

History of the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association

In 2017, the California Cotton Ginners Association and the California Cotton Growers Association merged to form one organization known as the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association. This was driven by the fact the two organizations shared the same staff and offices, and worked hand in hand on the critical regulatory and legislative issues affecting the cotton industry in California. However, the two organizations had very different beginnings.

California Cotton Growers Association

The California Cotton Growers Association was founded in 1990 after its predecessor; the Western Cotton Growers Association had operated since 1949.

The Western Cotton Growers Association was founded in 1949 as a cotton organization representing the interests of Arizona, California, and New Mexico cotton growers. One of the important issues that brought these growers together was government cotton allotments. By the mid 1950's, with cotton allotments no longer being the central issue, each of the three states went their separate ways and formed their own state grower associations. Since that time, the Western Cotton Growers Association, the name retained by the California organization, worked on issues specifically involving the California cotton growers.

In 1990, the Western Cotton Growers Association and the California Cotton Ginners Association agreed to share offices, staff and costs of running both organizations. This agreement has facilitated better use of the dues collected from the members of both associations by avoiding duplication of costs. To further identify the members as California Cotton Growers, in 1991 the Western Cotton Growers changed its name to the California Cotton Growers Association.

California Cotton Ginners Association

In the first sixty years of this century, the cotton ginning industry was part of a much simpler era. Problems facing the industry were not as numerous as they are today. There were far fewer government regulations and restrictions. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, Federal and State governments placed a new emphasis on drastic change in the American workplace. New regulations were written with little input from the industries being regulated. In some cases, where testimony was taken from the industry, it was ignored completely. In 1971, a few ginners began meeting. They were concerned over a series of regulations were imposed by State and Federal agencies. Ginners attending those early meetings were intent on abandoning the old "lone wolf" policy which had become so prevalent in the industry. What they envisioned was an organization that would represent a united front. In 1973, the California Cotton Ginners Association was formed to meet these needs.

In 2005, the Cotton Growers and Cotton Ginners were named California representatives for Supima, the advertising and promotional organization for the U.S. pima cotton growers.

In 2016, the two Associations began conducting meetings to determine the interest and feasibility of merging the two Associations. Since the two organizations already share staff and

office facilities, the primary benefit of the merger would be to save staff time by eliminating duplicative board meetings and annual meetings. After several months of discussion and a unanimous vote of the members, the two organizations voted to merge into one Association effective January 1, 2017.

Today, the Association represents 27 cotton gins and all of the estimated 500-750 cotton growers in California. Its members produce 100% of California's total annual production of approximately 750,000 bales, both upland and pima. The Association is governed by a 24 member Board of Directors made up of 12 growers and 12 Gin Managers. In addition, there are several advisors to the board including representatives from UC Cooperative Extension, Western Cotton Shippers Association, Cotton Incorporated, National Cotton Council, Cotton Pest Control Board, American Cotton Producers, CalCot, California Cotton Alliance, Supima and the San Joaquin Valley Cotton Board. The Association has a full staff consisting of the President/CEO, Director of Technical Services, Director of Regulatory Affairs, Secretary/Bookkeeper and an Intern position. The Association owns office facilities located at 1785 N. Fine Avenue in Fresno, California.