This report is dedicated to the memory of Lord Peter Melchett who passed away in August 2018. Peter was the catalyst for the Cotton 2025 initiative and a passionate advocate of working collaboratively to ensure the textiles industry makes a meaningful step-wise shift to more sustainable cotton. He was an important and charismatic figure in the environmental movement throughout his life, including for the last 18 years as Policy Director of the Soil Association, while running his family's 890-acre organic farm. Peter was a strong champion of organic cotton due to its profound and far-reaching contribution to tackling climate change, protecting soils and promoting biodiversity. Peter's generous spirit and positive, inclusive and ambitious approach will be sorely missed.
Foreword from La Rhea Pepper

Toward a more sustainable future

Cotton, grown in a responsible manner, is an amazing and versatile crop. With the ability to grow in a variety of climates, cotton provides not only fiber, but also oil and cattle feed from the seed, and, in many countries, the stalks are harvested for kitchen fires. Cotton grown within a holistic approach, utilizing more sustainable and regenerative farming practices, is an important solution for rural communities – creating biodiversity, food security, carbon-sequestration, cattle feed, cooking oil and a stable cash crop.

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, through the work of the International Sustainability Unit, was able to place the issue of cotton grown within a chemically intensive agricultural system on the global stage. His challenge has moved the industry from smaller cotton programs of organic, Fairtrade, Better Cotton (BCI) or Cotton Made in Africa (CmiA) to corporate cotton strategies with long-term commitments.

The sustainable approach benefits both “people and planet.” With continuous improvement and the implementation of regenerative practices, cotton farming improves biodiversity and the ecosystem, but it also has tangible material advantages. It changes the socioeconomic dynamics of these rural communities. The farmers get a fair price for their cotton and have diversified their production base with rotational crops.

Special thanks to Justin Mundy and Katie Flannagan, formerly with the International Sustainability Unit, who worked tirelessly for this vision of the 2025 Challenge to become a reality. Also to Sevilla Granger and Brent Crossland, as program managers, for their dedication and follow-up to bring the message of the 2025 Challenge to the community.

Join us. Be part of an era where cotton is a contributing solution to climate change and provides positive impacts in cotton growing communities. See the actionable opportunities on the right of this page.

And a very special thank you to our dedicated Steering Committee: Mike Barry, M&S; Sarah Compson, The Soil Association; Christine Goulay, Kering; Michael Kobori, Levi Strauss & Co.; Alan McClay, BCI; Clare McDermott, The Soil Association; La Rhea Pepper, Textile Exchange; Liza Schillo, Levi Strauss & Co.; and Phil Townsend, M&S.
How to Participate

This Challenge is a catalyst to spur a shift in the market toward the use of more sustainable cotton. As stated in the original Communiqué, companies will be required to independently publish their progress from 2018 which will be collected by Textile Exchange.

There is no cost to join and no requirement to be a member of Textile Exchange. Brands are asked to participate in either Textile Exchange’s Preferred Fiber and Materials Benchmark program or the Consumption Tracker so we can document our collective progress.

All results are reported as aggregated data and no information is disclosed from specific brand reporting; your information is absolutely secure. Any inspirational stories that brands and initiatives provide in addition are purely voluntary.

If your company is interested in signing up for the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge, please follow and fill out the Pledge link below. More information, including the full text of the sustainable cotton communiqué, is available on the Textile Exchange website:

textileexchange.org/2025-sustainable-cotton-challenge

textileexchange.org/sustainable-cotton-communique-2025

If you have any questions, please contact us at:

Cotton2025@TextileExchange.org

And be sure to read about our Transitional Cotton Challenge, in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University’s Fair Fashion Center’s Blended Cotton Challenge on page 58 and at the link below. This resource page provides information about organic and transitional cotton – sometimes also called “cotton in transition.”

textileexchange.org/transitional-cotton-challenge

“The growth of the preferred cotton market to 19 percent demonstrates momentum and commitment from all stakeholders to prioritize better management of harvesting our industry’s most important natural fiber.”

Cara Smyth
Founder of the GCNYC Fair Fashion Center

“With a firm belief that commitments to continuous improvement should lead toward organic, we are encouraged that brands are taking the Blended Cotton Challenge, accepting cotton in transition to organic, helping drive significant growth with figures indicating 217,721 hectares are in-conversion, or 50 percent of current organic land area. We remain committed to working in partnership with Textile Exchange to connect supply of preferred cotton with the demands and desires of brands.”

Maggie Kervick
Director of Strategy & Integrated Partnerships, GCNYC Fair Fashion Center
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Welcome to the 2018 edition of the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge Report

Welcome to Textile Exchange’s first annual 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge report.

The 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge challenges retailers and brands to champion the greater use of sustainable cotton by aiming for 100 percent of the cotton from their supply chains to come from the most sustainable sources. These sustainable sources are from the Textile Exchange list of recognized organic and sustainable cotton initiatives.

These initiatives include organic cotton certified to the Organic Content Standard (OCS) or the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), Fairtrade cotton (certified to Fairtrade International or Fair Trade U.S.A.), Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), and recycled cotton (rCotton) certified to an independently verifiable standard such as the Global Recycled Standard (GRS) or the Recycled Claim Standard (RCS). In addition, Cotton Connect’s REEL program and code provides a starting point for businesses aiming for greater sustainability in their cotton supply chain.

Our 2018 report sets the base line for tracking progress for the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge corporate participants and the sustainable cotton initiatives they have partnered with to make progress on their journey. We will look at their consumption data from the Textile Exchange’s Preferred Fiber & Materials (PFM) Benchmark Program as a starting point for tracking their evolution. We will also learn about the various initiatives and standards that are the framework for this work and be inspired by bite-sized stories from the organic field.

Looking at industry transformation with data

The use of data and rating tools such as the Textile Exchange PFM Benchmark Program can inform decision-making and strengthen internal systems toward progressing companies sustainability commitments. Textile Exchange’s organic cotton production data collection and management processes have been independently assessed by BSD Consulting in accordance to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and AA1000APS principles. This was a rewarding moment for the Textile Exchange team who worked very hard for this recognition and the same methodology is now being rolled out to other data collection processes. The accuracy of this reporting is key to keeping all brands involved on track toward these important long-term goals.

Teamwork is critical

It is essential that team members from across brand leadership and supply chain are responsible for getting the job done and that accountability sits with decision-makers. Public reporting is a gateway to transparency and demonstrates a company’s strength of commitment and ensures goals are progressing as milestones are reached.

Sevilla Granger Iovacchini
Program and Project Strategist, Textile Exchange

About the initiatives and their work

The sustainable cotton continuum is quite complex. The good news is that there is an abundance of global initiatives that are doing amazing things in this arena. Various not-for-profit groups, academics and businesses have collaborated to try and provide systems, standards, transparency and traceability in these programs to assist all involved from field to fabric. Sustainable production practices and technology are constantly evolving and adaptation is critical at the farm gate. These initiatives provide education, assistance and the platforms needed to guide us all to a more sustainable cotton supply. Sorting out the nuances, attributes and differing approaches can be a daunting task. Textile Exchange has attempted to provide a snapshot of the differences and similarities between these programs. Effects on the environment, economics and social ethics are compared via the Sustainable Cotton Matrix, which we use to detail the initiatives in this report. It is our hope that this can benefit brands, retailers and consumers when trying to decide on their sustainable cotton strategy and needs.
What is the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge?

History of the Challenge

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales established the International Sustainability Unit to facilitate consensus on how to resolve some of the key environmental challenges facing the world. These challenges include, halting tropical deforestation, sustaining the marine environment and exploring ways to maintain ecosystem resilience while achieving development goals.

His Royal Highness’ International Sustainability Unit (ISU) was formed in 2010 to address critical challenges facing the world, particularly the question of how to sustain the health of the environment while advancing development goals. The ISU built on the success of The Prince’s Rainforests Project, established in 2007 to find solutions to tropical deforestation, which resulted in international commitments of $5 billion USD for immediate financing. The ISU implemented integrated approaches needed to ensure food, water and energy security as well as focused on marine ecosystems, illegal wildlife trade, and the linkages between climate change and health while also maintaining activities toward preventing and reversing deforestation. During recent years, considerable progress was achieved in these and other areas, reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change among other things. The ISU was proud to have played a part in facilitating the advances that have been made, based upon its international reputation for credible, trusted and neutral convening, underpinned by well researched and rigorous analysis and broad consultation with key actors from governments, the private sector and civil society.

In a wide-ranging assessment of the issues, the ISU focused originally on the use of child labor in Indian cotton farming. At the time of the ISU’s research into cotton, a large number of brands, retailers and suppliers were beginning to acknowledge the need to protect their future cotton supplies against the threat of land pressure, volatile commodity prices, the market disruption caused by fast fashion and the significant environmental and social costs associated with cotton production. The momentum for change was increased during the previous years by a substantial increase in the production of more sustainable cotton, which, by 2016/17, reached more than 3.4 million mt, or 19 percent of total cotton produced. However, at the time of the ISU’s engagement with the sector, companies were actively buying less than one-fifth of this sustainable cotton. The other four-fifths were being sold into the general market, with no added financial benefit for those farmers who had made the switch, or any consumer-facing benefit for companies using such cotton in their products. This seemed to be an important and timely opportunity to encourage cotton-purchasing companies to correct this disparity by transferring their cotton purchasing patterns to existing sustainable supplies and by building demand for further supplies that might help transform all cotton production to a more sustainable and resilient model. While the ISU had registered the issue, it would take a few years before the time was right to convene a meeting to move things forward.

Action for sustainability

During 2016 and early 2017, the ISU, in collaboration with M&S and The Soil Association, convened some of the world’s leading clothing companies together with a number of NGOs and standards organizations working on sustainable cotton. These meetings at Clarence House offered participants the opportunity to discuss the possible launch of a collaborative effort on scaling the use of sustainable cotton within the textile industry.

Over the course of four workshops, the group explored how the global cotton supply chain could be made more sustainable. In addition to the gap between demand and supply outlined previously, one of the key messages to emerge was that there is frequently a disconnect between a company’s Head of Sustainability, who might be pushing for more sustainable cotton purchasing, and the company buyers themselves, who do not necessarily view this as a priority. It was felt that a decision needed to be made at the highest, executive level of the company that sustainable sourcing was indeed a priority for this to trickle down into every aspect of company activities. It was agreed that a high-level commitment to sourcing sustainable supplies would be vital, and participants supported the idea of the ISU convening a group of CEOs. In the Spring of 2017, CEOs met in the presence of HRH The Prince of Wales to secure their commitment to work together to accelerate the use of sustainable cotton. To this end, a process was set in motion to develop a Sustainable Cotton Communiqué that company leaders could sign to demonstrate their commitment to sourcing and encouraging the production of more sustainable cotton.
What is the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge?

An important first step was to bring the key standards organizations together in order to discuss definitions of sustainable cotton. During the course of the dialogue it was agreed that sustainable cotton needed to be defined in a manner inclusive enough to leverage the latest developments within the industry while also ensuring that the standards included in the Communiqué were indeed sustainable and could be subject to verification. Agreement was reached to define sustainable cotton in accordance with several existing standards, including; organic, Fairtrade, Better Cotton Initiative, Cotton Made in Africa, CottonConnect’s REEL program, and recycled cotton (rCotton) certified to an independently verifiable standard such as the Global Recycled Standard or the Recycled Claim Standard.

A small steering group, led by the ISU, M&S, The Soil Association, Textile Exchange, Levi Strauss & Co., and Kering worked together to draft the Sustainable Cotton Communique in early 2017. This Communiqué was circulated to a larger working group for comments and input and required all signatories to commit to using 100 percent sustainable cotton by 2025. The initial 13 companies to sign this commitment included ASOS, EILEEN FISHER, Greenfibres, H&M, IKEA, Kering, Levi Strauss & Co., Lindex, M&S, Nike, Sainsbury’s, F&F at Tesco and Woolworths Holdings. Civil Society groups at the meeting included The Pesticide Action Network and Textile Exchange.

In May 2017, at a high level meeting in London, the Sustainable Cotton Communique was launched. Thirteen of the world’s most renowned clothing and textile companies, in the presence of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, signed up to the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge. The Prince of Wales congratulated the companies that signed and described their commitment as “a hugely encouraging step that will hopefully spur wider action across the sector and go a long way in helping to reduce the negative environmental and social impacts that are all too often associated with cotton production.”

The commitment made by these companies equated to more than 300,000 metric tonnes (mt) of cotton purchased each year. The aims of the Communiqué included steps to increase the uptake of organic and sustainable cotton which will in turn increase the income of smallholder farmers, eliminate highly hazardous pesticides, eliminate or reduce the amount of pesticides and synthetic fertilizer used, reduce water use and improve water quality and soil health, including positive carbon impacts as a result of more sustainable practices.

