Agenda

Lunch sponsored by GAP Regional Development Authority, Turkey

13:00 – 13:45 Opening and Introductions

- VISION 2020 from Prabha Nagarajan, Textile Exchange
- Post Hong Kong – a brief update, Liesl Truscott, Textile Exchange
- Welcome from the Chair – Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Louis Bolk Institute and Waginengen University, Netherlands
- Introductions round the table (inc speed posting activity)

13:45 – 14:45 Showcasing Seed Projects

1. Agro-ecology Demonstration Plots for Seed Development (Mecilla, Inditex, TE) Tong Young, Mecilla, China
2. Seed Multiplication for Seed Security (CC, C&A, Pratibha, EcoFarms) Dhawal Mane, Pratibha, India
3. Seed Guardians Project (Chetna, Inditex, TE) Arun Ambatipudi, Chetna, India
4. Green Cotton Project (FiBL/bioRe/Chetna/University of Dharwad, India) Monika Messmer, FiBL, Switzerland
5. Participatory Breeding Program, Uganda (LBI, Agro-Eco) Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Louis Bolk Institute, Netherlands

14:45 – 15:00 Coffee Break

15:00 – 16:00 Exploratory Panel Discussion

Panel style Q&A – exploring the diverse seed landscape and future action from policy to commercial needs to partnerships and investment. This session leads into the breakout session which follows.

Panelist:
- Peter Melchett, Policy Director, Soil Association, UK
- Mans Lanting, Consultant, Netherlands
- Brent Crossland, Bayer Crop Science, USA
- Dylan Wann, Agrilife, USA
- Binay Choudury, CU India
- Monika Messmer, FiBL, Switzerland
- Prof. Patil, Darwhad University, India

16:00 – 17:00 Strategy for the Future of Seed in Cotton Agriculture

World Café style - Four strategy areas - outputs forms the basis of the task force strategic plan – this becomes a live document

17:00 – 17:15 Next Steps and Closing comments from the Chair

Task force next steps and action

17:15 – 17:45 Feedback

Join Open Forum for final part of meeting and feedback on highlights from both task forces
Edith Lammerts van Bueren has more than 25 years of experience in organic research and management. She is a pioneer in plant breeding and genetic resources for organic and low-input agriculture and has put this subject on the European agenda. She holds a chair at Wageningen University in the Netherlands as professor, Organic Plant Breeding, since March 2005. She is also senior researcher, Organic Plant Breeding, at the Louis Bolk Institute/Agro-Eco in the Netherlands; a research institute specialized in organic agriculture, health care and nutrition. Edith was co-founder and has been chair of the European Consortium for Organic Plant Breeding (ECO-PB) for 10 years, and is now chair of the Section Organic and Low-input Agriculture of EUCARPIA (European Association for Research for Plant Breeding). She is also active in the broader field of sustainability and chairs a Dutch interdisciplinary think-tank, at the Scientific Council for Integral Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition, which published their first report in 2012, see www.ridlv.nl.

Through supervising master students in plant breeding she became involved in setting up participatory cotton breeding approaches in Uganda in collaboration with Agro-Eco and Serrere Breeding Institute. She aims to build bridges between existing expertise among both farmers and professional breeders, and also to expand the commitment for cotton seed production and crop improvement.

Mans Lanting has an MSc Agronomy from Wageningen University. He has worked for government, NGOs, and the private sector. Mans was involved in designing and setting up Chetna Organic, a producer company that cultivates and sells organic/Fairtrade cotton. He also investigated the usefulness of Bt cotton for small scale farmers in Africa, for APROCA (African Cotton Producers Association).

Mans is convinced that the rapid spread of Bt cotton is a short lived boon to farmers which will probably be followed by a host of problems that are already visible on the horizon: resistance, new pests, reduced profitability, and too much dependence on one company. He is convinced that for all farmers non-GMO seeds should be available on the market, so that farmers have a choice.

