

2021 SEASON QUALITY REVIEW**By Michael O'Rielley, Australian Cotton Shippers Association**

It would be fair to say the quality of our 2021 crop has been one of the more variable ones we have seen in some time. I would say the cooler and wetter weather pattern we experienced during the 2020/21 growing season mostly attributed to this variability. While the 2021 Australian cotton crop did deliver many bales with excellent quality parameters, for some of those parameters it was a little below the extremely high standard we have set for ourselves in Australia over recent years. A silver lining at least is that for those growing regions, this weather pattern delivered the soil replenishing and dam filling rains we have all been waiting for.

Grade (colour and leaf)

While 96% of the 2021 crop was Middling (31-3) base grade or better, the percentage of Strict Middling (21) and better at 48% was below our 5 year average of 67% Strict Middling and better. The cause of the lower than the average percentage of Strict Middling was largely due to rain received on open cotton while growers waited for the final bolls to open. Only 4% of this year's crop fell below base colour (31) being 41 colour or lower and it's this 4% that is quite a remarkable outcome considering the inclement weather pattern that occurred during the crops prior to being picked.

Staple Length

One of the standout fibre characteristics was yet again length. This year length was above the 5 year average (91%) with 94% achieving 1-5/32" (37) or longer and only 2% of the crop received a discount for length as a result of falling below the base 1-1/8" (36) staple. Equally important and pleasing is that the percentage in the premium 1-7/32" (39) and 1-1/4" (40) categories was 40% of the crop which again is above the 5 year average of 33%. Apart from the other great things about Australian fibre that the export market comes to expect, length every year is the flagship out of all our fibre characteristics that always maintains its high status by being consistent year in year out.

Micronaire

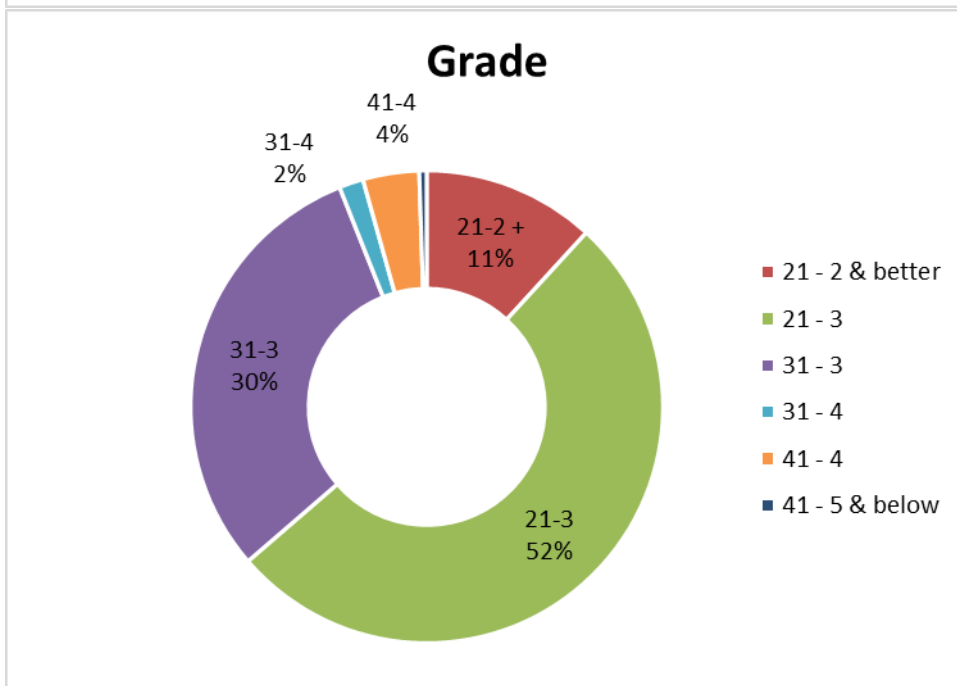
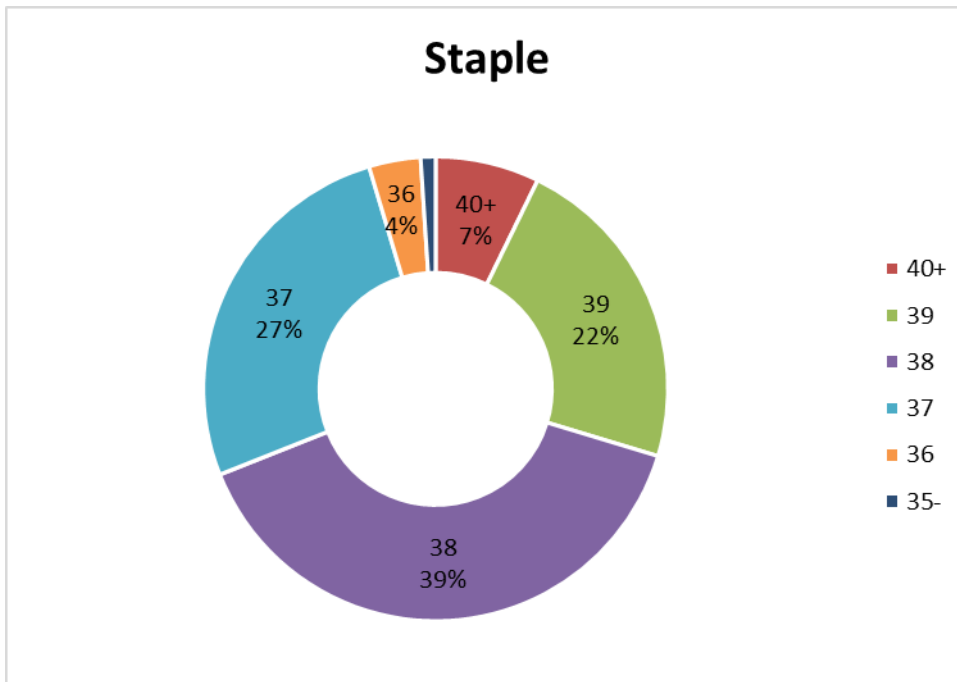
It's well known within our domestic industry that our micronaire did not consistently meet our usual high standards of producing micronaire parameters that fit well within the G5 (3.5-4.9) range. Micronaire production was mixed for the year 2021. It is pleasing to note however that 59% of the crop was in the premium range of 3.8-4.5. This is 11% above the five-year average which sits at 48%. Unfortunately, we had an above average percentage discounted for low micronaire. Years 2020 and 2021 have seen 15% and 14% low mic respectively, which is quite high compared to the previous five-year average of only 1% falling below base mic. This can be attributed to the cooler than average summers as well as some late planted dryland cotton which had very low micronaire.

