

Section GOV 2.0 Board Diversity

Approved: 03/18

GOV 2.1 Policy

The Cotton Board supports diversity among its board membership as well as the diversity goals outlined within the USDA/AMS Oversight Guidelines for Commodity Research and Promotion Programs.

GOV 2.2 Board Diversity Statement

The Cotton Board seeks to promote diversity and ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for all those who qualify for nomination and appointment to the Cotton Board regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, disability, socio-economic status, religion or sexual orientation. Further, the Board strongly encourages certified organizations to keep in mind the benefits that diverse membership and leadership will bring to the Cotton Research & Promotion Program, when considering individuals for nomination to the Cotton Board.

GOV 2.3 Nomination and Appointment of Members, Alternates & Advisors

The *Nomination and Appointment* of Members, Alternate Members and Advisors to the Cotton Board is a process governed almost exclusively by the Cotton Research and Promotion Act and Order. Nominees are selected by organizations (CIOs & CPOs) certified by USDA as being duly representative of the Program's range of stakeholders, and appointments are made by the Secretary of Agriculture from among such nominees.

While the organization exercises only limited influence throughout this process, the Cotton Board is in the position to make recommendations to certified organizations regarding "qualifications" for membership. It is in this way and by regularly communicating the importance and value of diversity and offering to support the efforts of individual certified organizations; that the Board will encourage diversity among the candidates for nomination and appointment.

1. Policies & Procedures

- a. The Cotton Board will maintain and periodically review a policy statement promoting the diversity of board membership.
- b. The Board will periodically review and consult with USDA/AMS regarding the department's diversity guidelines and objectives.
- c. The Board will maintain and support a term-limit policy which facilitates greater opportunities for fresh leadership and perspectives.
- d. The Governance Committee may appoint an *ad hoc* subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion to oversee the diversity and inclusion efforts of the Cotton Board. Such subcommittee will report to the Governance Committee and review reports and actions of the Cotton Board concerning diversity and inclusion.

2. Nomination & Appointment Process

- a. The Cotton Board will annually communicate its own statement re: Board diversity and USDA/AMS diversity guidelines and objectives to those certified organizations scheduled to participate in annual nominating caucuses.
 - i. A conference call may be conducted by the Cotton Board's Chairman with all CIO/CPO representatives in order to review diversity efforts and objectives.
 - ii. The policies and guidelines above will be communicated via a letter from the Board's Governance Committee Chairman, prior to nominating caucuses each year.
- b. Upon request, the Board will be available to assist any certified organization to determine demographic and other diversity characteristics within their respective state, region or segment.

- c. The Cotton Board will solicit nominations from certified nominating organizations and third-party organizations representing a significant number of cotton producers or importers for a limited number of Advisor positions to be recommended to the Secretary of Agriculture for the purpose of providing insight on production, promotional, and research issues affecting minority or under-represented producers. The Governance Committee will oversee this process and determine the number of Advisor nominations to be submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture. *(See Policy Re: Cotton Board Advisors)*

3. Benchmark & Review

- a. The Cotton Board will periodically conduct an assessment of its diversity and inclusion efforts to evaluate its effectiveness and identify areas in need of attention. This report will be reviewed by the Governance Committee and submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture as a part of the annual nomination process.