On October 11, 2017, a second announcement was made in Washington, D.C. at Textile Exchange’s annual Sustainability Conference, where more than 500 textile and apparel leaders had come together to discuss the most important sustainability issues facing the industry. Here it was announced that an additional 23 of the world’s most renowned clothing and textile companies including Burberry, Adidas, Kathmandu and Timberland had signed the Sustainable Cotton pledge and would be using 100 percent sustainable cotton by 2025, bringing the total number of signatories up to 39. These signatories represent over one million mt of cotton usage, approximately 4 percent of global cotton production.

In March 2018, with the close of the International Sustainability Unit, it was agreed that Textile Exchange would assume the role of the initiative’s Secretariat. Textile Exchange is thrilled to have this honor. Under the guidance of the steering group, we will continue to build on the momentum created through this initiative, enrolling more brands to the Communiqué and helping to secure a more sustainable cotton sector.
Why do we need this Challenge?

With some 20 million mt produced globally each year\(^1\), cotton is the world’s most widely-used natural fiber. Its production supports the livelihoods of more than 350 million people, primarily smallholder farmers in developing countries. But while vital for livelihoods, cotton production is beset by a multitude of environmental challenges. Cotton only covers 2.4 percent of the world’s arable land\(^2\), yet it accounts for 6 percent of global pesticide use and in many cases, is associated with widespread land degradation.

With around 2,700 liters of water needed to make just one t-shirt\(^3\), cotton production is highly dependent on water, and artificially irrigated areas can deplete local water sources. The most infamous example is the Aral Sea, which has shrunk to a tiny fraction of its former extent, in large part due to the diversion of the rivers that once fed it to provide water for cotton production. Higher temperatures and changing rainfall patterns caused by climate change are likely to cause severe water shortages in some areas, as well as increase the prevalence of pests and diseases, and negatively affect yields.

The challenges of the cotton sector are also social and economic, with cotton farmers and their dependents negatively impacted by the over-use of pesticides and petroleum based fertilizers, as well as rising costs of production and volatile market prices.

These environmental impacts arising from cotton production have increasingly been linked with a series of interconnected social factors such as widespread poverty, the use of child labor, chemical poisoning and in many cases, insurmountable debt. In India, high rates of suicide among cotton and other smallholder farmers have been well documented. Cotton is cultivated in more than 100 countries, with China, India, U.S.A., Pakistan and Brazil producing the largest volumes. This means that the problems associated with the production of cotton are not limited to one geographical area.

Addressing the land, water and social impacts of cotton supply chains will also move the textile industry closer to achieving the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.

The 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge is a catalyst to spur a shift in the market toward the use of more sustainable cotton. Through this challenge, these companies are ensuring that 100 percent of the cotton they use comes from sustainable sources by 2025.

The progress made on sustainable cotton reveals how entire commodity sectors can make rapid progress toward sustainable outcomes, so long as the business case is clear that solutions can be found and senior level leadership is behind the process of change.

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1. ICAC World Cotton Statistics 2018
Our Vision for the Future of Cotton: From 2025 through 2040

The 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge and the Cotton 2040 project share common leadership and a common vision.

Cotton 2040, like the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge, is also a multi-stakeholder initiative to significantly increase the use of sustainable cotton internationally. Facilitated by Forum for the Future, it brings together leading international brands and retailers, including M&S and Target, sustainable cotton standards, existing industry initiatives and other stakeholders across the value chain. It is the first time an initiative of this kind has brought all the sustainable cotton standards together. Cotton 2040 is co-funded by C&A Foundation.

Together the partners have identified priority areas for collaborative action that have the most significant potential to create a systemic shift in the cotton value chain. These include:

- **Building resilient communities among smallholder farmers**
  This type of change - systemic, holistic, regenerative - is truly a journey. What is the vision, and what are some of the milestones along the way?
  These collaborative programs are leveraging the work of transformational leaders, as well as, sustainable and organic cotton initiatives within the textile community.

- **Building demand for sustainable cotton**
  We are supporting brands with fast-tracking their sourcing strategies across multiple standards, starting with the creation of the CottonUP Guide. This workstream works in parallel with the 2025 Challenge to significantly increase uptake by brands and retailers.

- **Building transparency**
  We are creating an ongoing effort to drive alignment of traceability and impact data collection.

**2040**

The cotton industry has changed dramatically: it prioritizes sustainable practices, is highly transparent and traceable and provides viable livelihoods for farming communities.

**2030**

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Textile Sector Report communicates significant impacts around water use and quality, biodiversity, food security and case studies supporting the journey to regenerative agriculture and resilient communities.

**2025**

Over 50 percent cotton volume has been converted to more sustainable solutions. The rest of the industry understands the issues and solutions and is following the lead.

*2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge and SDG Reports are hosted by Textile Exchange, and Cotton 2040 is hosted by Forum for the Future: [forumforthefuture.org/cotton-2040](http://forumforthefuture.org/cotton-2040)*


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Terminology: “Sustainable” and “Preferred” Cotton

There are many terms used to describe approaches that aim to transition away from conventionally grown cotton to more sustainable techniques.

The title of this challenge, as coined at its inception by the International Sustainability Unit, uses the term “sustainable cotton”. Textile Exchange has a preference for using the term “preferred cotton” in its work, and this latter term is therefore used in parts of this report that refer to other work initiated by Textile Exchange, such as the Preferred Fiber & Material Benchmark. You can read Textile Exchange’s definition of “preferred” fiber or material on this page.

However, despite differences in the terminology used, the partners and signatories of the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge share the same vision and ambitions for the sector as Textile Exchange. We are aligned on the mission to transform the cotton sector based on a portfolio approach, committed to continuous improvement and to achieving a positive impact.

How Textile Exchange explains a Preferred Fiber or Material

Textile Exchange describes a preferred fiber or material as ecologically and/or socially progressive which has been selected because it has more sustainable properties in comparison to other options.

Ways to recognize or achieve a preferred status include all or a combination of the following:

- The fiber or material has sustainability criteria developed through a formalized multi-stakeholder process.
- The fiber or material has a recognized industry standard in place which confirms its status as preferred.
- There is a robust chain of custody system in place, to track or trace the fiber or material through the supply chain and back to its origin.
- The fiber or material has been objectively tested or verified as having greater sustainability attributes, such as through a peer reviewed Life Cycle Assessment.
- The fiber or material has a good potential for circularity.

Taking a Portfolio Approach

A portfolio approach involves building a suite of preferred fibers and materials, from a choice of preferred options, through the consideration of impacts and organizational priorities. It involves embedding a strategy that leads to preferred options replacing unsustainable or less sustainable options.

The portfolio approach involves:

- Building a suite of preferred fibers and materials, from a choice of preferred options, through the consideration of impacts and organizational priorities.
- Embedding a strategy that leads to preferred options replacing unsustainable or less sustainable options.
- A commitment to the principles of continuous improvement and ensuring options selected result in a positive impact.

Provided the above approach is taken, Textile Exchange recognizes that “one size does not fit all” and that a company will build their own portfolio based on the preferred fibers and/or materials their company is implementing.
Global Cotton Production
Cotton is the second most important fiber since synthetics took the lead in the mid 1990s. Cotton production took a dip in 2015/16 recovering with around 23 million mt and a market share of approximately 24.5 percent of global fiber production in 2016/17. Production of cotton is projected to hit approximately 25.8 million mt in 2017/18.

The average cotton yield is 778 kg/ha. Yields range from 123–1,761 kg/ha.

Total global cotton production was 23.1 million mt in 2016/17.

Cotton farms range from highly industrialized in more developed economies, to small scale family farmers in the developing southern hemisphere.

Cotton is grown in around 64 countries on approximately 29.67 million hectares = 2.1% of global arable land.
Global Preferred Cotton Production

Production facts and figures

From the niche to a market share of 19 percent, preferred cotton is gaining ground.

The market share of preferred virgin cotton increased from six percent of the total cotton production in 2012/13 to 19 percent in 2016/17. This equals an increase in global production volume of preferred cotton from 1.4 million mt in 2012/13 to 3.8 million mt in 2016/17. It is expected that the market share of preferred cotton will increase to 24 percent in 2017/18.

The preferred cotton figures include cotton certified to the BCI Standard, ABRACA, myBMP, Cotton made in Africa, REEL, Cleaner Cotton, e3, organic and Fairtrade cotton.

The BCI standard without equivalents made up around 47 percent of all preferred cotton in 2016/17. All BCI cotton including its equivalents ABRAPA, Cotton made in Africa and myBMP made up around 87 percent of all preferred cotton. The Brazilian standard ABRAPA, is with a market share of 32 percent of all preferred cotton, by far the most used standard apart from the BCI standard and the most widespread BCI equivalent.

The data presented on this page is taken from Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2018. Production volume in the following pages of this report may vary from that which is listed here due to subsequent adjustments made in February 2019 by selected standards and initiatives. These include: production volume for Fairtrade (from 20,517 mt to 17,997 mt in 2016/17), REEL (from 13,890 mt to 29,977 mt in 2016/17) and e3 (from 345,673 mt to 9,198 mt in 2014/15, 578,000 mt to 36,298 mt in 2015/16 and 42,457 mt to 47,302 mt in 2016/17). Based on the adjustments, corresponding changes in preferred market share are: from 12% to 10% in 2014/15, 19% to 16% in 2015/16, and 19% to 20% in 2016/17.)
Perspective on Brand Participants
In the 2017/18 cohort of the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge, 39 retailers and brands championed the greater use of sustainable cotton by aiming for 100 percent of the cotton from their supply chains to come from the most sustainable sources.

These companies are placing sustainable cotton at the core of their businesses. There is a strategy in place and policies have been set to address key sustainability issues in the sourcing of fiber and materials. Setting the goal of 2025 helps these companies stay focused, and the use of measuring tools such as the Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials (PFM) Benchmark Program can inform decision-making and strengthen internal systems.
For the 2018 report, 30 of the 39 signatories of the 2025 Sustainable Cotton participated in the Preferred Fiber and Materials (PFM) Benchmark Program.

Of the 30 participants who took part in the PFM Benchmark Program, 70 percent took part in the full PFM Benchmark and the remaining 30 percent completed the PFM Consumption Tracker. The group is made up of companies from 10 countries with a rough turnover of USD 290 billion.

As shown below, the sub-sector breakdown of the 30 participants is: Multi-Sector/Apparel (XL) and Apparel (L), followed by Outdoor & Sports, Apparel (S/M) and Home Textiles.

In all, 26 of the 39 signatories were able to report on one or more of their preferred cotton use culminating to an approximate aggregate consumption of 760,849 mt preferred cotton which represents just over 3 percent of global cotton produced.

Participants Profile

As shown below, the sub-sector breakdown of the 30 participants is: Multi-Sector/Apparel (XL) and Apparel (L), followed by Outdoor & Sports, Apparel (S/M) and Home Textiles.

Key Findings

Aim: 100% sustainable cotton by 2025

Current Status: Of the 30 Cotton 2025 signatories that completed the PFM Benchmark Program

- 10% of Cotton 2025 Signatories have achieved their pCotton 2025 target of 100% preferred cotton usage, all of which are organic.
- 37% have achieved a pCotton share of between 75-99%.
- 23% have achieved a pCotton share of between 50-74%.
- 7% have achieved a pCotton share of between 25-49%.
- 17% have achieved a pCotton share of less than 24%.
- 6% of cotton is not tracked yet by reporting brands.
Closing The Gap: Preferred vs Conventional Cotton

In 2017, based on the absolute mt volume of the preferred cotton reported by 26 Sustainable Cotton Challenge signatories, the mix of preferred cotton consumed was 67 percent preferred and 33 percent Conventional:

Sub-sector analysis of the Sustainable Cotton Challenge signatories showed Home Textile leading preferred cotton uptake at 94 percent, followed by Apparel (L) and Outdoor/Sports at 27 percent, Multi-Sector/Apparel (XL) at 40 percent and Apparel (S/M) at 63 percent.

Usage by sector:
The Preferred Fiber & Materials (PFM) Benchmark Program
A Wider Perspective of Preferred Cotton

Three Years of Benchmarking:
111 Participants
17 Countries
Estimated Turnover US$ 1.65 Trillion

2018 marked the third year of the PFM Benchmark Program with participation reaching 111 companies. Preferred cotton reporting has been steadily increasing over the past three years. In 2018, 104 (94 percent) of the 111 companies reported on one or more of the preferred cotton fibers - making it the highest amongst all other portfolios reported (Preferred Polyester, Preferred Man Made Cellulosics and Preferred Animal Fibers).

