

Agri ministry rejects draft proposal for new cotton output estimate regime

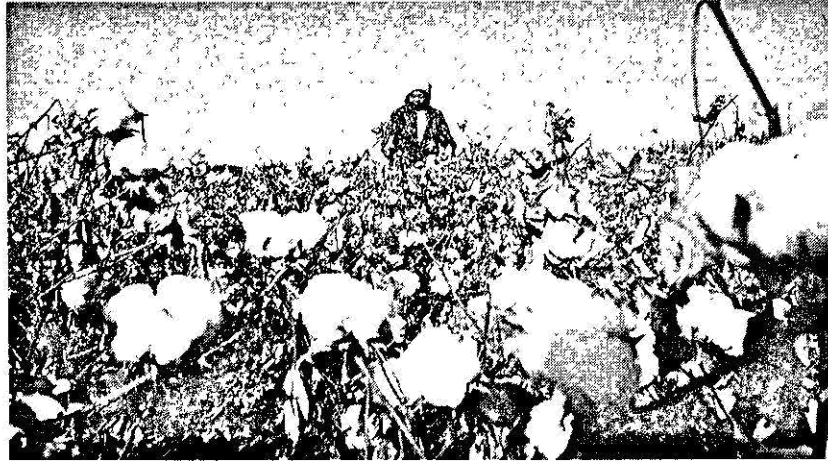
Says it would prefer basing its estimate on crop cutting method and not bale press method proposed by textiles ministry

ANINDITA DEY
Mumbai, 9 May

The Union ministry of agriculture has rejected the draft Cotton Trade (Development and Regulation) Bill, 2012, proposed by the textile ministry for streamlining output estimates for the industry.

The agri ministry says it would prefer to continue basing its estimate on what is termed the crop cutting method and not the bale press method as proposed by the textile ministry in its Bill. The present method, says the agri ministry, is based on a yield per hectare measurement and this helps to monitor both the total production and post-production use of cotton in ginning, pressing, etc, to make bales.

Also, says the ministry, the change proposed is cost-intensive and cannot be thrust upon mill owners and processors entirely. Nor would it be productive for a farmer. "While we continue with the crop cutting method, let the textile ministry first adopt the bale press method for cotton output estimates. Besides, our methodology is required for the crop and



NO CHANGE Agriculture ministry says the present method is based on a yield per hectare measurement and helps to monitor the total production and post-production use of cotton in ginning and pressing to make bales

estimates and not for processed cotton, which is post-production activity. First, one should know the entire cotton crop output, currently at a yield of 15 quintals per hectare, and only then does it make

sense to estimate the cotton processed," said an official close to the development.

The draft regulations require every ginning and pressing processing factory and trader and manufacturer of yarn to regis-

ter afresh with the textile commissioner within three months of the Bill's enactment and get a permanent bale identification system installed at their premises. Apart from ginning factories, independent pressing factories, composite ginning and pressing factories and traders would be required to file monthly production returns.

All processing and ginning factories will be given fresh 'press mark numbers', while the old ones will become invalid. Officials said no cotton bale shall be processed by any pressing factory until a press mark number is allotted by the commissioner. Removal of unmarked bales from the press house will attract a penalty of ₹5,000 per bale per day.

According to the proposal in the Bill, these measures had been taken to regulate the assessment, production and consumption of raw cotton. There is no statutory framework for collecting statistical data, so, it has become difficult for the Cotton Advisory Board to draw up a balance sheet, often reflected in the variations between the official and trade estimates of production.