	-	-	-
16	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	28		-	-	-	-	-
17	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	28	D	-	-	-	-	-
18	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	28		-	-	-	-	-
19	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	30mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	29	A	-	-	-	-	-
20	SA/TL/K/O	ICS-105	Fine	30mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	29		-	-	-	-	-
21	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	31mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	30		-	-	-	-	-
22	SA/TL/K / TN/O	ICS-105	Fine	31mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	30		20809 (74000)	20809 (74000)	20668 (73500)	20668 (73500)	20668 (73500)
23	SA/TL/K/ TN/O	ICS-106	Fine	32mm	3.5 – 4.2	3%	31	Y	21090 (75000)	21090 (75000)	20949 (74500)	20949 (74500)	20949 (74500)
24	M/M(P)	ICS-107	Fine	34mm	2.8 - 3.7	4%	33		21231 (75500)	21090 (75000)	20949 (74500)	20949 (74500)	20949 (74500)
25	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	34mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	34		21512 (76500)	21371 (76000)	21231 (75500)	21231 (75500)	21231 (75500)
26	M/M(P)	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	4%	35		-	-	-	-	-
27	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	35		-	-	-	-	-

(Note: Figures in bracket indicate prices in Rs./Candy)

UPCOUNTRY SPOT RATES													
(Rs./Qtl)													
Standard Descriptions with Basic Grade & Staple in Millimetres based on Upper Half Mean Length [By law 66 (A) (a) (4)]								Spot Rate (Upcountry) 2023-24Crop October 2023					
Sr. No.	Growth	Grade Standard	Grade	Staple	Micronaire	Gravimetric Trash	Strength /GPT	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
1	P/H/R	ICS-101	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 – 7.0	4%	15		15269 (54300)	15100 (53700)	15044 (53500)	14904 (53000)	14763 (52500)
2	P/H/R (SG)	ICS-201	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 – 7.0	4.5%	15		15410 (54800)	15241 (54200)	15185 (54000)	15044 (53500)	14904 (53000)
3	GUJ	ICS-102	Fine	22mm	4.0 – 6.0	13%	20		-	-	-	-	-
4	KAR	ICS-103	Fine	22mm	4.5 – 6.0	6%	21	H	-	-	-	-	-
5	M/M (P)	ICS-104	Fine	23mm	4.5 – 7.0	4%	22		-	-	-	-	-
6	P/H/R(U) (SG)	ICS-202	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4.5%	26		16028 (57000)	15860 (56400)	15775 (56100)	15691 (55800)	15550 (55300)
7	M/M(P)/SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine	26mm	3.0 – 3.4	4%	25	O	-	-	-	-	-
8	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4%	26		16225 (57700)	16056 (57100)	15972 (56800)	15888 (56500)	15747 (56000)
9	M/M(P)/SA/TL/G	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.0 – 3.4	4%	25		-	-	-	-	-
10	M/M(P)/SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	3.5%	26		-	-	-	-	-
11	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.5 – 4.9	4%	27	L	16422 (58400)	16253 (57800)	16169 (57500)	16085 (57200)	15944 (56700)
12	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	27		-	-	-	-	-
13	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	27		-	-	-	-	-
14	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	27		-	-	-	-	-
15	R(L)	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	28		16647 (59200)	16563 (58900)	16450 (58500)	16394 (58300)	16310 (58000)
16	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	28		16956 (60300)	16872 (60000)	16731 (59500)	16731 (59500)	16731 (59500)
17	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	28		16984 (60400)	16900 (60100)	16759 (59600)	16759 (59600)	16759 (59600)
18	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	28	D	17069 (60700)	17013 (60500)	16872 (60000)	16816 (59800)	16816 (59800)
19	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	30mm	3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	29		17153 (61000)	17069 (60700)	16928 (60200)	16928 (60200)	16928 (60200)
20	SA/TL/K/O	ICS-105	Fine	30mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	29		17181 (61100)	17097 (60800)	16956 (60300)	16956 (60300)	16956 (60300)
21	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	31mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	30		17322 (61600)	17238 (61300)	17097 (60800)	17097 (60800)	17097 (60800)
22	SA/TL/K/TN/O	ICS-105	Fine	31mm	3.7 – 4.5	3%	30		17378 (61800)	17294 (61500)	17153 (61000)	17153 (61000)	17153 (61000)
23	SA/TL/K/TN/O	ICS-106	Fine	32mm	3.5 – 4.2	3%	31		N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)
24	M/M(P)	ICS-107	Fine	34mm	2.8 - 3.7	4%	33		-	-	-	-	-
25	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	34mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	34	Y	-	-	-	-	-
26	M/M(P)	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	4%	35		-	-	-	-	-
27	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	35		-	-	-	-	-

(Note: Figures in bracket indicate prices in Rs./Candy)