There have been substantial gains made over the past few years in scaling the production of more sustainable forms of cotton, which is now higher than ever at over 3 million mt in 2016. However, companies are actively sourcing less than one-fifth of the available sustainable cotton¹. In order for sustainable cotton to become standard business practice, the amount of sustainable cotton grown and bought must increase significantly. The Cotton 2025 pledge sends a signal to millions of producers that there is a real demand for a more sustainable approach to cotton production that reduces the environmental and social costs.

The companies that have pledged their support are at various stages on their journey to using sustainable cotton, with some already securing all of their cotton from sustainable sources. However, all are clear that collaboration across the sector is needed to bring about transformative change.

¹. WWF-Solidaridad-PAN UK, Cotton Ranking Report, 2016

Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2018

The difference we’re making

The difference we're making

Global Preferred Cotton Production
2018: 940,533 mt
2017: 622,359 mt
2016: 319,248 mt

Outcome

1.15 million ha
Land under improved or organic management

Preferred Cotton vs. Conventional Cotton

47%

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94 out of the 111 companies completed one or more of the preferred cotton modules in the Preferred Fiber & Materials Benchmark Program. The following charts show the percentage responses of the 94 participants on three key questions: Chain of Custody, Target Setting and Product Marks & Labelling.
# Impacts and the SDGs

How preferred cotton (pCotton) interacts with the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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<td>12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.</td>
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<td>12.6: Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt practices and integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.</td>
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<td>pCotton reporting rates (number of companies)</td>
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SDG initial mapping: Initial mapping is based on Life Cycle Assessment. It links preferred fiber and materials to responsible consumption, sustainable agriculture, water, energy, climate, land use, technology and infrastructure.

SDG future mapping: The PFM Benchmark program will continue to map and measure linkages between adoption of pCotton and the SDGs.

Impact: Savings in water, energy, greenhouse gases and other benefits.

Outcome: More sustainable agriculture, land use and innovation.

Inputs: pCotton: Organic, recycled or more sustainably produced cotton.
Learning from the Pioneers

“ It’s been a long journey to reach 100 percent organic cotton. Kudos to all the prAna employees and global supply chain partners who put in countless hours. We couldn’t be more ecstatic about this sustainability milestone!”

Russ Hopcus, President, prAna

“As a pioneer in organic cotton bedding, Coyuchi cares immensely about what our sheets, towels and apparel are made of and its greater impact on the environment and the hands that touch it from earth to factory to home. Coyuchi is excited to join the pledge and the growing momentum by likeminded brands committed to a more sustainable future.”

Eileen Mockus, CEO, Coyuchi
Coyuchi has always been a pioneer in 100 percent organic cotton sourcing. What are some of the new steps you’re taking to make even more progress and get to the next level?

Coyuchi was the first to bring organic cotton bedding to the United States more than 25 years ago and continues to use certified organic cotton today. Our mission is to provide organic cotton products that are verified and that support the long-term sustainability of organic farming communities.

This past spring, we launched our Organic Crinkled Sheeting and Minimalist Bed Sets, which use 100 percent certified organic Fair Trade fiber sourced from Pratima, a farmer-owned producer group of almost 4,000 organic cotton smallholder farming families in Orissa, India. The farmers at Pratima have used their Fair Trade premiums from products like these to fund a variety of projects from building community centers, providing access to clean drinking water, creating a fund for the women in their community and providing access to quality, non-gmo organic seed.

Is there a special cotton product that you developed this year that takes Coyuchi’s commitment to the next level?

Last fall, we launched our Arroyo Kimono Cardigan and Crew Neck Sweater, which use 100 percent certified organic Fair Trade fiber sourced from Chetna Organic, an Indian, farmer-owned producer group of 10,000+ organic cotton smallholder farming families comprised of nine cooperatives across India in Telangana, Orissa and Maharashtra. Coyuchi has worked with Chetna as a member of the ChetCo shared value sourcing network since 2015. Working in cooperation with fellow members that span the supply chain, ChetCo’s collaborative sourcing efforts have generated over 400 percent increase in organic cotton purchases from Chetna’s farming communities. The impact of improving the procurement process and payment timing for these farmers sends a clear message of market demand and provides economic security needed for the longevity of these dynamic communities.

Where do you go from here?

The organic cotton community continues to face a number of challenges, but with innovative sourcing models like these and the opportunity for increased collaboration, Coyuchi will continue to focus on its mission in 2019.
Burton has a responsibility to protect the people and playground that sustain our sport and lifestyle. We recognize that there are social and environmental costs associated with producing our products. We are continuously striving toward sustainability in our production practices, including the materials we source. Burton is proud to join other industry leaders in this pledge, which is aligned with our commitment to sourcing 100 percent sustainable cotton by 2020."

House of Fraser supports the Sustainable Cotton Communiqué as part of our shift to sourcing sustainable cotton in our house branded fashion and homeware products. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate to scale the uptake of sustainable materials in fashion, and applaud HRH The Prince of Wales for his leadership."

At Timberland, we strive to be Earthkeepers in everything we do, and we recognize sustainable cotton sourcing as a major part of that goal. Studies have shown the positive social benefits to farming communities as well as the potential for these practices to sequester carbon into the soil. This is exciting work as we move beyond just minimizing environmental impacts to strategically creating real environmental and social benefits within the supply chain."
Why cotton?

Cotton was and is the retailer’s most important raw material. Within the Clothing & Home business it is the largest raw material, and on average, Marks and Spencer (M&S) use around 50,000 tonnes of lint cotton each year. Ten years ago, senior executives and raw material specialists were becoming increasingly aware of the issues in the cotton industry – from chemical and water usage, to issues around land usage and social impacts. There was, therefore, a clear case for including a separate sustainable cotton commitment in Plan A, and M&S have been working toward it ever since.

How did you go about developing targets?

Internally, the commitment to sourcing more sustainable cotton was driven in three ways: top-down, by a CEO committed to Plan A as a sustainability framework that underpins the whole business; by a commitment across the organization to get the basics right; and through specific expertise within the business, with raw material and technical specialists bringing their knowledge to the table.

How did you go about evaluating your sourcing options?

To achieve this, M&S in part used what was already available – by deliberately increasing the amounts of Fairtrade, organic or recycled cotton it sourced every year. But the company also decided to go beyond this, by working with other brands to develop a new global standard that could go beyond the M&S supply chain and that could transform the entire cotton industry globally. As a result, the business shaped the Better Cotton Initiative as founding member, to build capacity with farmers, promote sustainable cotton and accelerate its availability in the market place globally.

What were your drivers for sourcing more sustainable cotton?

Whilst there certainly are important and tangible benefits to M&S directly such as increased brand integrity or customer satisfaction, the main driver for sourcing more sustainable cotton is to help to improve the livelihoods of the hundreds of thousands of cotton farmers and communities that are part of the supply chain.

How did you engage your sourcing teams?

It initially took considerable effort to develop a sustainable cotton sourcing strategy, and to make sure it wasn’t just going to be a bit of good PR. Some of the key questions to be considered were: What was it going to cost the business? Were the supply chains lined up and ready to deliver? In some cases, they weren’t, so the value chains had to be lined up and put in a position to connect with the sustainable cotton supply chains.

The launch of the recent CottonUP guide (cottonupguide.org) has helped enormously in embedding sustainable cotton into our business.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and M&S started working together on sustainable cotton in 2009 in India, partnering to support farmers to develop ways of producing cotton that has a lower environmental impact. In short, a way of producing ‘better cotton’, under the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI).

What’s next for M&S?

In 2017/18, 77 percent of the cotton sourced by M&S’s suppliers (by volume) came from more sustainable sources. As part of the updated Plan A, M&S has committed to sourcing 100 percent of the cotton used in M&S clothing from more sustainable sources (which it defines as BCI, Fairtrade, organic or recycled cotton) by April 2019.

corporate.marksandspencer.com/blog/sustainable_cotton
Q&A With Stefanie Sumfleth

Stefanie Sumfleth
Head of Corporate Responsibility & Quality Management, bonprix

Q What was your sustainable cotton goal?

From zero to one hundred - our goal was to source all our cotton from sustainable sources by 2020. It was the start of an exciting journey for bonprix back in 2012 because when we began to buy “Cotton made in Africa” (CmiA), our suppliers weren’t quite as enthusiastic as we were.

Why buy “Cotton made in Africa” that has to be procured through registered spinning mills when conventional cotton, from India for example, fulfills the exact same requirements?! There was no established value-added chain for African cotton either. The spinning mills in the countries we purchased from had little or no experience with African cotton. And a 100 percent availability guarantee was a must. Question after question had to be answered, both for ourselves and our partners.

Q How has your partnership with CmiA evolved?

Slowly but surely we began to introduce new processes and build a supply chain with pilot partners in various countries. And we told them all about the advantages of “Cotton made in Africa.” A close partnership with the “Aid by Trade Foundation”, umbrella organization of CmiA, helped us tackle some issues. We are now “Cotton made in Africa’s” biggest partner. After continually raising the percentage we use, 93 percent of our cotton requirements were met by “Cotton made in Africa” in 2018. This translates into 54 million cotton items and over 16,500 tonnes of CmiA cotton. We’ve saved around 34.5 billion litres of water – the annual consumption of a medium-sized German town with a population of 760,000.

Three years ago, we began working with a new African partner that processes “Cotton made in Africa.” We continue to work toward establishing and developing a whole supply chain in Africa with our partners in Uganda. Our aim is now to secure a stable level of quality so we can buy cotton from even more African countries.

As a value-for-money fashion brand, initially people may have been skeptical when they heard about our ambitious sustainability targets. Now almost every second bonprix textile fulfills the criteria of a sustainable product. “Cotton made in Africa” is responsible for the lion’s share. We use the products to tell our customers how we support the initiative, and we’re proud of it. Because even today, there still needs to be a discussion among all stakeholders about how society can take responsibility as a whole.
Insights From Levi Strauss & Co.

Liza Schillo
Manager, Global Product Sustainability, Levi Strauss & Co.

Q Where did you start on this journey?

Levi Strauss & Co. joined BCI as among the first Retail/Brand Council members in 2011. The timing of BCI’s establishment was a very fortunate coincidence, as we had recently completed our first Lifecycle Assessment, which identified one of our biggest areas of opportunity for impact reduction as being at the cotton cultivation stage.

Q What did you find as you made progress this year?

This past year has been particularly interesting for several reasons. First, it was the first year that we achieved 65 percent of our total cotton supply being sourced as more sustainable cotton, predominantly Better Cotton. Second, the climate change discussion grew more heated and the topic of regenerative agriculture really took off. This is a very interesting new space for us, and we are interested in learning more about how opportunities drive regenerative practices to scale.

Q What are your goals for increasing engagement with sustainable cotton?

As referenced above, learning more about regenerative agriculture practices has been important to us as we see this as a major opportunity not only to reduce our farm-level carbon footprint, but to potentially establish cotton (and other crops) as a reliable method of carbon sequestration. Further, roughly two-thirds of our product lifecycle water impact occurs at the cotton farming stage. We want to better understand where our cotton is coming from so that we can more effectively impact the amount of water going into our products at the cultivation/raw materials stage. For water, we are thinking not only about better cotton growing practices, but also alternatives to growing cotton (e.g. recycled cotton) that reduce water needed to produce the raw material into our fabrics. This contributes to the circular economy by reducing waste and all the impact reduction that comes with that across chemicals, water and carbon. Our vision is to be a company that drives positive change simply by existing through the production, use and reuse of its products.

Q What are you proud of accomplishing this year?

This year we achieved (and are exceeding!) sourcing 50 percent of our cotton as more sustainable cotton. We are on track to accomplishing our goal of 100 percent more sustainable cotton sourced by 2020. We’re quite a large cotton buyer, so that’s no small feat!

Q Is there a special product that you developed this year that is made of 100 percent sustainable cotton?

Our Wellthread collection is a specially designed collection of tops, bottoms and outerwear that is made up of 100 percent responsibly made clothing. These apparel items are designed with end of use in mind, so they are either 100 percent cotton or otherwise simplified for ease of recyclability. They are also made in factories that have partnered with us to establish a Worker Wellbeing program in their facilities.
Kering’s Collaboration

Building long term partnerships for a sustainable organic cotton supply chain

In order to meet its goal to use 100 percent organic cotton by 2025, global Luxury group Kering recognized that full awareness of each stage of the supply chain and a whole new way of working was required. As one of its initiatives to address this, Kering partnered with CottonConnect in its quest for greater traceability of its organic cotton supply chain, with a desire to build supply chains that function more as partnership networks than traditional, top-down transactions.

