



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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12th CSITC Meeting September 8, 2009 Cape Town 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM Report

The 12th meeting of the Task Force on Commercial Standardization of Instrument Testing of Cotton (CSITC) was held on September 8, 2009 in Cape Town, South Africa at the Cape Town International Convention Centre

Members present:

Andrew Macdonald, AMCON Consulting, Sao Paulo, Chair
Romano Bonadei, Fondazione Industrie Cotone e Lino
Axel Drieling, Faserinstitut Bremen e.V.
Subhash Grover, Chairman and Managing Director, Cotton Corporation of India
Jean-Paul Gourlot, Director, CIRAD PERSYST LTC
James Knowlton, Chief Standardization & Engineering Branch, USDA AMS
João Luiz Ribas Pessa, farm director of Fazenda Nova in Brazil
Ralph Schulzé, cotton industry consultant, Australia
Rinat Gulyayev (representing Hakim H. Umarkhojayev, SIFAT, Uzbekistan)

Members Absent:

Zbigniew Roskwitalski, Vice President and Director of the Gdynia Cotton Association, Rapporteur
Darryl Earnest, Deputy Administrator, Cotton Program, USDA/AMS
Urania Kechagia, Director, cotton and Industrial Plants Institute, Greece
Lau Cheuk-Wai, Quality Control Department of Central Textiles in Hong Kong
Ibrahim Malloum, Cotton Commercial Manager, Somdiaa
Jolly Sabune, Managing Director, Cotton Development Organization, Uganda
Manfred Schiefer, President, M. Schiefer Trading Company, USA
Bruno Widmer, Global Business Manager, Fibres, Agricultural, SGS
M.N. Vijayshankar, Chairman, ITMF International Committee on Cotton Testing Methods
Peter Wakefield, Director, Wakefield Inspection Services

Observers: O.P. Agarwal, Bill Norman, Jan Wellman, G.S. Klindt, H.F. Schroder, Dominic Mwakangale, Joe Kabissa, Marco Mtunga, Mohamed Abdel Mageed Aziz, Neal Gillen, Iwona Frydrych, Sietse Van der Werff, Nayan Mirani, Dhiren Sheth, Trevor Wicks, Ed Hughs, Helvio Alberto Fiedler, Christopher Barry Ward, Bruce Pyke, Dr. Serunjogi, Cesar Ernesto, Antonio Alberto, Americo Come.

Next Meeting: Tuesday or Wednesday, March 23 or 24, 2010, (date to be finalized later) Bremen, Germany

Rafiq Chaudhry served as Secretariat

Background: An Expert Panel on CSITC was formed in December 2003 on the instruction of the 62nd Plenary Meeting in Poland. CSITC is facilitating the adoption of universal instrument testing standards and procedures by all testing centers around the world. CSITC is also working to introduce the use of instrument testing language in the trading of cotton so that traditional descriptions of grade or type are replaced with instrument test values.

The members of the panel represent both exporters and importers and all segments of the world cotton industry. Observers are welcome at all meetings. By tradition, decisions at all ICAC meetings are determined by consensus with full participation by observers. If it is not possible to reach consensus, decisions could be made by a vote of members present.

The Expert Panel issued **two interim reports in 2004**, including a report to the 63rd Plenary Meeting in India in November that identified seven actions to encourage worldwide testing of cotton with standardized instrument testing methods and procedures. The actions include 1) definition of specifications for cotton

trading, 2) definition of international test rules, 3) implementation of test rules, 4) certification of test centers, 5) definition and provision of calibration standards, 6) specification of commercial control limits for trading and 7) the establishment of arbitration procedures. The report from the Expert Panel included specific actions and identified responsible parties for the achievement of each recommendation.

During a small-group meeting in Bremen in April 2005 and during the **3rd Meeting** in Memphis in June 2005, the seven recommendations and status of implementation were reviewed. During the 3rd Meeting, the CSITC determined that the original tasks associated with diagnosis of problems and the development of recommendations had been achieved and that a new phase of work had begun with the implementing of proposals. Therefore, the name of the panel was changed to “Task Force” on CSITC to better describe the new role in facilitating the implementation of proposals.

