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### Cotton In Arizona

The bright, hot, and yet wonderful state of Arizona has many wonders. Copper, cattle, cotton, citrus, and climate are five of its main resources and my personal favorite is cotton. Cotton was moved into Arizona from Mexico about 2,000 years ago. The cotton's tough seeds, safety in Arizona, usefulness, and how well it grows here, makes it one of the perfect leading exports of this wonderful state.

Arizona produces the finest quality cotton, in their color, softness, and length. Cotton arrived from Mexico to Arizona around 2,000 years ago and though Arizona had been growing cotton for centuries, the cotton industry started booming in 1912 with the help of a local Tempe resident, Estmer W. Hudson. Hudson experimented with Egyptian cotton, trying to find a more durable variety of this fine cotton. Egyptian cotton was introduced to Arizona as a more disease-resistant option that grew mostly in the southeastern states. In 1916, Hudson successfully developed a new cotton - called Pima cotton. Pima cotton is an improved breed of Yuma cotton, made from hybrid Egyptian cotton. Pima cotton is soft, yet durable and is used to resist tears, fraying, and it wears out slower. In 1920, the California Department of Agriculture crowned him as the "Father of Cotton" in Arizona before he died in 1972.

Arizona produces the finest cotton in America, making it the one of its leading exports. Cotton is widely known for its uses in clothing, fish nets, and bookbinding. Exports have noticed a drastic change in the quality of Arizona and California cotton compared to other states. "Arizona cotton, along with California cotton, is some of the whitest, highest-quality cotton around"

(Murphree). The reasons for this are not just because of the talented farmers, though they do play a huge role. The climate of Arizona is the main reason behind all of this as Arizona is one of the most diverse states in the United States. Arizona can go from humid forests to dry deserts from the top to the bottom. This strange climate gave it the title of “Arid and Semi-Arid”, meaning, in some places, it rarely rains but in some parts it receives a lot of rain. The wind levels in Arizona are also lower than in any other state. The climate of Arizona gives cotton the perfect place to grow where the quality will not be impacted by heavy wind or rain. With the help of Arizona’s climate, Arizona produces the highest quality cotton in the United States by developing the finest ELS (Extra-Long Staple) cotton. The term “extra-long staple” refers to high-end cotton. High-end cotton is defined by the length of the fiber when pulled off the plant. When the fibers are  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches or longer, it is considered ELS cotton.

Cotton has been a really important part of my life. Other than supplying me with clothes, cotton plants bring me back to my childhood. When I was younger my aunt always took me to the cotton fields when we visited her in Safford, AZ. I remember how amazed I was when I found out that my clothes were grown! Thinking about these times really brings me back and reminds me to take things slow and admire the simple things in life.

Arizona Produces the finest ELS cotton and with Arizona's safe climate, cotton can safely grow into the wonderful fabric we all know and love. With its tough seeds, the safety we supply it within Arizona, how well it grows here, and its many uses, cotton makes one of the perfect leading exports in my home state, Arizona.

Works Cited

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