CottonConnect has worked with Kering since 2015, providing agronomic, social and business training for farmers in Kering’s organic cotton program. The program connects farmers with Kering’s supply chain so that the organic cotton produced is directly traceable to Kerings’ brand’s products. During this period, Volcom, a modern lifestyle brand in the Kering Group, was seeking to increase the amount of organic cotton used in its products. Volcom had a long-term trusted supplier for its t-shirts who was willing to take cotton fiber from a new source. Using this careful selection of partner, product and supplier, Volcom’s Farm to Yarn initiative was created.

The CottonConnect field program with Kering consists of three different elements. The Organic Cotton Farmer Training Program (OCFTP), in its pilot year with Volcom, is focused on training 150 farmers in Madhya Pradesh, India. Fifty women from the community taking part in the OCFTP are enrolled in the Gender Program: Women’s Rights and Life Skills, so that the benefits of both trainings can create positive effects in the community as a whole. In addition, a Farmer Business School was added in the last year of an OCFTP program with 100 farmers in Maharashtra, India. Kering expects the results of the OCFTP to be comparable with a project it ran with CottonConnect in Maharashtra, in 2015-2017. By year two, compared with conventional farmers, the yield of project farmers had been improved by 16.8 percent, their input costs reduced by 56.6 percent and their profits increased by 115.6 percent.

A pivotal moment in the Farm to Yarn initiative’s development was an all supply chain partner meeting in November 2017. In a proactive attempt to foster transparency and create a long term working relationship, Kering, Volcom and CottonConnect arranged a meeting between all the supply chain partners at once. This included the farmer project operator Noble Ecotech who also handles ginning, the yarn spinner, Volcom’s sourcing agent as well as the supplier partner responsible for the fabric and garment manufacturing, Kering’s sustainability team, Volcom’s compliance and supply chain team and CottonConnect. This meeting allowed direct communication with every member of the supply chain in the room, presenting challenges and opportunities for a new way of working. After this meeting and seeing the benefits of an expanded commitment to traceable organic cotton, it was clear that Volcom would move forward with a partnership arrangement for the long term with the hope of expanding on the work already achieved.

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The standards and initiatives listed to the right are currently tracked in Textile Exchange's Preferred Fiber & Materials Benchmark Program. Through this program we have been able to track the use of more sustainable fibers and materials from 111 global brands for several years and are using this data to build a track record of growth and success.

These initiatives include Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), Fairtrade, organic cotton (Organic Content Standard (OCS)), Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and recycled cotton (Recycled Claim Standard (RCS), Global Recycled Standard (GRS) and SCS Recycled Content Standard).

By committing to use cotton from these initiatives and standards, brands are ensuring that the intentions of their sustainable sourcing strategies are maintained.

A note on yield

Yields will vary from country to country (region to region, producer to producer and year to year), depending upon factors such as climatic conditions, water availability, soil quality, pest pressure, and farmer resources. This is particularly true when it comes to "rainfed vs. irrigated" production. Small-scale family producers (on landholdings of 2 hectares or less), who account for 80-90% of farmers, primarily in the global south, are often the most vulnerable, particularly when it comes to yield variation. Optimizing yield and farm diversity (including food crops) over the longer term, rather than a single focused approach to maximizing cotton production and yield, can be a more sustainable approach and can result in higher resilience and less risk for the farmer. In addition, balancing economic factors, such as yield, with sustainability outcomes and impacts, such as soil and water quality/conservation, food security and farm net income, should also be carefully considered in any cotton sustainability strategy.

A note on LCA data

While Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) help us assess the inputs and impacts of production systems, it is limited to a restricted set of criteria more suitable for a factory than a farm. In addition, conditions will vary from year to year, region to region, and farm to farm, these variances can be obscured when LCA's are presented as a global average (even if volume-based weightings are applied). Other key impacts that are not captured in an LCA include biodiversity and socio-economic impacts which are critical to a sustainability agenda.
Better Cotton Initiative

bettercotton.org

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) brings together farmers, ginners, traders, spinners, mills, cut & sew, manufacturers, retailers, brands, civil society and grassroots organisations in a unique global community committed to developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.

Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) cotton production including equivalents increased from 665,789 mt in 2012/13 to 3.26 million mt in 2016/17. The BCI Standard made up ~60 percent of all BCI cotton produced in 2016/17. The remaining ~60 percent of BCI cotton was produced according to the BCI equivalents ABRAPA, Cotton made in Africa and myBMP.

Producing Countries
China, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Mozambique, Pakistan, South Africa, Tajikistan, Turkey and the U.S.A. - PLUS Benchmarked standards in an additional 10 countries.

Objective
To transform the market by making Better Cotton a sustainable mainstream commodity.

Overview
BCI sets out to improve the sustainability of mainstream cotton production. Growers must meet core environmental and social requirements for their cotton to qualify as Better Cotton. Continuous improvement is a key element of the Assurance Programme.

Fiber Production (2016/17)
1,754,000 mt - BCI
1,508,000 mt - BCI Equivalent

Yield
BCI collects yield data at country-level. In the vast majority of cases, implementation of the Better Cotton Standard System leads to higher yields, but the measures of improvement vary. For example, in the 2016-17 season, BCI Farmers in China had 14% higher yields and BCI Farmers in India had 8% higher yields than Comparison Farmers in the same geographic areas.

Growth in Production
(2015/16 - 2016/17)
35% - BCI
21% - BCI Equivalent

Market Share of Total Cotton Grown (2016/17)
8% - BCI
7% - BCI Equivalent

Projected increase

Rainfed / Irrigated
Combination

Project data is referenced to Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2018 which is sourced from and verified by respective initiative.
The market share indicated in this page is initiative dependent and may differ from what is outlined in Global Preferred Cotton Market due to overlapping programs between initiatives (i.e. BCI equivalency).

1. Find the full results at bettercotton.org/about-better-cotton/farmer-results
Better Cotton Initiative

LCA Availability
Not applicable. BCI understands the sector's expectations for measurable indicators of improvement and impact, and is currently developing reliable indicators that offer value to members while ensuring the credibility and feasibility of the Better Cotton Standard System.

Water Consumption:
No LCA data.

Primary Energy Demand:
No LCA data.

Global Warming:
No LCA data.

Eutrophication:
No LCA data.

Water Management
Water Stewardship is one of the seven Better Cotton Principles and Criteria. Management practices address water resources identification and mapping, soil moisture management, efficient irrigation practices, water quality, and participation in collective action to promote the sustainable use of water.

Soil Fertility
Soil Health is one the seven Better Cotton Principles and Criteria. Management practices address soil analysis and type identification, enhancement of soil structure and fertility, and nutrient cycling improvement.

Biodiversity
Biodiversity and Land Use is one of the seven Better Cotton Principles and Criteria. Management practices address identifying and mapping biodiversity resources, identifying and restoring degraded areas, enhancing populations of beneficial insects, ensuring crop rotation and protecting riparian areas.

GMOs Permitted?
Yes. BCI is ‘technology neutral’ with respect to GM cotton, and will neither encourage farmers to grow it, nor seek to restrict their access to it.

Use of Hazardous Pesticides
Pesticides listed in Annex A and B of the Stockholm convention, Annexes of the Montreal Protocol, and Annex III of the Rotterdam convention are forbidden. Producers must phase-out active ingredients that are known or presumed to be highly or extremely hazardous, carcinogens, mutagens or reproductive toxicants.

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
The use of fertilizers (organic and inorganic) is addressed in the Soil Health and Water Stewardship Principles and Criteria. Producers should develop a better understanding of, and have better control of, fertilizer use.

Social considerations/regulations
The Better Cotton Standard is aligned with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work agenda requirements on gender. Guidance on topics such as child labor, sanitation facilities and equal payment are also included in the Standard.

Verification/Certification (farm level)
Self-assessment, Second-Party Credibility Checks by BCI and/or partners, Third-Party Verification by independent verifiers, and for large-farms in the US, a US Group Management model.

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
Physical segregation farm to gin; mass balance gin to retailer.

Product Marketing/Labeling
On-product and off-product communications. The BCI On-Product Mark can be used by BCI’s Retailer and Brand Members. Strict criteria for use are set out in the Better Cotton Claims Framework.

Consumer Recognition
The introduction of the Better Cotton Claims Framework enabled BCI’s Members to communicate their commitment to BCI and Better Cotton to their consumers.

Livelihoods
No price differentials for farmers but yields and income expected to improve. The volume-based fee paid by BCI’s Retailer and Brand Members is invested into farmer training and capacity building programs.

Cost Implications/Impacts
No price differential at point of sourcing but membership and volume-based fees apply.

Quality Perception/Implications
No known quality implications.
Cotton made in Africa is an initiative of the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) that works to promote economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable cotton production in Africa. CmiA helps smallholder farmers improve their living conditions and profit from fair contracts and training in efficient and environmentally sound cultivation methods. The CmiA certification process also includes the workers in the cotton gins. Together with partners, CmiA additionally invests in community projects that provide school infrastructure and empower women.

Growers must meet minimum environmental and social requirements for their cotton to qualify as CmiA. GMOs are banned in the CmiA standard. With production having increased from 144,909 mt in 2012/13 to 495,839 mt in 2016/17, CmiA is a major player in the cotton sector of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Aid by Trade Foundation has introduced a CmiA Organic Standard into its family of standards, which combines existing organic standards with the social and economic production criteria of CmiA.

### Producing Countries
Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia

### Market Share of Total Cotton Grown (2016/17)
2.15%

### Fiber Production (2016/17)
495,839 mt

### Growth in Production (2015/16–2016/17)
+55%

### Yield
Claim of 20% average yield increase

### Rainfed / Irrigated
100% rainfed

Initiative data is referenced to Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2018 which is sourced from and verified by respective initiative. The market share indicated in this page is initiative dependent and may differ from what is outlined in Global Preferred Cotton Market due to overlapping programs between initiatives (i.e. CmiA covers organic).
Cotton made in Africa

LCA Availability
Yes - PE International (2014a)

Water Consumption:
1 m³ / 1,000 kg fiber
(~100% reduction - LCA)

Primary Energy Demand:
No LCA data.

Global Warming:
1,037 kg of CO₂-eq / 1000 kg fiber
(43% reduction - LCA)

Eutrophication:
20.4 kg of phosphate-eq / 1000 kg fiber
(431% increase - LCA)

Soil Fertility
Farmers receive training to improve agricultural practices, particularly soil and water conservation. Composting and manure are encouraged whilst crop rotation is mandatory.

Biodiversity
Destruction of primary forest (or other designated resources protected by national or international law) for the purpose of cotton production is prohibited.

GMOs Permitted?
No.

Use of Hazardous Pesticides
Promotes bio-intensive IPM and excludes pesticides banned under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), the WHO list of highly hazardous and hazardous pesticides, and pesticides listed in the Rotterdam Convention on PIC.

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
Excessive use of fertilizers not an issue in CmiA’s growing regions; IPM, organic manure and compost pits encouraged.

Social Considerations/ Regulations
Production must comply with labor standards as set by the ILO. CmiA standard includes farm as well as gin level criteria. Social project investment with AbTF and retail partners/ cotton companies.

Verification / Certification (farm level)
Self-assessment and 3rd party certification on field and gin level.

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
Mass Balance from spinning mill onward (hard identity from field to spinning mill); full traceability possible through Hard Identity Preserved (option).

Product Marketing / Labeling
In store marketing/on product labeling (own label or CmiA hangtag).

Consumer Recognition
13% awareness among German consumers (measured Aug 2016).

Livelihoods
No price differential for farmers but the volume-based fee paid by brands/retailers is reinvested in the Foundation’s activities, e.g. farmer training, verification, community projects, etc.

Cost Implications / Impacts
No membership fee but retailers/brands pay a volume-based fee and spinning mills pay a small annual registration fee.

Quality Perception / Implications
Historical perceptions of quality being an issue - but not so much these days.

Water Management
CmiA farmers practice rainfed agriculture exclusively. This means they do not use any artificial irrigation.

Soil Fertility
Farmers receive training to improve agricultural practices, particularly soil and water conservation. Composting and manure are encouraged whilst crop rotation is mandatory.

Biodiversity
Destruction of primary forest (or other designated resources protected by national or international law) for the purpose of cotton production is prohibited.

GMOs Permitted?
No.

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No membership fee but retailers/brands pay a volume-based fee and spinning mills pay a small annual registration fee.

Quality Perception / Implications
Historical perceptions of quality being an issue - but not so much these days.
Fairtrade

Fairtrade (FT) is a global movement to support small-scale, marginalized farmers and workers in developing countries, changing the way trade works through better prices, decent working conditions, and an overall fairer deal.