Presently many disjointed small scale activities to produce seed are taking place. The criteria for selection of non-GMO cotton should include: capacity to create symbiosis with VAM and bacteria that solubilize phosphorus, fix nitrogen, etc. The main problem is that companies own the IP rights to the parent seed and that they cannot guarantee it is GMO free.
Dr. Monika M. Messmer

Senior Scientist for Organic Plant Breeding, FiBL

Dr. Messmer has studied Agrobiology at the University of Stuttgart-Hohenheim in Germany focusing on plant breeding and population genetics. In her PhD thesis she analyzed the genetic diversity of maize inbred lines using molecular markers. In 1993 she joined the wheat and spelt breeding department of the Swiss Research Station for Agro ecology in Zürich-Reckenholz in Switzerland and was involved in identification and application of marker assisted resistance breeding. In 1989 Dr. Messmer joined the Pharmaceutical Institute of Basel and the private startup company VitaPlant AG which develops and optimizes plant based medicinal products from the seed up to the pre-clinically tested standard extract. As head of the R&D Agro unit of VitaPlant AG she was responsible for the breeding programs and the domestication and cultivation of various medicinal plant species as well as for contract cultivation. In August 2008, Monika Messmer joined the Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FiBL) in Frick, Switzerland where she is responsible for plant breeding projects for organic agriculture.

Since 2011, Dr. Messmer has been guiding participatory cotton cultivar testing and breeding projects in close collaboration with the research team of bioRe Association and Kasrawad in Madhya Pradesh, and Chetna Organic, Odissa, and with the great support of Prof. S.S. Patil from the University of Agricultural Science, Dharwad in India. She was involved in the organization of the Dharward workshop on “Disappearing non-GM cotton – ways forward to maintain diversity, increase availability, and ensure quality of non-GM cotton seed” in June 2011 and at the workshop on “Breeding and supply of non-GM cotton seed” in Kasrawad in March 2013.

Dr. Messmer’s motivation to join the seed task force is to enhance the availability of optimized GM-free cultivars for the various farming practices and conditions. She supports alternative projects to the mainstream GM-focused plant breeding and all endeavors that improve the choice and the seed sovereignty of smallholder farmers.
Showcasing Seed Projects

Agro-ecology Demonstration Plots for Seed Development (Mecilla, Inditex, Textile Exchange)
Tong Yeung, Director, Mecilla Limited, China

Tong is a director of Mecilla Limited. He has over six years of experience in the sustainable agriculture and apparel industries. Tong and Mecilla are pioneers in developing sustainable farming in rural China with a network of farmers’ coops, agricultural experts, brands and designers.

This project is developing an innovative and eco-friendly system with a special emphasis on Mecilla demonstration farm as the nodal point of innovation, in the context of a community of farmer cooperatives in north-west China. Mecilla conducts scientific research and demonstrate bioverse farming in the community. In 2012, there were no non GM cotton seeds in Yongji, Shanxi, so Mecilla procured over 200 varieties of non GM cotton seeds. We planted them on two select spots in the community as well as on Mecilla farm. We identified 6 high performing varieties in 2013.

Photo: The Mecilla team
Dhawal Mane is a textile sustainability professional working with Pratibha Syntex Ltd, a vertically integrated manufacturer based in central India. Dhawal plays a key role in projects like environmental impact tracking and reduction, product footprinting, social responsibility; each aligning to position Pratibha as the global leader in sustainable textile products and practices.

Dhawal collaboratively engages to develop standards as the Secretary with ASTM International’s Subcommittee D13.40 Sustainability of Textiles and with The Green Signal – India’s first comprehensive sustainability eco-label – for its Textile Sector eco-labeling methodology (currently in the pilot phase). Along with these engagements, he enjoys teaching the subject of sustainability at The Handloom School, Maheshwar, sensitizing young handloom weavers. Dhawal’s prior experience includes working as an Associate Consultant with Wazir Advisors which involved conducting market research, consumer studies, and policy analysis for private and government organizations in the textile industry. He holds a Masters in Fashion Technology from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Delhi.
Arun Ambatipudi comes from the multi-cultural city of Hyderabad of India. He has more than 17 years of experience working in the rural development sector with local, international and inter-governmental organizations. Arun has worked on a wide range of development issues, starting with Disaster Management, Water & Sanitation, Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Agriculture & Rural Livelihoods and Value Chains involving smallholder farmers and landless workers from the rainfed regions. He is passionate about rainfed farming based livelihood issues and supporting the building of smallholder farmer centric supply chains and strongly believes in responsible and accountable innovations.

