

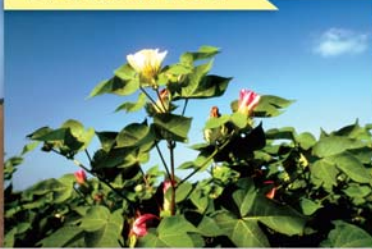
Farmers prepare the ground for planting by creating furrows in the soil. This lets the soil warm faster in the spring and directs irrigation water across the field. When the soil reaches about 65 degrees, mechanical planters will place the seed in the soil. The mechanical planters can cover as many as 12 rows at a time. Cotton planting can begin as early as February in South Texas and as late as June in northern areas of the Cotton Belt.

1. PLANTING



Seedlings emerge from the soil within one to two weeks after planting. The plant will bloom at about 8-10 weeks. Within three days, the flower will pollinate itself, change from a creamy white color to pinkish red and then wither and fall off—leaving behind the developing boll. The cotton boll develops at about 10 weeks.

2. GROWING



Cotton bolls open 50 to 70 days after bloom, letting air in to dry the white, clean fiber and fluff it. Now the cotton crop is ready to be harvested.

3. BOLL OPENS



For hundreds of years, cotton was picked by hand. Now, thanks to technology, equipment such as the mechanical cotton picker or brush stripper are used to remove the fiber from the plant. Today's modern cotton harvesters can cover up to 6 to 8 rows at a time and can harvest up to 100,000 pounds of cotton seed a day. Cotton harvesting begins in July in South Texas and in October in more northern areas of the Cotton Belt.

4. PICKING



Cotton—from Field to Fabric

* Planting, Growing, Harvesting & Processing

5. MODULES



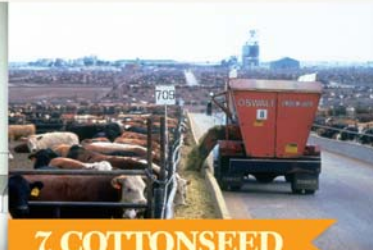
Cotton from the picker is dumped on the ground and compressed hydraulically with a module builder to form a module. Modules can be left in the field for storage until it is time to haul the cotton to the gin.

6. GINNING



The modules are taken to the cotton gin where the cotton will be dried, cleaned and have its seed and fiber mechanically separated. The gin contains revolving circular saws that pull the raw fiber through closely-spaced ribs that prevent the seed from passing through.

7. COTTONSEED



The cottonseed is processed into cottonseed meal, cottonseed oil, hulls and linters. The meal and hulls can be used in livestock feed or in fertilizer. The oil is used in several products including cooking oils, cosmetics and snack foods. Linters are manufactured into a variety of chemical and non-chemical products.

8. COTTON LINT



The raw fiber, now called lint, is pressed into bales. These bales are banded with 5 steel straps, tested for classing, wrapped for protection and then shipped to storage yards, textile mills and foreign countries. Textile mills process these bales in stages until they produce yarn or cloth—which can then be made into clothing, sheets, towels and other products.