During the 4th Meeting in Liverpool in September 2005, the CSITC discussed the results of a pilot round trial and considered how best to rate test centers. It was agreed at the 4th Meeting that the world cotton industry **will not seek to establish an international testing center**, and it was agreed that **testing centers should be rated according to their performance** relative to other participating testing centers in a series of CSITC Round Trials.

During the 5th Meeting in Bremen in March 2006, the CSITC considered the results of a Second Pilot Round Trial and agreed to a system of evaluating test centers based on parameters for individual measurements and an overall score.

During the 6th Meeting in Goiania, Brazil in September 2006, the CSITC adopted a formula and set of scale factors to calculate a **“Combined Properties Measurement”** to enable testing centers to gauge their current performance and to track progress over successive Round Trials. It was decided that quarterly Round Trials should begin in 2007, with a nominal cost of US\$75 per Round Trial charged to participating test centers to cover the costs of sample shipment. The CSITC decided to include non-U.S. cotton in the Round Trials as a “fifth sample,” with the understanding that the fifth sample will not be used in the calculation of the Combined Properties Measurement. Results from tests on the “fifth samples” will be used to show the in-laboratory and inter-laboratory variability on cottons from different origins. The Task Force decided that **a summary of results of all participating test centers in each Round Trial would be published** on the ICAC web site. However, the names of participating test centers, the results for each center, and the disaggregated results for each test parameter will be given only to each test center in order to encourage participation. Test centers will also receive detailed reports indicating their performance relative to all other test centers and recommendations for improvement. The Task Force agreed that its current structure should continue through 2007. The CSITC agreed to meet with the leadership of the ITMF International Committee on Cotton Testing Methods (ICCTM) during 2007. Progress on technical matters referred to ICCTM by CSITC (e.g., effect of trash on color readings), will be reviewed, and possible additional tests, e.g., fineness/maturity, will be considered.

During the 7th Meeting in Winterthur, Switzerland in March 2007, the results of the first official Round Trial conducted in December 2006 and January 2007 were reviewed. The Task Force approved the format of a certificate of participation and accompanying tables and charts with detailed examination of results to be provided to each participating testing center. The Task Force confirmed that evaluations of laboratory performance would be **calculated from the mean values** of participating labs rather than using the standard values determined in advance by USDA. The mean values will be presented in comparison to the values established by the USDA. The Task Force decided to **exclude obvious typographical errors** from the calculation of results from each lab, as such errors would skew results to absurd ranges, but it was decided that the reports from the Bremen Fibre Institute would inform labs of such errors so that data-handling procedures can be improved. **Acceptance ranges for each of the 6 parameters were approved.** If results reported by testing centers fall within each range, the results will be used in the evaluation of laboratory performance; results falling outside each range will be excluded. The CSITC agreed that the Bremen Round Trial and USDA check tests are more appropriate vehicles for investigation of methods to develop tests for Short Fiber Index, stickiness and neps. The CSITC asked the ITMF International Committee on Cotton Testing Methods (ICCTM) to study how to improve these tests. It was noted in the 2nd Pilot Round Trial (2006) that there were persistently lower Rd measurements using HVI 900 or HVI Spectrum versus the newer HVI 1000 instruments (all instruments are manufactured by Uster Technologies). The Task Force decided that participating laboratories should receive a document with recommendations for good incandescent colorimeter performance. The CSITC decided to ask the ICCTM to investigate how best to compensate for trash in color measurements. Regarding the use of instrument values in arbitration of contracts, the CSITC decided to continue to conduct round trials and provide results to participating labs. Those **labs that wish to be certified for arbitration purposes should apply to an arbitral authority for certification.** The CSITC decided that it **will not establish certification procedures**, but each arbitral body will decide their own

certification standards, and labs will apply to the arbitral body, not the CSITC, for certification. The Task Force agreed that the results of the CSITC Round Trials, especially the inter-laboratory variations, would be published and given to the cotton associations. The results will help the associations to fix commercial tolerances.