In the context of this initiative a ‘Seed Guardian’ is a farmer who has been trained and possesses the knowledge, skills, and ability to lead on the delivery of seed production. A Seed Guardian takes responsibility to improve seed security for her grower community; she provides advice, and supports the producer group to achieve seed security. Importantly, Seed Guardians are part of a larger scale multi-stakeholder network dedicated to improving seed choice, including seed breeders, producer groups, and other experts. To this end, organic cotton growing communities (particularly women’s cooperatives) will become less dependent on seed traders, and be secure in their supply of and access to, non-GMO seed.
Small farmers of the organic cotton sector face an acute shortage of GMO free cotton seed (free of genetic engineering) due to the wide-spread dissemination and adoption of genetically modified Bt cotton hybrids. India has a wealth of elite cotton germplasm of tetraploid and diploid species; however in recent years private breeding companies became more active and focus mainly on tetraploid species like G. hirsutum and G. barbadense. Main breeding goal is the development of Bt hybrids with high fiber quality and high yield potential under optimum high input farming conditions. Although the traditional diploid cotton species G. arboreum and G. herbaceum have several advantages with regard to pest and stress resistance, they are largely neglected after the introduction of Bt cotton and their cultivation dropped within 10 years from 20% to less than 5%. However, these cotton species might be specially suited for low external input conditions under organic farming.

Through close cooperation with the University of Agricultural Science Dharwad and two organic cotton organizations this gap shall be closed and decentralized cotton breeding initiatives shall be established, which remain GMO-free and meets the need of organic and low-input farmers. In an innovative transdisciplinary approach, smallholders, breeders, researchers, extensionists, spinning and textile industry will be actively involved from the very beginning. Overall objective of the project is to strengthen the smallholders by restoring their sovereignty of seed for organic cotton production.
In 2010, LBI and WUR started a low budget project with MSc students to work with farmers in the Lango and Teso Region, identifying the main constraints and the most desired variety characteristics. Several workshops were organized bringing interested farmers to the nursery of the NaSARRI Breeding Station. Farmers selected entries and marked them, and those they liked for some specific traits only. The marked lines were discussed with breeders and researchers. Most promising breeding lines were planted in a next study in two farmers’ fields to evaluate the performances of the lines under local conditions and on-station.

Farmers could quickly evaluate plants for multiple characters; this included traits that have additional effects on the plant’s ability to utilize resources (e.g., yield stability, branching), and on facilitating harvesting process (e.g., plant height).

Both farmers and breeders appreciated the exchange of ideas with respect to farmers’ preferred traits and breeders’ perspectives, and would like to continue.
Task Force Panel

Peter Melchett, Policy Director, Soil Association, UK

Peter Melchett has been Policy Director of the Soil Association, the UK’s main organic food and farming organization, working on campaigns, standards and policy, since 2001. He runs an 890-acre organic farm in Norfolk, with beef cattle and arable seed crops. He is a member of the BBC’s Rural Affairs Committee, and was a member of the Government’s Rural Climate Change Forum and Organic Action Plan Group, and the Department of Education’s School Lunches Review Panel.

As a former member of the House of Lords, he was a Labor Government Minister 1974-79, at the Departments of Environment, Industry, and Northern Ireland (covering education and health). He has been President or Chair of several conservation NGOs, including the Ramblers and Wildlife Link, and was Director of Greenpeace UK (1985-2000), and chaired Greenpeace Japan (1995-2001). Greenpeace launched their global campaign against GM crops in 1997, and Peter was one of 28 volunteers arrested for removing GM maize in 1999; all the volunteers were found not guilty in the subsequent court case.

Mans Lanting, Consultant, Netherlands

Mans Lanting has MSc agronomy from Wageningen University. He worked for government, ngo and private sector. Was involved in designing and setting up Chetna, a producers’ company that produces and sells organic/fair-trade cotton. He also investigated for APROCA (African Cotton Producers Association) the usefulness of Bt cotton for small scale farmers in Africa. See Mans full biog earlier in the program.

