



## MILLNet™ 4.0 Updates

During the year since the initial release of MILLNet 4.0 for Windows®, Cotton Incorporated has made upgrades to address the needs of the mills that use the EFS® program.

Marsha Heron, customer service representative for Cotton Management Software Services in Fiber Competition, says that as the number of mills using the MILLNet 4.0 software increases, additional mill operational needs must also be accommodated to maximize cotton management efficiency. This maximization is possible through improved management tools within MILLNet 4.0 software. To help cotton management efficiency, the following additions have been made to the software:

- A new option to configure displays.
- A cancel option on the Edit button.
- New multiple warehouse options in analysis mode.
- A two-dimensional bar code support for the Motorola® MC9090
- Portable printer support for the O'Neil® LP3 printer
- A contract status in the Building Report Progress window.
- Net received weight in the inventory report.
- Merge Data program .



O'Neil® LP3 printer with Motorola® MC9090 scanner

scanner.

updates to the software include a change in the date display on the Import and Export module as well as a refinement of the picking process using the category codes. Since the MILLNet 4.0 software is newly-released, these updates are minor adjustments rather than crucial changes and have been made in an effort to accommodate the individual needs of customers who depend on it for their own cotton management practices.

Apart from the additions,

# Absent 2009 EFS® System Conference

For the past 21 years, Cotton Incorporated has hosted an annual EFS System Conference that provides users with valuable information they can use to sustain cotton's competitiveness. This year, the EFS System Conference was not scheduled due to worldwide economics that have sharply trimmed some attendees' budgets. Following last year's conference, Cotton Incorporated conducted a survey of attendees. The feedback obtained from the survey included the desire and need to narrow topics of discussion that were too broad and to personalize EFS System communications to encourage open and focused dialogue.

Mike Watson, Vice President of Fiber Competition at Cotton

Incorporated, says that Cotton Incorporated is currently working on reformatting the conference in a way that provides one-on-one sessions with key EFS System users. These sessions will include topics that largely focus on trends in U.S. fiber, textile and retail chains, while also including discussions regarding quality parameters. The main purpose of this format is to provide enhanced levels of service by personally addressing concerns or questions EFS System users may have concerning their use of the software. These questions will be addressed by industry leaders and may include how to increase productivity using EFS System software and how

to enhance the use of the software by implementing all of its features to their fullest potential.

Based on the EFS System Conference survey results from 2008, other topics of interest include warehouse systems, international EFS System use, classing updates, environmental issues, supply and demand, ginning, cotton marketing, field production and mill applications. Ultimately, the new dialogue format will provide both EFS System users and Cotton Incorporated with the opportunity to collaborate and discuss the paths they want to take in the future with EFS System software.

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## EFS®-USCROP™ Program Will Include U.S. Crop Quality Reports

Since HVI® properties reflect the value of cotton, it is important for this information to be provided to those who are involved in its production and management. This information is distributed by Cotton Incorporated as a crop quality report, a weekly collection and distribution of data that is used as a comparison to last year's crop.

Vikki Martin, director of quality research and product evaluation at Cotton Incorporated, says that weekly reports are important because they assist in tracking how the crop quality is proceeding through the harvest and classing season. Providing reports gives buyers and sellers information that they can use when

selecting cotton with desirable traits from specific regions in the United States.

The weekly reports are in the process of being integrated into the EFS-USCROP software. This will allow users to select up to a two-year time frame for comparison, which can be broken down into weekly reports including averages for states and classing offices. For those who do not license the EFS-USCROP software, the U.S. Crop Quality reports will continue to be provided via email as a quick reference guide. This will help them determine which regions of

the United States can provide them with the best cotton for their specific product needs. For users of EFS-USCROP software, look for your fall update to include the U.S. Crop Quality reports.



# Spotlight On Brian Evans

## Cotton Management Software Field Service Technician

The EFS® System software provides mills, merchants, producers and ginners with opportunities to benefit from HVI® data, but the software itself would be ineffective without the technical support from Cotton Incorporated's Cotton Management Software Services group in Fiber Competition. Brian Evans, a cotton management software field service technician at Cotton Incorporated, has been providing such support to clients for seven months now and has been in the technical customer support field for eight years. He says that he typically receives questions regarding upgrades and installations while he is on-site with a client, and those questions are generally related to documentation such as manuals. After he leaves the site of the software upgrade or installation, the questions he receives gener-

ally involve user errors such as inventory issues.

When Evans is not out in the field providing technical support to a client, he is on standby so that he is available to address any issues that are called in. He also follows up with clients who have recently had an issue with EFS System software to make sure that their operations are now running smoothly.

Typically, Evans' fieldwork requires him to travel about once a month. Although most of his trips have been to South Carolina, he has also traveled as far as Mexico City.

Evans received his bachelor's degree in Management



**Brian Evans,  
Service Technician**

Information Systems from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. His hobbies and interests include video games and electronics.

## MILLNet™ 4.0 Tips

- Use the Bale Search to track the location and movement of a bale. You can search by different criteria, including bale number, mark, and vendor. This is a great tool for troubleshooting duplicate bales.
- Always save files to your data folder.
- Always back up your files.
- Be sure to install all updates.

# Cotton Calibration: Agent For Accuracy

Most laboratory instruments must be calibrated, i.e. set to determine a range of true values, in order to ensure the accuracy of test results. Cotton-classing instruments are no exception. These instruments are calibrated for length, uniformity, micronaire and strength using cotton samples that must pass rigorous screening procedures set by the USDA.

According to Regina Horton, a laboratory technician in Fiber Competition at Cotton Incorporated, there is a tolerance range for each high-volume instrument that is based on the calibration cotton assigned to it. Samples of cotton with a known value are tested on each HVI<sup>®</sup> testing instrument at least once a day, and if the test value deviates from the known value beyond the tolerance range,



## Calibration Cotton

then the instrument must be recalibrated and corrected. Calibration cotton plays a crucial role in testing because it sets parameters that ensure an accuracy that other labs can use to test by.

To further help with the maintenance of accurate test

results, the USDA has a checklot program that retests uniform test results from HVI testing instruments in all USDA classification facilities. Under this program, a computer selects random samples to be forwarded overnight to the USDA's quality assurance facility in Memphis, Tenn. After the samples are retested, the results are compared with the originals and communicated back to the facility where the samples originated. These facilities then use the test results to make adjustments in the calibration of their HVI testing instruments. Although calibration ranges are set by the USDA, Cotton Incorporated contributes to the establishment of these parameters by participating in the USDA's calibration studies.

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