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For immediate release

Textile Exchange, Organic Trade Association join forces to advance organic fiber

Under an MOU agreement, the two will work together to strengthen the organic textile industry

Lubbock, Texas (January 20, 2016)— Textile Exchange (TE) and The Organic Trade Association (OTA) have announced an important collaboration to strengthen the North American organic textile industry’s public policy influence and public relations efforts.

The two groups recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work together on legislative advocacy, public outreach and consumer education initiatives. The agreement was signed in conjunction with the recent formation of OTA’s Fiber Council, which was created to provide a cohesive voice across fiber categories within OTA and to grow the North American organic fiber sector overall.

According to OTA’s *2015 Organic Industry Survey*, U.S. organic fiber sales were the fastest-growing non-food sector, reaching \$1.1 billion in 2014, up 18% from the previous year. The leading organic fiber is cotton. In 2014, U.S. growers planted organic cotton on 18,234 acres—the largest number of U.S. acres devoted to organic cotton since 1995. According to Textile Exchange’s *2014 Organic Market Report*, global sales of organic cotton products reached an estimated \$15.7 billion in 2014, up 10 percent from 2013.

“This is just the beginning of an exciting collaboration that will propel the organic fiber sector to the next level. People want to make organic a bigger part of their lifestyle, but they are often unaware of all the ways that organic fiber can contribute to human and planetary wellness, as well as social justice,” said Marci Zaroff, Founder of Under the Canopy. Both an OTA and Textile Exchange Board member, Zaroff was among those instrumental in submitting a petition to OTA to form the [Fiber Council](#), and now serves as its chair.

A major goal of this new partnership will be to boost outreach to North American consumers on the benefits of organic fiber and textiles, particularly the environmental and social benefits of growing and processing them. Much of the current demand for organic cotton currently comes from manufacturers and brands. With authenticity and transparency as key goals, brands are trying to position themselves to be responsible stewards—becoming more sustainable in their supply chains and more relevant in their core messaging.

Companies recently have reported significant growth in their organic cotton programs, and are increasingly adopting standards addressing fiber and/or product traceability, such as the Textile Exchange Organic 100 Content Standard or Content Claim Standard. Many manufacturers have also become certified to the [Global Organic Textile Standard](#) (GOTS), a fully traceable global standard from farm thru processing (spinning, knitting, dyeing and manufacturing) of apparel and home textiles made with organic fiber. The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) has recognized GOTS as the platinum seal for finished organic fiber products and the counterpart to their more widely known organic food certification.

Under the agreement, OTA and TE will work together on legislative advocacy initiatives undertaken by the Fiber Council, advance organic fiber market messaging to consumers, promote awareness and education on both GOTS and the Organic Content Standard (OCS) and certification, develop and participate in media efforts

to facilitate awareness and knowledge related to organic fibers, and develop and participate in various industry initiatives such as workshops, seminars and webinars.

For more information, visit OTA's website for resources about [organic fibers and textiles](#) or Textile Exchange's www.AboutOrganicCotton.org.

[Textile Exchange](#) (TE), founded in 2002, is a global non-profit organization that works closely with all sectors of the textile supply chain to find the best ways to minimize and even reverse the negative impacts on water, soil, air, and the human population created by this \$1.7 trillion industry. TE accomplishes this by providing the knowledge and tools this industry needs to make significant improvements in three core areas: Fiber and Materials, Integrity and Standards, and Supply Chain. A truly global organization, TE is headquartered in the United States with presence also in Europe, Latin America, India, China and Africa.

The [Organic Trade Association](#) (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. OTA is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 8,500 organic businesses across 50 states. Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA's Board of Directors is democratically elected by its members. OTA's mission is to promote and protect ORGANIC with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace. Its website includes an Organic Cotton Facts sheet and one on Cotton and the Environment.