Fairtrade standards require farmers to organize into democratic producer organizations and to have environmentally sound agricultural practices. In return, they are guaranteed the Fairtrade Minimum Price, which provides an important safety net, as well as a Fairtrade Premium. The producer organizations democratically decide how they want to use the Fairtrade Premium, and it generally goes toward community development.

Fairtrade has stringent social criteria ensuring freedom from discrimination, forced and compulsory labor, child labor, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Fairtrade cotton production reached 17,997 mt in 2016/17, of which 17.65 percent was also certified to an organic standard. GMOs are banned in the Fairtrade standard.

Objective

To make trade fair, empower small scale producers and workers and to foster sustainable livelihoods.

Overview

Fairtrade changes the way trade works through better prices, decent working conditions and a fairer deal for farmers. The Fairtrade standards require farmers to organize in democratic producer organizations and environmentally sound agricultural practices. It ensures the Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premium.

Fiber Production (2016/17)
17,997 mt

Market Share of Total Cotton Grown (2016/17)
0.06%

Growth in Production (2015/16–2016/17)
24%

Growth in Production Projected to Increase?
Yes

Yield
Yield increases recorded. Dependent on rainfall as most Fairtrade cotton is rainfed.

Rainfed / Irrigated
Predominantly rainfed (75% in 2015)

Producing Countries
India, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, Senegal, Uganda, Egypt

Rainfed / Irrigated
Predominantly rainfed (75% in 2015)

Growth in Production (2015/16–2016/17)
24%

Fairtrade Organic
Fairtrade

5 Year Production trend (,000)

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Fairtrade

- **LCA Availability**: n/a
- **Water Consumption**: No LCA data.
- **Primary Energy Demand**: No LCA data.
- **Global Warming**: No LCA data.
- **Eutrophication**: No LCA data.

- **Water Management**: Promotes efficient and sustainable use of water resources.
- **Soil Fertility**: Encourages improvement of soil fertility through composting, crop rotation and intercropping and reduction/prevention of soil erosion.
- **Biodiversity**: Ensures no negative impact on protected and HCV areas and must comply to national legislation on agricultural land use and carry out activities to protect and enhance biodiversity.

- **GMOs Permitted?**: No.

- **Use of Hazardous Pesticides**: Promotes IPM and organic practices. Prohibited Materials List is divided in two: The Red List includes materials that are prohibited, while the Amber List includes materials that are under evaluation for inclusion in the Red List.

- **Use of Synthetic Fertilizer**: Red and amber list of PML (based on POP, PIC, WHO, PAN 12).

- **Social Considerations/Regulations**: Stringent criteria on freedom from discrimination, forced/compulsory labor, child labor, freedom of association and collective bargaining. Operators in the supply chain must comply with ILO core conventions.

- **Verification / Certification (farm level)**: Certification by third party.

- **Chain of Custody (supply chain)**: Two models: Classic: Physically segregated and traceable. Mass balance: Physically traceable until spinner; CoC maintained through supply chain via online tool.

- **Product Marketing / Labeling**: On-product and in-store marketing. Third-party certified (Fairtrade mark).

- **Consumer Recognition**: Fairtrade mark widely understood and trusted by consumers.

- **Livelihoods**: Farmers paid Fairtrade Minimum Price. Communities benefit from Fairtrade Premiums - spending decided democratically by cooperatives.

- **Cost Implications / Impacts**: Price differential (Fairtrade Minimum Price). Buyers also pay Fairtrade Premium for community investment.

- **Quality Perception / Implications**: Historical perceptions of quality being an issue - but not so much today.

Organic Fairtrade (OFT) cotton is cotton that is certified to both Fairtrade and organic standards. Fairtrade encourages Organic farming practices and has a higher minimum price for organic commodities. Organic farm standards ensure that the cotton is grown within a rotation system that builds soil fertility, protects biodiversity and is grown without the use of any synthetic fertilizers, hazardous pesticides or GMOs.

With most (93%) of OFT participants adopting third-party standards, the sector is performing well in Chain of Custody (86%). The sector score for Traceability is relatively strong at 69, with 86% of participants able to trace their suppliers of OFT cotton to some degree. Sustainability Investment scored slightly lower at 56. However, with 64% of OFT participants making Sustainability Investments in their supply chains, this score was the highest among all modules.

More than two-thirds (71%) of OFT participants have a SMART Target driving Uptake of OFT cotton and 14% are maintaining an OFT-only status (100% of cotton usage). The majority, (71%) of OFT participants are able to report consumption volumes.

OFT leads in Section 4: Consumer Engagement with a sector score of 54. 86% of OFT participants regard their use of Organic-Fairtrade as core to Establishing Brand Value and communicate/label OFT products. 93% of OFT participants engage customers on the benefits of OFT. Calculating ROI (14) is lagging and Monitoring Business Benefits (36) could be improved.
Organic Cotton

textileexchange.org/organic-cotton-round-table

Organic Cotton (OC) is cotton that is produced and certified to organic agricultural standards. Its production sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people by using natural processes rather than artificial inputs. Importantly, organic cotton farming does not allow the use of toxic chemicals or GMOs (genetically modified organisms). Instead, it combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote a good quality of life for all involved.

The Organic Content Standard (OCS) and the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) link the organic agriculture standards for chain of custody forward and provide third-party assurance organic product claims. In addition, GOTS includes environmental and social responsibility in processing.

Organic cotton production increased from 107,243 mt in 2012/13 to 117,525 mt in 2016/17.


Objective
Sustaining the health of soils, ecosystems and people.

Overview
Organic cotton is grown within a rotation system that builds soil fertility, protects biodiversity, conserves water, helps farmers feed their families and is grown without the use of any synthetic chemicals or GMOs. Growers must meet organic agricultural standards as set nationally and by the importing country if export is carried out.

Producing Countries
Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, Greece, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Peru, Senegal, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, U.S.A.

Fiber Production
117,525 mt

Market Share of Total Cotton Grown
0.51%

Growth in Production
(2015/16–2016/17)
↑10%

Projected to Increase?
Yes

Yield
Claim of yield increases recorded in Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Tajikistan, Turkey, Brazil, China and others.

Rainfed / Irrigated
75-80% rainfed

Initiative data is referenced to Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2018 which is sourced from and verified by respective initiative. The market share indicated in this page is initiative dependent and may differ from what is outlined in Global Preferred Cotton Market due to overlapping programs between initiatives (i.e. organic covers Fairtrade).
Organic Cotton

LCA Availability
Yes - thinkstep (2014b)

Water Consumption:
182 m³ / 1,000 kg fiber (91% reduction - LCA)

Primary Energy Demand:
5,800 MJ / 1,000 kg fiber (61% reduction - LCA)

Global Warming:
978 kg of CO₂-eq / 1000 kg fiber (46% reduction - LCA)

Eutrophication:
2.8 kg of phosphate-eq / 1000 kg fiber (26% reduction - LCA)

Soil Fertility
Effective management of soil fertility is at the heart of organic production, with requirements for crop rotation, soil conservation and soil management. Organic cotton farmers report increases in organic matter (OM). Soil fertility challenges vary from region to region. Studies by FiBL, FAO and Rodale Institute show soil fertility increases on organic farms.

Biodiversity
Organic management maintains or enhances biodiversity in crop and non-crop habitats on farms. FAO and FiBL studies alongside others show increased biodiversity on organic farms.

GMOs Permitted?
No.

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
No. Organic production relies on crop rotation and natural inputs such as animal or green manures to build fertility.

Social Considerations/ Regulations
To qualify as organic, production must comply with labor standards as set by the ILO. Textiles certified to GOTS have met strict social standards during processing (e.g. in factories).

Verification / Certification
Certification (annual) by third party.

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
Identity Preserved; Certification of Supply Chain.

Product Marketing / Labeling
In-store marketing and on-product label. Third-party certification label.

Consumer Recognition
Concept of organic widely understood, trusted and respected by consumers.

Livelihoods
A price differential/sustainable price (i.e. meeting the cost of production and of ecosystem value addition) is expected to occur via market mechanisms and producer group policy, but is not a requirement of the standard. Optional partnership investment via NGOs, corporate investment, and PG investment goes back into the community.

Cost Implications / Impacts
Price differential paid to farmer/producer group.

Quality Perception / Implications
Historical perceptions of quality have been a problem in the past, but are not considered an issue today.
Focus on Organic Cotton: Q&A with Arun Ambatipudi

Arun Ambatipudi
Executive Director, Chetna Organic

Q Can you tell us a bit about the ChetCo Model?

The Chetna Coalition (ChetCo) collectivizes SME brands and manufactures for effective supply chain risk management at the cotton source: the organic farming community.

ChetCo acts as a coalition to grow, scale and organize their communal demand to reliably off-take the full community harvest volume each season. Members act collaboratively to produce value and reduce risk. Each season, members increase the value of their cotton, their cooperative and their farming community. The members work together in efforts to continuously enhance the quality, integrity, traceability and transparency of their fiber. At the same time, members send strong market messages and support sustainable community development through efforts in seed purchase, healthcare, education and livelihood initiatives for farmers.

Together, individual ChetCo companies can effectively address, and continue to improve upon, the factors that underpin both the supply sustainability and impact value of their cotton. Namely: the economic stability and resiliency, the environmental health and the social welfare benefit that farming communities need for growing high-quality organic cotton over the long term.

Together, ChetCo members agree to participate in, but are not limited to, four categories of cooperative-action mandates to make year-on-year improvements to the sustainability, resiliency, and value of their marketplace, their coalition, and their farming communities.

Q What were the highlights of 2017?

This year, our value chain coalition ChetCo had 70 percent uptake against production of Chetna Organic’s nearly 8,000 smallholder cotton farmers. This has grown from 15 percent prior to ChetCo’s formation five years ago.

Approximately INR 5,500 ($76) was paid per quintal (100 kg), with a premium of INR 250-600 ($3.47 - $8.32). An additional INR 176,000 ($2,580) per quintal was paid in Fairtrade premiums on around 3,000 mt of seed cotton.

ChetCo now has nearly 25 brands, spanning 11 countries and four continents, including two new brands - No Nasties and Soul Space - selling on the domestic market in India.

Q What does the future hold?

Both Chetna and ChetCo will act as best practice teaching/learning institutes for producer organizations and emerging sourcing coalitions around the world. A partnership has just been announced with the West Africa Sourcing Coalition, with others to come.

Q What are you most proud of that these initiatives have achieved over the years?

Access to finance. Chetna has received 13 Croles (~$2 million) working capital finance with collateral of less than 10 percent this year. This was made possible by uptake commitments from brands and manufactures.
Recycled Cotton

textileexchange.org/integrity

Recycled Cotton (rCotton) has been reprocessed from reclaimed cotton. The Recycled Claim Standard (RCS), the Global Recycled Standard (GRS) and the SCS Recycled Standard are Chain of Custody standards to track the use of recycled material through the supply chain. The GRS, in addition, includes social and environmental requirements that must be met during the processing stages.

Global Warming:
100 kg of CO₂-eq / 1,000 kg of fiber.

Eutrophication:
n/a

Water Management
n/a

Soil Fertility
n/a

Biodiversity
n/a

GMOs Permitted?
Potential for GMOs to enter supply chains through feedstock as a result of over 80 percent conventional cotton being genetically modified.

Use of Hazardous Pesticides
n/a

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
n/a

Social Considerations/Regulations
n/a

Verification / Certification
(farm level)

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
Global Recycled Standard.

Product Marketing / Labeling
In store and on-product marketing.

Consumer Recognition
Primarily B2B but in-store marketing.

Livelihoods
n/a

Cost Implications / Impacts
Cost absorbed / Co-op promo concepts.

Quality Perception / Implications
No known quality implications. Some limitations in color variety due to mechanical recycling.

About recover

recovertex.com

Objective
To help facilitate Closed-Loop manufacture and a zero-waste industry.

Overview
Recover® produces Mechanically Recycled Cotton Yarns. Recover® is known for offering the finest gauges, consistent quality and precise color control. Recover® cotton is blended into accurate colors lot to lot without any dyestuffs applied to cotton fiber. Recently published LCAs indicate significant water, energy, chemical and CO₂ savings.

Producing Country
Spain

Manufacturing Process
Mechanical cotton recycling, blending and spinning yarns.

The LCA data has been contributed by Recover
A Growing Portfolio

As the Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Benchmark Program undergoes strategic review, more cotton initiatives will be included. Some of these initiatives such as ABRAPA and myBMP are currently reported as Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) equivalents. Additional standards and initiatives that may be tracked through the program include BASF e3™, Field to Market, ISCC, Transitional Cotton and Regenerative Organic Cotton.