During the 8th Meeting in Izmir, Turkey October 21, 2007, the Task Force reviewed the results of Round Trials 1 through 3, noting that the **overall data and single-lab data for each parameter were consistent** from one round trial to the next, strengthening confidence in the CSITC process. No differences occurred between the inter-laboratory averages reported by participating test centers during the first three CSITC round trials and the USDA Established Results for strength, length uniformity index, Rd and +b. It was reported that work done earlier based on the Bremen Round Trials indicates that instruments from different manufacturers will give results on one common level if operated properly.

The inclusion of a 'fifth' cotton in the CSITC Round Tests was discussed, and the principle endorsed. The Task Force agreed that the fifth sample could be of any origin, but would need to be properly prepared by USDA to minimize variation between samples. To further reduce the risk of distortion of results, it would be assessed separately from the 4 test samples. There was considerable discussion on the need for interactive feedback, especially with participating test centers with results outside the statistically normal range. The ICAC Secretariat presented a 2-page Invitation/Participation form, and this was well received. All agreed that the stage has been reached where greater participation is essential. A concerted promotional effort, led by Andrew Macdonald and Terry Townsend, and covering ICAC, ITMF, all Cotton Associations, instrument manufacturers and all sectors of the trade, should be launched. The Task Force set the participation fee at US\$300 for four tests. The publication of the list of CSITC Round Trial participants was seen as a positive mechanism to encourage uptake. The CSITC effort is seen as 'good for the international industry' and as such, a good thing with which to be associated. The Task Force supported a proposal to publish the list of participating testing centers, with the proviso that those not wishing their names to be included could choose not to be listed. A 'tick box' on the forms presented by the Secretariat would facilitate this. It was emphasized that only the names of participating testing centers, and not confidential information about performance, would be made public. **A proposal to publish a list of testing centers with passing or failing performances in round trials was not supported.**

Romano Bonadei presented 'a spinners view' on neps and stickiness. There was general agreement that **CSITC should expand its focus to these and other relevant fiber quality measurements, once the current system is adopted universally, and once rapid/repeatable measuring equipment becomes available.** The Task Force on CSITC had decided during the 7th Meeting in Winterthur that the International Cotton Association (ICA), as a signatory to the Universal Cotton Standards Agreement, would petition USDA to develop calibration standards for Short Fiber Index at the next Universal Cotton Standards Conference in June 2008 in Memphis. However, Jimmy Knowlton of USDA suggested that a more constructive first step in making progress on the subject of SFI would be to organize a small group of about ten labs with HVI 1000's to evaluate the new SFI cotton calibration. Jimmy suggested that USDA could provide "research" SFI values on special calibration cottons to these labs. The group of labs would be a subset of CSITC labs. The subset of labs would enable the SFI cotton calibration option on their instruments when they test their CSITC round test samples. The SFI data would be collected on the CSITC samples and sent to USDA with the regular CSITC test data. A separate analysis would be performed on the SFI data independent of the normal CSITC round test analysis. It was noted that China is considering the development of their own SFI standards using a different definition (16.5 mm and less) than the definition of SFI in common use elsewhere (12.7 mm or shorter). Neal Gillen observed that USDA should be encouraged to develop a SFI standard for inclusion in the Universal Cotton Standards. The Task Force **agreed that an SFI standard is needed, and there was a consensus to support the proposal by Jimmy Knowlton to use a subset of CSITC participants to evaluate the new SFI cotton calibration standard.** It was decided that the ICA should not petition the Universal Standards Conference in June 2008 to have USDA develop SFI calibration standards at this time, pending additional research.

During the 9th Meeting on April 2, 2008 in Bremen, Germany, the Task Force discussed best practices in encouraging universal participation in CSITC Round Trials. It was agreed that the list of participants should be published on the ICAC website (and possibly more widely) so that non-participants can be identified and encouraged to join the international effort.

