



New Extraneous Matter Code for Plastic Contaminants in Cotton Samples

The USDA AMS Cotton and Tobacco Program (C&T) will implement two new extraneous matter codes for samples containing plastic contaminants. This change is being implemented in response to industry requests and concerns. Beginning July 1, 2018, the full list of extraneous matter codes identified by C&T cotton classers will be:

Extraneous Matter			
Code	Description	Code	Description
01	Prep Level 1	41	Oil Level 1
02	Prep Level 2	42	Oil Level 2
11	Bark Level 1	51	Spindle Twist Level 1
12	Bark Level 2	52	Spindle Twist Level 2
21	Grass Level 1	61	Other Level 1
22	Grass Level 2	62	Other Level 2
31	Seed Coat Fragments Level 1	71	* Plastic Level 1
32	Seed Coat Fragments Level 2	72	* Plastic Level 2

* Unlike plant-based extraneous matter such as bark, grass or seed coat fragments, plastic extraneous matter is generally not uniformly distributed throughout a plastic-contaminated bale. Therefore, a sample from a plastic-contaminated bale submitted for classification may or may not have plastic extraneous matter present.

We have contacted the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and they plan to use the “Other” (e.g. 61 & 62) extraneous matter discounts for the new plastic extraneous matter codes (e.g. 71 & 72) for the 2018 crop. This is the same discount structure that has been used in previous years since plastic contaminants were identified using the “Other” extraneous matter code. FSA did mention that loans for ELS cotton that have a 71/72 extraneous matter code, will require

the producer/CMA to visit the local county office for processing. This is due to programming changes that are needed for ELS cotton only. The 2017 crop contained 56 ELS samples identified as having “Other” extraneous matter. For questions pertaining to FSA, please contact Kelly Hereth Dawson via email at Kelly.Hereth@wdc.usda.gov or at 202-720-0448.

The C&T classing offices will continue to notify cotton gins when plastic is identified in a sample. The offices will also continue to save all samples that contain plastic for management and customer review as needed.

We value our customers and truly hope this new plastic extraneous matter code will assist the industry with achieving contamination-free cotton. The National Cotton Council has a website dedicated to this very important subject. The link to this website is: <http://www.cotton.org/tech/quality/contamfree.cfm>.

Thank you for your continued trust and support of the U.S. cotton classing system. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact your local classing office or contact me at Ronald.Robbins@ams.usda.gov or at 901-384-3000.