Strength

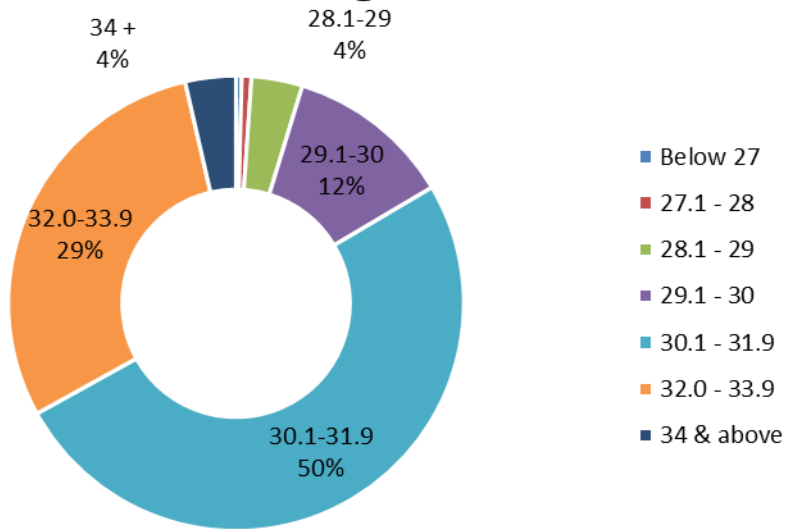
Strength was right on the 97% 5 year average when we look at the percentage above the base strength of 28 GPT. Strength this year was however off slightly when we look at the percentage above 30 GPT and then above 32 GPT. 2021 had 75% of the crop over 30GPT compared with the previous 5 year average of 80% The percentage over 32GPT was 24% compared with the previous 5 year average of 37%. This drop off like the other fibre parameters can be attributed to the cooler growing season and it stands out that historically we grow our strongest crops during hot drought effected years.

As we roll into peak planting season with plenty of soil moisture, rain and water storages, we'll be hoping for a lovely hot summer to produce one of the largest crops we've seen in a while.

Ends



Strength



Micronaire