James Knowlton reported that Short Fiber Index (SFI) reliability is being studied as an adjunct to CSITC Round Trials. He reported that under the test conditions, acceptably tight distribution curves for SFI could be achieved (as was the case for Length and Uniformity). The meeting supported further work in this area and encouraged USDA to prepare and provide the necessary calibration cottons. It also suggested to Uster that

its newer machines should be enabled to be calibrated for SFI. However, Hossein Ghorashi stated that considerable work needs to be done studying the relevance of Short Fibre data derived by different techniques – HVI, AFIS, Roller Analyzer, Sutter Web Array etc. It was agreed that this should be a prerequisite before progressing too far with adding ‘SFI’ to CSITC measurements. USDA and Uster (and others) were encouraged to collaborate closely in the effort to develop and determine a single worldwide acceptable basis for reliable SFI testing/calibrating/benchmarking. The meeting also discussed the fact that, while most countries and the international trade define ‘short fiber’ as fiber under 12.5mm length, some are now advocating 16mm length as the ceiling. As the correlation between both measurements is high, the meeting saw no difficulty with the use of either, providing that the ceiling was clearly communicated. It was agreed that the world industry should work toward the adoption of one standard rather than have different parameters in parallel use.

Geoff Naylor of CSIRO, Australia, presented an update on the development of ‘Cottonscan’ to measure fiber fineness. He stated that Cottonscan had achieved speeds of 60 seconds per sample. The meeting supported further development of Cottonscan.

Menahem Yogev described Israeli equipment used for rapid testing of cotton for ‘stickiness’ and neps. He demonstrated that it is possible to test high volumes of cotton for stickiness and neps with acceptable levels of accuracy and precision. However, it was noted that the instrument used in Israel is no longer being manufactured, suggesting that the technology may not be economically practical. Menahem encouraged plant breeders to select strains that are low in seed coat fragments, which can contribute to both ‘stickiness’ and ‘neppiness’.

After considerable discussion, CSITC decided that Brazil should be asked to supply a bale to serve as the fifth cotton for the next Round Trial. The importance of Brazil in international cotton trade, the structure of the cotton industry in Brazil with large mechanized operations producing most cotton and the improvement in quality of Brazilian cotton since the start of the decade were factors considered by CSITC in making this decision. On behalf of the Brazilian Cotton Growers, Mr. João Luiz Pessa offered to supply the next fifth international cotton bale. The Task Force gratefully accepted this generous offer. Mr. Greg Parle, chair of the Australian Cotton Classers Association, volunteered to supply the following international fifth cotton for the next season.

Terry Townsend presented results of a survey on the cost of instrument testing. Indicative costs, in US\$, based on 2006-7 data were:

	Developed Countries	Developing Countries
Personnel	49,000	33,000
Repair & Maintenance	12,000	18,000
Other Annual	47,000	14,000
Instrument Depreciation	51,000	36,000
Other Depreciation	6,000	12,000
Total Annual Costs	165,000	113,000

Testing fees ranged from \$1 to \$4 per sample- and the average charge was \$2.25 per sample. Assuming every bale is tested once, this equates to 0.50 cents per pound for a 500-pound bale. Participants from India commented that, as only 2% to 4% of their bales were tested, their costs per pound were correspondingly very low.

Andrew Hursthouse, President of the ICA, submitted a letter to the Task Force. He noted that the Rules Committee is working on comprehensive rules that will protect both buyers and sellers in the case of a dispute over the results of two instruments located in different places over a broad range of mechanical parameters. Zbigniew Roskwitalski reported that Gdynia is adapting its rules to accommodate arbitration procedures for instrument testing parameters.

During the 10th Meeting on November 16, 2008 in Ouagadougou, Axel Drieling reported that the 2008 results were stable across Round Trials, and that the Round Trials are serving as a very good tool to provide statistically reliable variability information between test results and between laboratories, and to evaluate and rate the performance of test centers based on their accuracy.

A report was given about the results from the “Fifth Cottons” used for research purposes in each Round Trial. In summary, the Indian roller ginned samples yielded higher variations in micronaire and length than the 24 saw ginned samples from U.S. cotton used in the Round Trials 2007-1 to 2008-2. The U.S. Pima saw ginned samples resulted in higher variations in strength and length. Accordingly, Axel suggested that roller ginned

cotton and extra-fine cotton samples should not be used when evaluating the performance of testing laboratories (as is done with cottons 1 to 4).

