

Grade I pulp, an astonishing slide in less than ten years from the highest achievements to the lowest quality level. In the chemical industry, first-grade textile yarn output fell, while raw resources and materials losses, the numbers of yarn winders, and key personnel turnover all rose steeply.

Now for the story's technical side. Viscose sulfite pulp grades differ from one another in the content of their main component: alpha cellulose. The first grade used to contain not less than 93 percent alpha cellulose; second grade, 92 percent, and third grade, 90 percent. Third grade, incidentally, is in chemists' opinion not at all suitable for producing viscose textile yarn.

Since January first last year, pulp classification by grades has no longer been valid, as authorities have now developed a new GOST (All-Union State Standard) defining superior, first- and second-grade pulp output. The names, of course, are neither here nor there. Just one thing amazes us: the new GOST has lowered the requirements for the general quality level of viscose pulp. Today, the superior pulp grade contains 0.5 percent less of its basic component. This means that more resins, fats and mineral impurities have remained in the pulp, giving rise to the voluminous and as yet, I think, incomplete, correspondence among executives in the two ministries.

The chemical people write: "Processing pulp with 92.5 percent alpha cellulose impairs textile yarn quality and increases the consumption of carbon disulfide, pulp and scarce caustic soda. Production costs have risen by an average of 41 roubles 87 kopecks for each tonne of yarn..."