Brent Crossland, Bayer Crop Science, USA

Currently the Fiber Development manager for Bayer Crop Science, Brent has held numerous positions within the company and legacy companies Aventis and Rhone Poulenc. Those positions included product marketing and sales team management. He also directed the Mid-South and Western sales teams based out of Memphis, Tennessee and Fresno, California respectively. He has managed a portfolio of products on two different occasions from the U.S. headquarters in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. He currently oversees the Fiber Business Development programs from the global cotton headquarters based in Lubbock, Texas. Brent is a Texas native with degrees from both Texas A&M University and West Texas A&M University.
Dylan Wann, Agrilife, USA

Dylan Wann received his B.S. degree in environmental science from Abilene Christian University and M.S. degree in crop and soil sciences from the University of Georgia. During his master’s research, he worked on improving weed and disease control for organic peanut production. He is currently a third-year Ph.D. student at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX, under Jane Dever of the Texas A&M AgriLife Research Cotton Improvement Program.

Dylan’s current research focuses on developing insect-resistant, non-transgenic cotton varieties specifically geared for organic production. Using these varieties, he is also working to develop an organic-approved integrated pest management (IPM) strategy for managing thrips (Thysanoptera: Thripidae) pests, utilizing both resistant varieties and an OMRI-listed insecticide. After completing his Ph.D., Mr. Wann hopes to work in agricultural development abroad, with a focus on smallholder organic agriculture. He is passionate about organic cotton and about increasing the diversity of non-transgenic varieties and germplasm available for both organic growers and breeders alike.

Binay Choudury, Control Union, India

Binay has a Ph.D (Agriculture) in Soil Science & Agricultural Chemistry with specialization in Pesticide Residues. He worked as a Technical Manager and Head for the Regional Centre Food Research and Analytical Centre, Bangalore in the 2001 and then shifted his focus towards research in feed additives by joining a US based multinational organization called KEMIN.

Dr Choudhury joined Control Union in March 2005 and is currently working as General Manager and Head of the Textile Division for Control Union India. Mr Choudhury has extensive knowledge on organic cotton and organic textile certification in various countries. He has been awarded several national and international awards, fellowship for research and is involved as advisor for various entities. As a certification expert, he has audited more than 500 farms and 1000 textile projects related to organic cotton in various countries.

Monika Messmer, FiBL, Switzerland

Dr. Messmer has studied Agrobiology at the University of Stuttgart-Hohenheim in Germany focusing on plant breeding and population genetics. In her PhD thesis she analyzed the genetic diversity of maize inbred lines using molecular markers. In 1993 she joined the wheat and spelt breeding department of the Swiss Research Station for Agro ecology in Zürich-Reckenholz in Switzerland and was involved in identification and application of marker assisted resistance breeding. In August 2008 Monika Messmer joined the Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FiBL) in Frick, Switzerland where she is responsible for plant breeding projects for organic agriculture (see Monika’s full bio, earlier in the program).
Dr Shreekant S Patil is a Cotton Breeder from the University of Agricultural Sciences Dharwad, India. He holds a PhD in Genetics from IARI New Delhi, and a Diploma from CIMMYT Mexico. He has completed three decades of teaching Population Genetics, Quantitative Genetics and their application in Plant Breeding. He has guided 5 PhD and 22 MSc (Agri) students and is on the editorial board of leading national journals on Plant Breeding. He has been working on Development and exploitation of Heterotic groups for improving performance of hybrids in Cotton.

Dr Patil has released over ten cotton varieties and hybrids for different Indian regions. He is currently engaged in breeding and development of cotton genotypes suitable for organic situations in India. He has teamed up with a few organic cotton producer groups and International institutes such as FiBL to support meeting the non-Bt seed needs of Indian organic farmers. Potential Non GM varieties both normal and compact cotton genotypes, hybrids involving different cotton species, developed by Dr Patil are being tested and identified for different organic regions through farmers participatory approach. These efforts are meant to empower groups of organic farmers with self sufficiency for seed needs. Dr Patil is working for maintaining species diversity in the cotton ecosystem. He is keen on supporting similar seed movement in other regions in India and other countries.