Jimmy Knowlton provided a presentation on the CSITC SFI study. He reported that 10 testing centers with HVI 1000's (5 operated by USDA and 5 operated by non-USDA centers) participated in the SFI study. USDA distributed the SFI calibration cottons with Roller-Analyzer reference values. The results indicated that:

- Between-instrument HVI 1000 SFI levels are relatively close together;
- SFI calibration levels vary more on cottons with higher short fiber content;
- SFI measurement variation increases dramatically as short fiber content increases;
- It is uncertain why some HVI 1000's perform better than others when setups and calibrations were performed similarly.

One of the purposes of CSITC is to provide statistically reliable empirical information on variability of results from instrument testing of cotton that can be used in setting commercial tolerances for trade. In a typical commercial situation, it is not possible to know the mean (average) value of the test results across 50 or 60 laboratories for a given cotton sample. Instead, it is relevant, especially for arbitrations, to know the expected, or normal, difference between two labs chosen by contracting parties for evaluation of cotton parameters.

Axel estimated such difference based on single tests per sample, with different samples provided to each lab, based on the six CSITC Round Trials conducted through mid-2008. 95% of the results between a random laboratory and the reference, or true, result of the tested cotton would be within the following limits:

- Mic: 0.18
- Strength: 2.8
- Length: 0.034
- Length Uniformity: 1.6
- Rd: 2.1
- +b: 0.8

The numbers are stable and statistically sure for US Upland machine-picked cottons. For other origins there might be other values based on variables such as field size and methods of picking and ginning. It was noted that roller ginned and hand-harvested cotton would require separate sets of control limits, and concerns were voiced about variances in test results linked to ranges of moisture levels. **The Task Force agreed that the results should be summarized but not recommended for adoption at this time. It was agreed that Axel's work may be sent to arbitral bodies upon request.**

The Task Force on CSITC welcomed a letter from Mr. Ustyugin of SIFAT in Uzbekistan. SIFAT supports the aims of CSITC. SIFAT operates a modern system of instrument testing of cotton involving 14 testing centers operating according to the Universal Cotton Standards providing evaluation of all cotton produced in Uzbekistan. SIFAT operates a center to train operators in the use of instruments for testing cotton, and SIFAT plays an important role in regional standardization of cotton testing. Over the last twelve years, SIFAT has trained 711 instrument operators, including 338 SIFAT employees and 81 persons from outside Uzbekistan. Mr. Ustyugin pledged that SIFAT is prepared to assume the responsibilities as the regional technical center for Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). **CSITC was very pleased that SIFAT will continue to coordinate with the laboratories in the region. SIFAT may be designated as the Regional Testing Center for Central Asia in the future, when such criteria are approved for use in all regions. However the Task Force emphasized that the Regional Technical Centers will not certify or grade laboratories in place of the CSITC Round Trials.** The Task Force also agreed that similar regional supporting activities are welcome in other regions.

It was noted that the GCA General Assembly endorsed changes to its By-Laws and Rules for arbitration procedures for disputes involving instrument test results at its June 2008 meeting. It was reported that the ICA had also approved a relatively simple procedure for arbitration of instrument values that allow any laboratory agreed by the contracting parties to do the testing. In the ICA procedures, no control limits are specified but may be agreed by the contracting parties. Members of CSITC expressed the hope that arbitral bodies would work toward harmonization of the rules for trade in cotton and arbitration of instrument values.

It was noted that some laboratories have requested to participate in CSITC Round Trials with stand-alone instruments to measure individual parameters. The Task Force was asked if this is to be allowed. **It was agreed that testing centers are evaluated based on testing results, not methods, and therefore the use of stand-alone instruments in CSITC Round Trials is acceptable, but not encouraged.** An indispensable prerequisite is that all participating instruments provide results on the fixed CSITC criteria, mainly the calibration based on Universal Calibration Standards provided by the USDA and a sufficient number of specimens tested from each sample for a sufficiently low variability.