The up-and-coming initiatives

Certainly, we are catalysts and observers of change. Our industry is in the top echelon of change. Those of us working every day in this “Textile Sustainability Arena” all agree that continuous improvement is a mandate for success. We are constantly chasing this improvement. Look at the amazing advancements, almost daily, from the farmgate to the fashion runway, digital farming, precision application, A.I., just to name a few. New spinning, weaving and dyeing technologies that all do more with less. Look at the supply chain now. Major accomplishments in traceability with “blockchain” technology and DNA and other marker products that allow us to prove integrity. And so goes the improvements in the “preferred cotton” initiatives. We are excited that these initiatives are evolving and coming on board for the benefit of brands and retailers to custom design their sustainable cotton journey and strategy. We are pleased to provide some insight into these “up-and-comers.”

Brent Crossland
Textile Exchange Ambassador
The Responsible Brazilian Cotton program (ABR) epitomizes the union of cotton growers in favor of a more sustainable cotton production in Brazil. ABRAPA aims to protect and preserve the integrity of workers. It is 100 percent in line with Brazilian labor laws (CLT), International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions and Regulating Norm 31, which controls work safety, occupational health and work environment.

ABR participating production units have a zero tolerance policy toward child labor, with non-compliance preventing certification. The ABR offers workers a series of guarantees: formal registration, fair wages, extra hours as per law, weekly day off and paid vacations; safety in the workplace; lodging, meals, transportation, medical care, and recreational structure; non-discriminatory treatment; freedom to join unions and support to collective bargaining.

Under the environmental pillar, growers are encouraged to adopt best practices that combine agricultural production and environmental protection. ABR promotes protection of water sources, rivers, and reservoirs; preservation of biomes and of the soil; air, water and soil quality.

Producing Countries

Brazil.

Objective

The Brazilian Association of Cotton Producers aims to increase the profitability of the sector through the union of its agents and seek strategic sustainability, acting politically, socially and economically with the public and private sectors, practicing management of results in four aspects: fiber quality, traceability, sustainability and commercialization.

Overview

The Brazilian Cotton Responsible (ABR) program, as well as the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), is based on the progressive increase of good social, environmental and economic practices in cotton production units. These three pillars of sustainability represent the core of the program that acts as an ally of the cotton grower in achieving a more profitable, socially fair production and in line with all environmental laws and best agricultural practices of soil and water conservation.

Fiber Production (2016/17)

1,190,213 mt

Market Share of Total Cotton Grown (2016/17)

5.15%

Growth in Production (2015/16–2016/17)

14%

Projected to Increase?

Yes

Rainfed / Irrigated

95% rainfed, 5% irrigated

Initiative data is referenced to Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2018 which is sourced from and verified by respective initiative. The market share indicated in this page is initiative dependent and may differ from what is outlined in Global Preferred Cotton Market due to overlapping programs between initiatives (i.e. as BCI equivalency).
ABRAPA

LCA Availability
n/a

Water Consumption:
No LCA data.

Primary Energy Demand:
No LCA data.

Global Warming:
No LCA data.

Eutrophication:
No LCA data.

Water Management
ABR has 21 verification items related to the efficient use and conservation of water within the criteria of “Environmental Performance” and “Good Agricultural Practices.”

Soil Fertility
18 criteria related to soil health, including: minimum crop, crop rotation, soil fertility analysis, organic matter, no-till, erosion prevention and soil salinity, fertilizer efficiency and pH correctives, precision agriculture, map soil fertility, fertilizer application at variable rates and use of biome-adapted cultivars, and cotton growing areas outside the Amazon biome, and cultivated in areas that were once farmed.

Biodiversity
ABR certification is 100% aligned with all federal laws in the country. Promotes conservation of biomes, water sources, fauna, flora and environmental recovery.

GMOs Permitted?
Yes - regulated and carefully managed. ABR has specific items regarding the GMO and its management of the resistance.

Use of Hazardous Pesticides
The farm has a strategy to discontinue the use of WHO Class I pesticides, listed in the Rotterdam Convention and Endosulfan.

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
Permitted - In the criterion of good agricultural practices the ABR has five certification items related to the sustainable use of synthetic fertilizers.

Social Considerations/ Regulations
The social theme is aligned with the legal precepts that protect and preserve the integrity of the worker. 100 percent aligned with Brazilian labor legislation - Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT); 100 percent aligned with the conventions of the ILO - International Labor Organization; 100 percent aligned with Regulatory Standard 31, which regulates work safety, occupational health and the work environment.

Verification / Certification (farm level)
Diagnostic evaluation, plan for the correction of nonconformities and certification by third parties.

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
The model adopted (EAN 128 - subsidy B) was based on the system implemented by the USDA. The current standard uses a Serial Shipping Container Code (SSCC) logistic unit serial code - one of the most important application identifiers used in product traceability - containing 18 digits preceded by a two-digit prefix (00) that identifies the EAN / UCC code type. It is a simple, practical and very safe system for the traceability of cotton bales, which can be implanted by all producers and cottons without major investments.

Product Marketing / Labeling
Limited in the marketing of products in the bales.

Consumer Recognition
Low levels of awareness in consumer recognition.

Livelihoods
Maybe some price differential paid directly to farmers - farmers are paid based on market price, prevailing quality and whether certified cotton.

Cost Implications / Impacts
No membership fee for the ABR application or licensing fees.

Quality Perception / Implications
Consistently high quality, among the highest in the world in all parameters.
Only e3™ brings together a unique blend of integrity and authenticity to provide peace of mind and sustainable credibility. The consumer can now know who grew the cotton in their apparel and under what conditions it was produced.

The core focus of sustainable farming practices is to meet the current needs for productivity and profit ensuring future generations can do the same. Their definition of sustainable also includes the use of new technologies as well as proven production methods to optimize water use, increase soil and plant health, preserve land and reduce energy. Sustainable farming may or may not use plants improved through modern biotechnology.

Dedicated e3™ cotton growers commit to certification and verification through independent audits, allowing for tracking of specific environmental and social measurements.

Objective
To create a more sustainable American cotton landscape.

Overview
e3™ is BASF CropScience’s more sustainable cotton option. It is grown in the U.S.A. with care by cotton producers striving to improve their sustainability in production of the highest-quality upland cotton for apparel and home furnishings.

Fiber Production (2016/17)
47,302 mt

Market Share of Total Cotton Grown (2016/17)
0.20%

Growth in Production (2015/16–2016/17)
↑30%

Proven Production Methods
Optimize Water Use, Increase Soil and Plant Health, Preserve Land and Reduce Energy

Rainfed / Irrigated Combination

Initiative data is referenced to Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2018 which is sourced from and verified by respective initiative.
BASF e3™

LCA Availability
No.

Water Consumption:
No LCA data.

Primary Energy Demand:
No LCA data.

Global Warming:
No LCA data.

Eutrophication:
No LCA data.

Water Management
Aims to reduce irrigation water use.

Soil Fertility
Promotes soil health and stewardship. Activity is assessed on various factors including land use and soil carbon. Concept based on continuous, measured improvement.

Biodiversity
Promotes biodiversity conservation. Activity is assessed on various factors including conservation. The concept is to improve one’s performance on these various parameters over time.

GMOs Permitted?
Yes.

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
Fertilizer use is measured under e3™ program criteria, along with crop rotation, composting and cover crop usage. 98% of e3™ producers conduct soil test and 94% applied nutrients based on crop & soil needs and/or University recommendations.

Social Considerations/Regulations
US cotton growers are all held to high standards by law for worker health and safety.

Verification / Certification (farm level)
Self-evaluation and third party audits.

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
CoC to the mill (for further content claims use).

Product Marketing / Labeling
Limited on product marketing.

Consumer Recognition
No data.

Livelihoods
e3™ farmers are paid a small per bale incentive to reinvest in sustainable improvement practices.

Cost Implications / Impacts
Small price differential paid to farmers, negotiated with individual brand / retailer.

Quality Perception / Implications
No known quality implications.
SCP’s farm program brings together a community of family farmers growing cotton in California’s Fresno, Madera and Merced counties. With SCP’s support and guidance from experts at UC IPM and UC Cooperative Extension, these growers are changing the way they farm by implementing biologically-based practices, which protect the land, air and water resources in the region. The fiber that these farmers produce as part of SCP’s program is called Cleaner Cotton™.

Cleaner Cotton™ fiber is high quality fiber, available in both Pima and Acala varieties. It utilizes biological farming practices and eliminates the 11 most toxic chemicals used in conventional cotton cultivation in California, reducing toxicity in our air, soil and watersheds.

Cleaner Cotton™ receives a modest premium, paid directly to the farmer to help support these practices. It is tracked from field to spinner, using the USDA Permanent Bale Identification barcode and data.

Cleaner Cotton production increased from 258 mt in 2012/13 to 699 mt in 2016/17.

Objective
Cleaning Up Cotton In California.

Overview
The Sustainable Cotton Project works with California cotton growers to reduce the harmful impacts of pesticide use from cotton production on the air, water and soil in the region and to market the cotton they grow in the project as Cleaner Cotton™.

Fiber Production (2016/17)
699 mt

Market Share of Total Cotton Grown (2016/17)
0.003%

Growth in Production (2015/16–2016/17)
↓7%

Projected to Increase?
Yes

Yield
Average 748 kg/ha

Producing Countries
U.S.A. - California.

Rainfed / Irrigated
100% irrigated
Cleaner Cotton™

LCA Availability
n/a

Water Consumption:
No LCA data.

Primary Energy Demand:
No LCA data.

Global Warming:
No LCA data.

Eutrophication:
No LCA data.

Water Management
Some cotton grown on drip irrigation.

Soil Fertility
Compost and cover crops encouraged to maintain soil health and productivity.

Biodiversity
Promotes farming systems that increase beneficial insect habitat and survival.

GMOs Permitted?
Yes - sold separately from non-GMO.

Use of Hazardous Pesticides
Disallows the use of the 11 most toxic chemicals used in cotton in California - unless pests threaten to cause economic loss, or other lower-risk options are exhausted. IPM and biological alternatives encouraged. Up to 50% reduction in chemical inputs over conventional.

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
Growers encouraged to adopt biological methods to improve soil quality.

Social Considerations/ Regulations
U.S. cotton growers are all held to high standards by law for worker health and safety.

Verification / Certification
Second party monitoring.

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
Bale identification system - USDA bar code on each bale.

Product Marketing / Labeling
Marketed and trademarked as Cleaner Cotton™.

Livelihoods
A modest price differential is paid directly to the farmer.

Cost Implications / Impacts
Price differential paid to farmer.

Quality Perception / Implications
No known quality implications.

Consumer Recognition
Yes, consumer messaging via products and website.
Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture is a diverse, multi-stakeholder initiative working to create opportunities across the agricultural supply chain in the United States for continuous improvements in productivity, environmental quality, and human wellbeing. The organization provides a common framework for sustainability measurement that row crop farmers and the supply chain can use to better understand and assess performance at the field, local, state and national levels. Field to Market’s Supply Chain Sustainability Program helps the agricultural supply chain benchmark sustainability performance, catalyze continuous improvement and enable brands and retailers to characterize the sustainability of key sourcing regions, as well as measure and report out on progress against environmental goals.

The organization focuses on eight key sustainability indicators that are most relevant to U.S. row crop production – biodiversity, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, irrigation water use, land use, soil carbon, soil conservation, and water quality. The associated metrics are science-based and designed to measure environmental outcomes from individual farm fields. The metrics have been developed or adopted by Field to Market through a multi-stakeholder governance process over the past decade.

Farmers can access the sustainability metrics through Field to Market’s online Fieldprint® Calculator, a free and confidential tool available to all U.S. row crop producers, or through associated farm-management software that integrates the Platform’s metrics and algorithms. Brands, retailers and suppliers can access aggregated data from farmers who opt-in to participate in local projects. The organization has also developed verification protocols that allow companies to make certain kinds of supply chain sustainability claims.

**Objective**

Convenes diverse stakeholders to work collaboratively to define, measure and advance the sustainability of food, fiber and fuel production in the United States.

**Overview**

Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture consists of nearly 150 member organizations – including grower groups; agribusinesses; food, beverage, apparel, restaurant and retail companies; conservation groups; universities; and public sector partners – working collaboratively to define, measure and advance the sustainability of commodity crop production in the United States. The organization provides science-based tools and resources to benchmark sustainability performance, catalyze continuous improvement, and enable credible sustainability claims.

**Producing Countries**

United States

Initiative data is sourced from and verified by respective initiative.
**Field to Market**

**LCA Availability**
No

**Water Consumption:**
No LCA data.

**Primary Energy Demand:**
No LCA data.

**Global Warming:**
No LCA data.

**Eutrophication:**
No LCA data.

**Water Management**
Participating farmers receive metric scores on irrigation water use efficiency and water quality.

**Soil Fertility**
Participating farmers receive metric scores on the soil carbon and soil erosion implications of their practices; they must indicate whether soil testing is used in determining fertilizer needs.

