



## La Rhea Pepper Biography

La Rhea Pepper, Managing Director of Textile Exchange

For press inquiries, please contact Donna Worley, Director of Communications and Public Relations at [Donna@TextileExchange.org](mailto:Donna@TextileExchange.org)

Learn more: <https://textileexchange.org/about-la-rhea-pepper/>

### **Biography:**

La Rhea Pepper is the Managing Director and a co-founder of Textile Exchange. A fifth-generation farmer and the co-founder of two successful organic cotton businesses, Ms. Pepper's unique perspective helps her lead Textile Exchange along with its pioneering Members to create preferred fiber and material strategies, strengthen integrity in the market place through the adoption of standards and promoting deeper engagement within the supply network.

Prior to Textile Exchange, Ms. Pepper and her late husband, Terry, were founding members of the Texas Organic Cotton Marketing Cooperative (TOCMC) in 1993. Today, TOCMC is the largest organic cotton cooperative in the United States. Together, they built and demonstrated a sustainable business model for farmers creating strategic partnerships with various manufacturers and "value-added" programs including Cotton Plus (organic fabric) and Organic Essentials (organic personal care products).

In 1995, La Rhea served on the Administrative Council for Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) and two years later was elected to the Organic Trade Association's Fiber Council Steering Committee. She joined the Organic Trade Association's Board of Directors in 1998 where she supported the creation organic fiber processing standards and chain of custody for the industry. Continuing to serve and support advocacy for family farms in the US, she has also served as a board member for RAFI – the Rural Advancement Foundation International (2013-2017).

Known for her passionate and inspirational presentations at various conventions and conferences, La Rhea is often invited to write and speak on issues related to organic cotton farming, organic cotton fiber use, and industry standards. Impassioned about organics and stewardship for the land, La Rhea holds strong family, community and religious values and has dedicated her life to making a positive difference in the world.

Ms. Pepper holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from Abilene Christian University and a Masters of Science in Organizational Leadership from Lubbock Christian University.