During the 11th Meeting, May 26, 2009 in Washington, DC, Andrew Macdonald noted that a letter had been received from Mr. V.E. Ustyugin of the Uzbek Center for Certification of Cotton Fiber (SIFAT) requesting that SIFAT be identified as a Regional Testing Center (RTC) for Central Asia. (See the Report of the Tenth Meeting.) **With minor modifications, the proposed set of criteria was approved by CSITC.**

A suggestion had been received from Cotton South Africa to grade laboratories based on their performance in the Round Trials. However, members of CSITC were concerned that thresholds chosen for grades would be arbitrary. It was also noted that CSITC evaluates the performance of instruments, not laboratories. It was decided that **CSITC should continue to provide results on an instrument-by-instrument basis.**

Jimmy Knowlton reported that there is still no consensus on the reference method for measuring Short Fiber Index, AFIS 12.7 mm or Roller Analyzer 16.5 mm or 12.7 mm. He said that USDA and the China Fiber Inspection Bureau (CFIB) were conducting a study in 2009 to assign reference values to calibration cottons. CSITC thanked Jimmy for his work and endorsed additional SFI sub-round trials in 2009. Jimmy was urged to work with Uster Technologies to collect SFI and maturity data provided on HVI 1000s during the 2009 Round Trials.

It was noted that the Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology (CIRCOT) has reported that it is producing calibration cotton for use with HVI systems. Members of CSITC recalled the minutes of the Third Meeting of CSITC in June 2005 in Memphis:

“The CSITC agrees that the Universal HVI Calibration Standards for all six measurement parameters (length, length uniformity, strength, micronaire, Rd, +b) are the official standard of the CSITC.

It was reported that Chinese authorities have indicated that they will eventually develop their own domestic calibration cottons, but they agree in principle to the importance of maintaining a single world reference standard for calibration cottons based on the Universal Standards prepared by USDA. USDA plans to establish a standard for value setting of calibration materials under the American Society for Testing Materials International (ASTM) to cover the procedures used by USDA in creating calibration standards. The CSITC agreed that calibration standards must be referenced to the USDA reference material.”

Darryl Earnest reported that the ASTM standard would be developed by the end of 2009.

Axel Drieling reported on a new database for CSITC Round Trial results being developed with support from the Common Fund for Commodities. The new database will be tested from RT 2009-3 on, and Axel plans to implement the new database beginning with RT 2010-1.

CSITC agreed that laboratories registering for participation in Round Trials would be considered registered for each Round Trial until they withdraw.

Report of the Twelfth Meeting

1. Welcome SIFAT as a new RTC

The Chair congratulated Mr. Rinat Gulyayev, the representative of SIFAT Uzbekistan. SIFAT has been acknowledged as a Regional Technical Center. The Chair was confident that this would lead to the excellence of cotton classing in Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

2. Consider CSITC Structure and Duties: Proposal by Axel and Jean-Paul

The Chair explained that the success of CSITC indicates that the work of the Task Force is ongoing, and therefore a clear structure of responsibilities and operations was required. Axel Drieling presented a proposal for the CSITC Structure and Duties drawn up by Jean-Paul and himself. The proposal was accepted unanimously, and a copy is attached to these minutes (CSITC – Documentation of Structure and Duties).

2.a. Certification or Grading of Laboratories

João Luiz Pessa suggested that a certification system was required if growers are to choose which lab to use. It was noted that South Africa had expressed the same concern earlier this year. The Chair reported that the Brazilian Cotton Growers Association intended to request that every

Brazilian lab participate in the CSITC round trials so that the HVI classing of Brazilian cotton could be relied upon. However, the Association feels that it needs to set a standard for approval of laboratories, and it had been suggested that their standard would be based on the tolerances which exist in the commercial trading of cotton. Axel Drieling confirmed that it is possible to provide standard differences between laboratories testing single samples based on the results from CSITC round trials, and he would make the calculations available to Brazil and South Africa.

The Chair emphasized that neither ICAC nor CSITC would, or could, approve or not approve, any labs under such a system. It would be up to the individual organizations responsible in each country to set their own standards, and stand by it against any claim or legal action which might occur from such a decision. If these results were published or the names of the labs were published, ICAC and CSITC could in no way be held responsible or liable, and this must be made clear in any publication.