**Biodiversity**
Participating farmers receive a biodiversity score for their cultivated fields and other land types on the farm that indicates the potential to support diverse ecosystems. This information is used to educate farmers on opportunities to increase this potential.

**GMOs Permitted?**
Field to Market is technology neutral. No specific products are prohibited or required.

**Use of Synthetic Fertilizer**
Field to Market is technology-neutral. No specific products are prohibited or required.

**Social Considerations/Regulations**
Field to Market does not ask questions that replicate regulations in the U.S. and does not have explicit social metrics at the field scale. The National Indicators Report considers industry-wide economic and social indicators.

**Verification / Certification (farm level)**
Second-party verification is used for project level measurement. Third-party verification is used for projects that make an Impact Claim. The farmer does not apply for individual verification, rather the company wishing to make a sustainability claim applies for process/data verification of results for the farmers in their sourcing project, as a group. This is not a certification system.

**Use of Hazardous Pesticides**
Field to Market is technology-neutral. No specific products are prohibited or required. Participating farmers are subject to all U.S. laws and regulations regarding permitted/prohibited chemicals and safe handling requirements.

**Chain of Custody (supply chain)**
Product is not physically segregated or physically traced. Two project accounting systems have been enabled for projects that seek to make Impact claims: traditional mass-balance and volume proxy based on production acres.

**Product Marketing / Labeling**
No consumer-facing labeling or marketing.

**Consumer Recognition**
No consumer-facing labeling or marketing and no data on consumer recognition at this time.

**Livelihoods**
No specified price differential or payment requirement for partners, though supply chain partners develop strategies for grower recruitment and retention that may include financial or non-financial incentives that have included direct payment, cost-sharing, financial assistance, and technical or educational assistance.

**Cost Implications / Impacts**
The supply chain partners typically bear the cost of data collection and analysis and any incentives or assistance provided to participating farmers. The program is free for growers.

**Quality Perception / Implications**
No known quality implications.
ISCC is one of the leading certification schemes applied on a global scale for different feedstocks and markets. The ISCC principles for farms and plantations are a balanced set of ecological and social criteria. They include the protection of biodiverse and carbon-rich areas, good agricultural practices, safe working conditions, compliance with human labor and land rights, compliance with laws and international treaties, and good land management practices that encourage continuous improvement. In comparison, ISCC covers more sustainability requirements than other standards.

Producing Countries

40 producing countries. ISCC certification is applied in more than 100 countries (including processors and trading/storage).

They provide full traceability along the entire cotton supply chain from farms and plantations through to the final product. More than 50 ISCC certificates have been issued for cotton, covering both mills and hundreds of cotton farmers.

Each farmer has an average of 3-4 hectares of cotton. The fiber, seedcake and oil are all sustainably produced to strict standards. A changing sample of farmers is visited by an auditor every year. Each cotton mill is audited individually. The greenhouse gas intensity of cotton production and processing is also calculated.

Objective

ISCC aims to promote the implementation of deforestation free, environmentally, socially and economically sustainable production, as well as the use of certified fiber, food, feed and biomaterials in global supply chains.

Overview

ISCC is applicable to all field crops, including cotton. ISCC ensures that crops are not produced on land with high biodiversity and high carbon stock, good agricultural practices are applied to protect soil, water, air, and that human, labor, and land rights are respected. Supply chain traceability is ensured. There are specific approaches to help smallholders. Non-GMO certification and verification of GHG emissions are optionally available.
LCA Availability
No.

Water Consumption:
Water management plan required minimizing negative impacts on water quality and quantity. Water consumption must be monitored according to water management plan.

Primary Energy Demand:
Energy consumption must be monitored.

Global Warming:
Covered by certification add-on “Greenhouse Gas Emissions”.

Eutrophication:
Fertilizer balance or soil organic matter balance required. Further requirements on sustainable handling and application of fertilizers (e.g. only on absorptive soils, weather conditions to be taken into account).

Water Management
Best practices to maintain and improve water quality and quantity are applied:
- Respect of existing water rights.
- Application of good agricultural practice to reduce water usage and to maintain and improve water quality.
- Water management plans for efficient water usage during irrigation, responsible use of organic fertilizers and agro-chemicals, waste discharge.

Soil Fertility
Improvement of soil fertility is addressed through soil management plans, crop rotation, intercropping, plant spacing etc., avoidance of erosion and compaction through cultivation techniques. Certification add-on “Environmental Management and Biodiversity” available to further support farmers to conserve and improve soil fertility, water, and biodiversity.

Biodiversity
Land use change of land with high biodiversity or high carbon stock, is not allowed (cut-off date January 2008). Requirements to conserve natural resources and biodiversity on cultivation areas are applied. Certification add-on “Environmental Management and Biodiversity” available to further support farmers to conserve and improve soil fertility, water, and biodiversity.

GMOs Permitted?
Yes, but certification of non-GMO also possible. Non-GMO material must be kept segregated from GMO.

Use of Hazardous Pesticides

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
Permitted. However, fertilizer balance or soil organic matter balance and integrated pest management are required. Further requirements on sustainable handling and application of fertilizers (e.g. only on absorptive soils, weather conditions to be taken into account). Disadvantageous impacts of synthetic fertilizers (e.g. regarding GHG, energy consumptions) are specifically covered in add-ons “Greenhouse Gas Emissions” and “Consumables”.

Social Considerations/Regulations
Compliance with human, labor and land rights, as well as safe working conditions required on farm level, including: core ILO standards (no forced and child labor), no discrimination, freedom of association and bargaining, minimum wage, appropriate facilities and accommodation (if applicable) for workers and their families, etc.

Verification / Certification
3rd party certification. Physical Annual audit required annually for all individual and group certifications. Sampling possible for group certification of farms. ISCC carries out additional ‘integrity audits’ to check on auditors.

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
Two options possible: physical segregation or mass balance. Book and claim is not allowed.

Product Marketing / Labeling
On-product claims and ISCC logo use is encouraged for certified consumer goods available.

Consumer Recognition
Currently mainly business-to-business, but increasing application of on-product claims and logos for consumer goods and business-to-consumer communication through website, etc.

Livelihoods
A living wage is to be paid which meets at least legal or industrial minimum standard and that are sufficient to meet the basic needs of workers and provide some discretionary income.

Cost Implications / Impacts
Competitive fee structure for certification.

Quality Perception / Implications
No known quality implications.
myBMP is a voluntary farm and environmental management system which provides self-assessment mechanisms, practical tools and auditing processes to ensure that Australian cotton is produced according to best practice. The original BMP (Best Management Practices) program began in 1997 and was reviewed and redeveloped in 2006-07, with the new online myBMP system re-launched in 2010.

myBMP is the industry’s assurance mechanism, a best management practice system for growers to improve on-farm production. It attends to the industry’s requirement for risk management and supports industry’s social license. Through myBMP, all Australian cotton growers have a resource bank to access the industry’s best practice standards, fully supported by scientific research and development, resources and technical support.

By using myBMP’s tools, growers can improve on-farm production by:
- Better managing business and production risk.
- Maximizing potential market advantages.
- Demonstrating responsible and sustainable natural resource management to the community.

myBMP is the result of industry-wide consultation with growers, researchers and industry bodies, taking into consideration the requirements of the cotton industry now and into the future. The initiative is supported by the Cotton Research Development Corporation and Cotton Australia.

### Objective

To produce high quality, high-yielding fiber while sustaining the natural environment, people and regional communities.

### Overview

The myBMP (Best Management Practices) program is the Australian cotton industry’s environmental and social standard. To achieve full certification, growers must comply with more than 325 checklist items across 10 modules including soil health, water management, natural assets, pest management, energy efficiency and worker health and safety.

### Fiber Production (2016/17)

138,000 mt

### Market Share of Total Cotton Grown (2016/17)

0.6%

### Growth in Production (2015/16–2016/17)

↑125%

### Rainfed / Irrigated

77% irrigated, 23% rainfed

### Producing Countries

Australia.

Initiative data is referenced to Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2018 which is sourced from and verified by respective initiative. The market share indicated in this page is initiative dependent and may differ from what is outlined in Global Preferred Cotton Market due to overlapping programs between initiatives (i.e. BCI equivalency).
myBMP

LCA Availability
n/a

Water Consumption:
No LCA data.

Primary Energy Demand:
No LCA data.

Global Warming:
No LCA data.

Eutrophication:
No LCA data.

Water Management
67 criteria related to water management, 42% water use efficiency gain industry wide.

Soil Fertility
32 criteria related to soil health including: minimum tillage, crop rotation, soil testing, organic carbon, stubble retention, erosion and salinity prevention, fertilizer efficiency and plant monitoring.

Biodiversity
28 criteria related to sustainable landscapes, including: management of native vegetation and natural assets, improve habitat for biodiversity, assess and monitor native vegetation condition, stock exclusion.

GMOs Permitted?
Yes - regulated and carefully managed.

Use of Synthetic Fertilizer
13 standards relating to fertilizer efficiency including plant monitoring to assess requirements, pre and in-season nutrient budgets, monitoring and record keeping.

Use of Hazardous Pesticides
80 criteria related to pesticide management. More than 90% decrease in pesticide use industry-wide. Practices include IPM, compulsory training, pupae busting, farm mapping, weather monitoring, safe storage and handling.

Social Considerations/Regulations
All Australian cotton growers subject to high standards by law for fair work conditions, pay, health and safety. myBMP includes 49 criteria related to human resources and worker health and safety including 35 standards required by Australian law.

Verification / Certification (farm level)
Self assessment, third party verification and certification and spot checks.

Chain of Custody (supply chain)
Physical segregation and tracing possible, unique bar-code identifier on every bale tracking field to spinning mill.

Product Marketing / Labeling
In-store marketing and on-product label (own label or Australian cotton swingtag).

Consumer Recognition
Higher levels of awareness in Australia.

Livelihoods
No price differential paid directly to farmers - farmers paid based on prevailing market price and quality.

Cost Implications / Impacts
No price differential at point of sourcing; no membership or licensing fees.

Quality Perception / Implications
Consistently very high quality, amongst highest in the world across all parameters.
Focus on myBMP: The Burnett Family

“Two years ago our family cotton farm became accredited in the Australian Cotton industry’s assurance program myBMP. For many of the modules we were already achieving sustainability at a high level, however through the process we were able to improve some of our on-farm practices to an even greater level. This continuous improvement has become a linchpin for our family’s farming strategy. As Australian cotton farmers, we are proud of our sustainability efforts and believe it is important to promote this for advocacy, social license and most importantly, we want to be part of an industry that is building a reputation of responsible production of fiber for the world market.”

- Nigel Burnett “Colorada”
Emerald Queensland, Australia
The REEL Cotton Program is CottonConnect’s three-year agricultural program providing farmers with training on sustainable cotton farming practices. The REEL Code is used to verify that farmers in the REEL Cotton Program are using more sustainable practices, with additional program elements that ensure traceability and decent working conditions.

REEL, as one of the newest sustainability programs, has the lowest participation rate of all pCotton modules, and has a sector score of 46 for Section 2: Supply Chain. The sector is performing reasonably in Chain of Custody (40), Traceability (50) and Sustainability Investment (50).

Consumption (13) is the lowest within the pCotton modules. None of the REEL participants reported consumption data, and SMART Targets are not generally in place.

Consumer Engagement is an untapped area for REEL Cotton. REEL participants are not carrying out the full extent of consumer engagement activities. Product Marks and Labeling (13) was the one area of activity with participants communicating REEL Cotton usage on company websites and in corporate reports.

REEL cotton production was 29,997 mt in 2016/17.

**Producing Countries**
China, India, Pakistan, Peru.

**Objective**
To create more sustainable, traceable cotton.

**Overview**
The REEL Cotton Program is a three-year modular program for farmers with Sustainable Agricultural Practices (SAP) at its core. It has four key focus areas:
- Agronomic training
- Social mobility and engagement
- Supply chain verification
- Brand reputation

**Fiber Production (2016/17)**
29,977 mt

**Market Share of Total Cotton Grown (2016/17)**
0.13%

**Growth in Production (2015/16–2016/17)**
†143%

**Rainfed / Irrigated**
Mostly irrigated

**Yield**
Claims 9% average yield increase among REEL farmers compared to control.
REEL Cotton

- LCA Availability: n/a
- Water Consumption: No LCA data.
- Primary Energy Demand: No LCA data.
- Global Warming: No LCA data.
- Eutrophication: No LCA data.