Dr Patil has been raising concerns on policy changes and strategies required for promotion of organic cotton and showing how organic non GM cotton cultivation is also required for the very survival of GM technology.
**Task Force Hosts**

**Liesl Truscott, European and Farm Engagement Director, Textile Exchange**

Liesl is passionate about holistic approaches to sustainability. She has a first class honors degree in Environmental Management from Newcastle University in Australia. She has spent over twenty years in various areas of sustainability; including corporate responsibility, occupational health & safety, and environmental management systems – and now specializes in organic cotton. Liesl sits on the UK Soil Association’s Textile Advisory Committee and is a member of the Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change (RTOACC) co-ordinated by the FiBL. Liesl is a New Zealander living in the UK with her husband and two fine sons. As a mother, Liesl advises her local school on the integration of sustainability in the curriculum.

**Prabha Nagarajan, Regional Director, India, Textile Exchange**

Prabha Nagarajan has bachelor degrees in sociology and law, and a master’s degree in business management. She has held senior positions in the public and private sector in India and has been actively involved in textile sustainability for the last 14 years. Since March 2006 she has been the Regional Director, India for Textile Exchange and in that capacity has played a vital role through the journey of organic cotton in India.

Since 2008, Ms Nagarajan has raised the issue of the expected shortage of good quality seed for organic cotton cultivation and been part of continuous efforts to highlight this and seek policy changes as well as bringing stakeholders together to create synergies and support them in being proactive. She is deeply appreciative of being a part of this global task force and hopeful that only good can come from these efforts, whether it is seeking self-sufficiency, enhancing bio diversity, countering monopoly or simply ensuring the right of choice for millions of farmers around the world.

**Alice Dos Santos, Former intern at Textile Exchange and B.A.Sc. student, Van Hall Larenstein University, the Netherlands**

In 2013, Alice worked for 5 months as an intern with the Farm Engagement team at Textile Exchange. Alice got her background as a qualified technician in agronomy in her native country in France. She is currently in her last year of bachelor in applied sciences at Van Hall Larenstein University (Wageningen, the Netherlands). She is studying Fair Trade specialization in International Development Management, focusing on building sustainable business models and fair trade in agricultural value chains.

Concerned about the issues of sustainability in fashion, Alice is particularly interested in cotton cultivation and the textile industry. During her placement in Peru with Textile Exchange, she did a small research on seed supply interviewing the organic Peruvian producer groups and several actors of the textile industry.
## Task Force Participants

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History of the Round Table

The Seed Task Force evolved from a Call to Action by Textile Exchange in 2012. There were a number of concerns raised in that year’s Farm & Fiber Report; including seed security and the need to improve the business/investment model. During the global textile sustainability conference that year in Hong Kong, Textile Exchange held the inaugural meeting of the “Organic Cotton Round Table” in collaboration with Fairtrade International. The meeting was an open forum style get-together for all conference delegates interested in finding out more and working towards solutions. The Seed Task Force was born at that meeting.

This year our Round Table meeting in Istanbul includes two task force meetings, focusing on our formalized priorities: seed security and business models. The second part of the meeting – and open forum - will be dedicated to our nominated third area of focus: consumer engagement.

Seed Task Force

Aim
Co-create a pre-competitive platform for the development of a seed strategy which protects and enhances the security of supply of cotton seed compatible with organic (and other non-GMO) agriculture.

Objectives
• Strengthen a network of stakeholders through the work of a seed task force.
• Share experiences, learn from each other, and communicate learning to escalate scale and accelerate action.
• Build a task force strategic plan that is global but tailored to address challenges and find solutions at a local level.
• Develop a framework for financial investment and partnerships.
• Share achievements and develop a culture of optimism - building on success!

More Information

• More on the Organic Cotton Round Table online here
• Briefing note on Seed (pdf)
• Seed discussion summary from Hong Kong Meeting (pdf)
• Audio presentation: Monika Messmer, FiBL and expert advisor to the seed task force (Hong Kong) here
• Audio Presentation: Jane Dever, AgriLife and expert advisor to the seed task force (Hong Kong meeting) here
Textile Exchange inspires and equips people to accelerate sustainable practices in the textile value chain. We focus on minimizing the harmful impacts and maximizing the positive effects of the global textile industry. Our signature program focuses on organic cotton value chains; improving lives for farmers, stimulating markets, and supporting best practice.

Website: farmhub.textileexchange.org/

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