3. Review RT2009 Results

Axel Drieling presented a review of the latest results of CSITC 2009, which showed consistence with all previous results, confirming the robustness of the methodology. The number of participating labs was overall stable, with typical fluctuations during the years. The procedure to keep laboratories registered beyond single years will probably reduce this.

4. Developments in SFI and Maturity measurement

Jimmy Knowlton and Axel Drieling made a presentation of the results of SFI and Maturity tests that had been voluntarily included in the results submitted by labs in recent Round Trials. The variation that exists between labs indicates that SFI measurements are insufficiently reliable to be included as an official part of the round tests. The lack of a procedure of calibration for the HVI SFI readings precludes any possibility of using the information on a commercial basis. However the meeting was informed that one manufacturer, USTER, would be making available software which would permit calibration on the HVI 1000 instruments only. Though this restriction eliminates many current HVI lines prior to the 1000 model, it was considered a step in the right direction. CSITC therefore decided to maintain the voluntary inclusion of SFI data in the round trials so that, as the new software is introduced, it would be possible to evaluate the performance of the instruments after calibration. However this would require the availability of calibration material, and Jimmy Knowlton expressed the intention of USDA to prepare calibration cottons with trial values for 12.7mm short fiber index. These values will be made available on an experimental basis to HVI 1000 users that utilize the new software from Uster.

As regards maturity, although the results were highly consistent between the participating labs, the scale of measurement was such that overall accuracy created a serious obstacle to utilizing the information on a commercial basis. However as with SFI, the round trials would continue with the option of including the maturity readings so as to permit further analysis during future round trials.

5. Production of Calibration Cottons

Jimmy Knowlton described the procedures for the production of calibration cottons, and the fact that some countries were in the process of producing their own calibration cottons, but, that to achieve standards compatible with the current Universal Standards (the accepted world standard) adherence to the correct procedures would be required. Some of the major requirements include: 1) utilization of USDA "benchmark cottons" as the reference material; 2) instruments used for value setting must meet qualification requirements of ASTM D7410-07; 3) candidate bales must be at least one year old prior to value setting; and 4) candidate bales must meet specific acceptance requirements which include within-bale variation limits and measurement levels within designated ranges. USDA is documenting its complete calibration cotton production procedures for publication as an ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) standard. The document is currently in draft stage within the ASTM process but should become finalized as an ASTM standard sometime in 2010. Jimmy Knowlton said the current draft is now available for review by CSITC Task Force members.

6. Update on progress toward a Round Trial Database system with online data submission and distribution of results via a CSITC website

Axel Drieling reported on the progress in developing a web based database system for the CSITC Round Trials. The database will allow CSITC to include information from Round Trials, as well as regional round trials conducted by Regional Technical Centers. Laboratories may register online via the database, data input will be simplified by directly importing data from High Volume Instruments, the Round Trial reports for current and past Trials will be provided on the website, and laboratories can generate their own analysis and use additional functionality. For FIBRE, USDA, and ICAC, the administration of the Round Trials will get easier, with joint access to the administrative tools. The database system will be integrated on the www.csitc.org website.

A test run on a small number of laboratories will start with Round Trial 2009-4, and the database is planned to replace the current system from Round Trial 2010-1 on.

7. Cost of Round Trial Participation

The Chair noted that the costs of operating the round trials was increasing and at present the contributions of each lab only covered the cost of preparation and shipment of the samples for the round tests, and that these cost had increased. Likewise the CFC project had funded Bremen's participation in conducting the trials, and from end of 2011 Bremen would also have to collect a payment for their services. The current charge was US\$400 per annum and it was proposed to increase this from 2010 to US\$600. This was approved. Axel Drieling explained that he estimated the costs for the fiber institute at US\$500 per year per participating instrument so that further increases must be expected in the future unless the Task Force can convince other labs to participate. The Chair called on all members to do their utmost to convince spinners as well as the trade to take part in the round trials so as to reduce the individual cost and improve the network of efficient labs.

8. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the CSITC would be in Bremen prior to the International Cotton Conference Bremen in March 2010.

Seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Attachment: CSITC – Documentation of Structures and Duties