**Water Management**
Promotes water efficiency. Claims 16% average reduction in water use.

- **Soil Fertility**
  Promotes soil health and nutrient management through crop rotation and composting.

- **Biodiversity**
  Promotes biodiversity conservation.

- **GMOs Permitted?**
  Yes.

- **Use of Hazardous Pesticides**
  REEL farmers are trained in pest management and reduction of harmful chemical use. Training is provided on organic pesticides (e.g. neem spray). Claims 40% average reduction in chemical pesticide use among REEL farmers.

- **Use of Synthetic Fertilizer**
  REEL farmers trained on crop rotation, composting and reduction in use of chemical fertilizers. Claims 20% reduction in chemical fertilizer use among REEL farmers.

- **Social Considerations/Regulations**
  Provides training to produce cotton with respect for Human Rights principles for decent working conditions: no child labor, application of health and safety principles, gender inclusion. Focus on women empowerment.

- **Verification / Certification (farm level)**
  Developed and verified by Flo-Cert (third party).

- **Chain of Custody (supply chain)**
  Bale preserved - procurement links to supply chain provided if required.

- **Product Marketing / Labeling**
  In-store and on-product marketing.

- **Consumer Recognition**
  Primarily business-to-business but in-store marketing.

- **Livelihoods**
  REEL farmers receive training to improve yields and profits. Claims 41% average increase in profit compared to control farmers.

- **Cost Implications / Impacts**
  Brand/retailer pays for service.

- **Quality Perception / Implications**
  No known quality implications.
Regenerative Organic Cotton

The Regenerative Organic Alliance (ROA) has brought together stakeholders across the natural products value chain – from farmers to brands, including those in the food, textile, and personal care product sectors – to push the regenerative agriculture movement forward. The launch of the Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC) standard earlier this year has introduced a paradigm shift in the landscape of agricultural certifications to encourage responsible farming practices based on the standard’s three pillars: soil health, animal welfare and social fairness.

Estimates suggest that the agriculture sector currently contributes 10–12 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. However, the Rodale Institute has projected that a widespread shift to regenerative agricultural practices could actually sequester more than 100 percent of annual global emissions from all sectors. The ROA and ROC are promoting a change in the industry to reduce emissions from farming and agriculture through practices such as conservation tillage, cover cropping, and more to build organic matter, biodiversity, and fertility in the soil. In addition to fighting climate change, the practices supported by the Regenerative Organic Certification help to build long-term soil health and fertility, protect biodiversity, treat animals humanely and ethically, and support social and economic wellbeing for farmers and workers.

The ROC has already garnered support from major brands in the natural products space. The nine ROA founding board members include representatives from Patagonia, Dr. Bronner’s, the Rodale Institute, and other pioneering farmers and organizations working in the food, textiles, and natural products industries. The ROC pilot phase attracted more than 80 applicants, with many more companies and brands continuing to express interest in participation. Currently, 22 pilots are underway in six different countries to test the ROC audit process, fine-tune the standard, and support the full launch of the program in 2019.

As the program grows, the ROC label on certified products also provides an avenue for farms and brands to engage with customers and consumers, spreading knowledge and support for products and practices that combat climate change. The potential to scale globally, contribute to farm welfare, and reduce agricultural emissions and sequester carbon make the Regenerative Organic Alliance’s work pioneering and transformative in the natural products industry.

More information can be found on the ROA’s website at regenorganic.org.

Photo Credit: C&A
Regenerative Agriculture: Rebuilding the Future

Elizabeth Whitlow
Executive Director, Regenerative Organic Alliance

What most excites you about the regenerative agriculture movement now?

Regenerative agriculture is the next necessary step for building healthy food systems and combating climate change simultaneously... and that is what excites me most.

It all begins with soil health. Since the rise of industrial agriculture systems, soil health has declined all over the world. In 2014, soil scientists estimated that one-third of the world’s topsoil – the irreplaceable foundation of planting food in the ground - had already been lost and that it could be completely gone by 2075. Other estimates suggest that the agriculture sector contributes 10–12 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. When we focus on sinking carbon through regenerative practices, we begin to actively reduce those numbers.

In addition, regenerative agriculture provides a means to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, by capturing and building carbon stocks in the soil instead of releasing them through tillage and erosion. This type of agriculture can provide a solution to mitigate climate change rather than add to the problem.

What’s most exciting are the pro-active steps being taken by leaders in food and fiber - from smallholder cotton and rice growers, to emerging and established brands - who are taking an interest and heeding the call of cleaning up supply webs. Ultimately, regenerative agriculture is exciting because it offers practical solutions to many of the ecological, economic, and social challenges farmers face today.

Are consumers becoming more aware and enthusiastic about the regenerative movement?

We recently attended the Regenerative Earth Summit in Boulder, CO - a gathering of industry and thought leaders in the field of regenerative practices and business. There was an awe-inspiring recognition that consumers are also leaders, as they demand transparency and are becoming increasingly aware of the “story” of how their food and fashion comes to be than ever before.

We’ve seen evidence that the millennial generation is the biggest group of organic food buyers in the U.S. and are more willing to pay a premium for responsibly sourced products compared to previous generations. Purchasing based on values – rather than low-cost “value” – is a growing trend, one that can be expected to extend to regenerative products. A recent study showed that 60 percent of consumers surveyed would consider shifting their purchasing to regenerative products if they knew the products were fighting climate change.

All of this promise and data – from the farmers to the brands to the those who purchase products – has spearheaded the creation of The Regenerative Organic Alliance (ROA), a coalition of like-minded farmers, ranchers, brands, non-profits and other organizations who oversee the Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC).

Do you foresee the regenerative movement becoming more popular with other consumer goods, like clothing and personal care?

It already is. From the masterminds behind the certification, to the brands in the Pilot - which include cotton growers and personal care brands amongst others, we are working holistically to move the needle on perception that regenerative organic agriculture is only for food. From plant-based textiles to leather, from raw coconut oil to the coconut-oil-based toothpaste, and of course, to all the food we eat that is grown and raised on home planet Earth, we have an opportunity to clean up nearly all the channels of our consumption.

What’s on the horizon for the regenerative movement in 2019?

In 2019, we will be wrapping up the first audits and developments for the Pilot participants for the ROC seal, which is going to be a tremendous milestone for the ROA. After that, we will begin to open application for the series of certifications of companies, growers, and products.

And you know what is so great right now? All of your readers can check out the standard for themselves. We encourage people to begin the journey with all of our brands and to start thinking about the full supply web of everything we eat, drink, and clothe ourselves with on a regular basis. We can do so much with this certification, and we can do so much more together in commune with the people.
Transitional Cotton

The demand for, and the benefits of, organic agriculture are clear. Evidence of the role organic agriculture plays, with its regenerative properties, means that supporting organic production by incorporating organic fiber into textile programs, are more important than ever. As the threat of climate change continues to intensify, the need for companies to use fiber grown with organic practices that fix carbon in the soil will only increase. A recent study, which looked at farming systems and pasture trials, claimed farmers could capture up to 100 percent of current annual global carbon emissions through organic farming using regenerative organic practices.

One of the biggest opportunities for increasing supply of organic lies in “transitional” cotton programs that support farmers through the years of conversion to organic certification. Building impactful business models - that share risk and reward - right from the start is critical to success.

The Process of Transition:

Transiting production to organic certification usually takes place over a 36-month (three year) period, unless using virgin land. It is an ongoing cycle of shifting conventional farming practices to an organic management system until the land qualifies to be certified organic under national or international organic standards.

During those three years, certification bodies (CBs) conduct annual audits as per international organic farming standards. If the farm is in compliance, a “Scope or Farm Certificate” (SC) is issued for year 2 and year 3 on transitional crops. The year 1 cycle does not have a Scope Certificate, but CBs must still develop an audit report.

During the third year of production, all pertinent crop production is considered transitional (in-conversion) output. Some standards (e.g. the Australian organic farm standard) have a provision to convert year 3 crops to organic based on performance of farmer/farmers group. In such cases, only year 1 and year 2 crops are considered transitional. Note: organic farm standards are developed nationally and requirements for transitional/in conversion may differ from one country to another.

Standards supporting Transitional Organic include:

Textile standards The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and Textile Exchange’s Organic Content Standard (OCS) accommodate both certified organic cotton and transitional fiber (i.e. fiber from farms undergoing transition to full organic status). Transitional standards Quality Assurance International (QAI) offers a “Certified Transitional” program, although to date, QAI has proved more successful with food than it has with fiber.

Global Organic Textile Standard

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) permits the use of transitional cotton in its finished products. Companies may label their products as “Organic – in conversion materials” or “Made with x % organic in conversion materials.” The minimum amount of transitional organic fiber content is 70 percent. See 2017 GOTS Labeling and Licensing Guide for details.

Organic Content Standard

Textile Exchange’s Organic Content Standard (OCS) verifies that the cotton in a final product is certified organic. The OCS allows “in-conversion” organic materials as inputs if the applicable farming standard permits such certification. All the materials entering the supply chain must have a Transaction Certificate issued by an accredited certification body. The OCS applies to products that contain from five to 100 percent organic material.

Certified Transitional

The Quality Assurance International (QAI) program includes categories for both food and beverages and textile products. QAI is one of the largest certification organizations in the U.S.A. QAI’s program enables products made using at least 51 percent certified transitional content to use the QAI Transitional mark on their textile packaging. From 25–50.9 percent, a transitional content claim may be made but the logo must not be used. The goal is that transitional farms become certified to organic standards in year 3 and graduate out of the program. No textile companies have become certified to the standard yet.

Textile Exchange, in partnership with Kering, is developing a Transitional Cotton Roadmap which will be made available soon. The Roadmap aims to support the sustainable growth of the organic cotton sector. It builds on the earlier work delivered through this partnership and provides a robust business model that benefits people and planet.
Looking Ahead
Our Newest Signatories

We warmly welcome and congratulate the newest members to the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge:

BRANDS

HEMTEX

MAYAMIKO

naturepedic®

EST 2009

RAMBLERS WAY

clothing for a good life

Reformation

MANUFACTURERS

orimpex

Pratibha
Resources

There is a plethora of information and resources available to you and your brand along the journey toward a more sustainable cotton supply:

The Cotton Up Guide from Forum for the Future:
cottonupguide.org

Planning An Effective Cotton Strategy:
textileexchange.org/materials-z/planning-an-effective-cotton-strategy

Cotton mapping to the SDGs:
textilesforsdgs.org/resources/insights

Information on Organic Cotton:
aboutorganiccotton.org

Information on Textile Exchange’s Organic Cotton Round Table:
textileexchange.org/organic-cotton-round-table
textileexchange.org/organic-cotton-round-table/ocrt-milan-2018

Textile Exchange Organic Cotton Market Report 2018:
textileexchange.org/downloads/2018-organic-cotton-market-report

Textile Exchange Preferred Fiber and Materials Market Report 2018:

Learning Resources for Preferred Cottons:
textileexchange.org/learning-center/preferred-cotton

Matrix of Preferred Sustainable Cotton Initiatives:
textileexchange.org/sustainable-cotton-initiatives-matrix

Textile Exchange’s Quick Guide to Organic Cotton
textileexchange.org/downloads/quick-guide-to-organic-cotton

Organic Cotton Accelerator
organiccottonaccelerator.org
About Textile Exchange

Founded in 2002, Textile Exchange is a global non-profit with more than 300 members that represent leading brands, retailers and suppliers – the quality and global reach of which has meaningfully accelerated the use of preferred fibers and increased the adoption of standards and certifications in the global textile industry. As an organization, Textile Exchange creates leaders in the sustainable fiber and materials sector by providing learning opportunities, tools, insight, standards, data, measurement and benchmarking—and by building a community that can collectively accomplish what no individual or company can do alone.

Textile Exchange members are connected to a powerful community of brands, retailers and companies, large and small, from across the textile world—all seeking to create a more sustainable and responsible fiber and materials industry. Members gain access to a suite of valuable tools, relevant data, insight reports, industry networks and connections—and, above all, the opportunity to take action, individually or collectively. Our goal is to help you succeed. Please join us in our collective journey!

textileexchange.org/become-a-member

Textile Exchange has three tiers of membership to suit your company or organization’s needs, including Friend, Supporter, Partner (Brand/Retailer) and Partner (Supply Network). Current Partner level members include:
THANK YOU M&S!!
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Thanks to our 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge Steering Committee

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Textile Exchange envisions a global textile industry that protects and restores the environment and enhances lives.

TextileExchange.org

To learn more about the 2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge, visit Textile Exchange’s dedicated webpage:

textileexchange.org/2025-sustainable-cotton-challenge

For the latest news and trends in the wider preferred fiber and materials landscape, go to Textile Exchange’s website:

textileexchange.org/materials