



Engage

Connecting organic cotton farming communities



Life is a journey... as is the evolution of our Engage newsletter... Our 20th Issue of Engage brings you a new 'look and feel' - we hope you like it! More importantly we hope you find it much easier to jump in and out of various stories and links, and navigate around our website. Our previous version of Engage (in pdf) works well for members of our community with restricted access to the internet but it was less embedded in our Farm Hub and as a result past issues got buried soon after publishing

We, do of course, remain just as committed to reaching everyone on our mailing list and happy to keep providing you with a pdf version. We are also just as committed to producing Engage in both French and Spanish. These non-English language versions will be available in the same way as they have always been and emailed to you directly. If you are not on our mailing list and wish to be alerted to the release of each Issue of Engage please do not hesitate to email us: farm@textileexchange.org

In addition to the Engage newsletter we also publish regular updates on the Farm Hub, click [here](#) to read more.

Best wishes,

NEWS AND VIEWS

2011 Organic Cotton Market Report - Just Released!



The 2011 Organic Cotton Market Report is here and available for *free* download. Get ready to read about the highs and lows of 2011 – truly a year of contradictions. This Report continues vital conversations that were underscored at the Organic Cotton Roundtable during our most recent Sustainable Textiles Conference in Hong Kong.

For the first time, we are offering this report free of charge. Our decision to offer it at no cost is driven by the importance of the findings. *We all* need open access to this updated and vetted information so that we can implement systemic changes. We invite you to read the report, share it with anyone and everyone who has a hand in building a more sustainable textile industry and then talk with us – it's only through two-way conversation that we'll discover the tipping point for the changes we need to see.

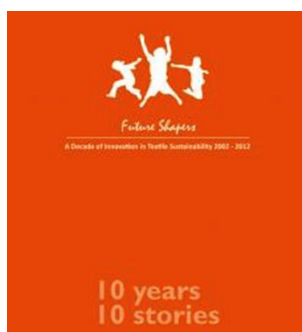
To download the report click [here](#).

Hong Kong



The 2012 Sustainable Textiles Conference was a huge success! In attendance were 330 guests representing 36 countries and the entire textile supply chain. Visit the [Textile Exchange website](#) for highlights from the conference.

Future Shapers



To help us celebrate ten years of Textile Exchange we asked ten of our member companies to take us on their journey to share their stories of commitment to people and planet, their work in organic cotton, and their wider sustainability agendas. A commemorative book, compiling all ten Future Shapers, has now been published and launched at our 2012 Sustainable Textiles Conference in Hong Kong. Order your copy [here](#).

Read all about our Awards Ceremony and more about each Future Shaper [here](#).

Inspiring Moments Calendar



Also available now is the Inspiring Moments calendar. Order your copy [here](#).

When you purchase our beautiful calendar for 2013, you are helping us raise the visibility of organic cotton and the people behind the product. All proceeds go towards building farm capacity. Currently we are focusing on supporting organic cotton seed projects. Receive more information by visiting the [farm hub](#).

Organic in Action

Organic in Action

OBEPAB, Benin:
Farmers contributing to technology that improves yields

The latest Organic in Action story posted on the farm hub chronicles the work of The Organisation Béninoise pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture Biologique (OBEPAB), one of the pioneers of organic cotton production in Africa. Read more [here](#).

New Learning Tool



Visit the farm hub to download an excellent and detailed overview of Remei's approach to business in a presentation delivered by Simone Seisl. This is no 'business as usual' account of textile production: from the growing of the organic cotton, to the socially and environmentally sound manner in which textiles are manufactured. You will hear how Remei go that extra step both up and down the supply chain and are at the forefront of breakthrough innovation (such as carbon 'insetting', and product tracking). To read more and to download the presentation click [here](#).

Textile Exchange Organic Round Table



We were very pleased to have such a great turn out for the Round Table meeting in Hong Kong a couple of weeks back (if you could not make the meeting or wish to refresh your memory you can see more about this [here](#))

Next Steps

We are currently working on a Round Table strategy going forward and would welcome all comments and suggestions. If you are interested in either contributing to the development of the Round Table or would simply like to find out more, please do not hesitate to contact us on farm@textileexchange.org.

Global organic cotton campaign launched by the Soil Association and GOTS



The world's first global organic cotton campaign launched at Textile Exchange's Sustainable Textiles Conference on October 4th. Speaking at the Conference in Hong Kong, Peter Melchett – the Soil Association's policy director – asked textile industry leaders: “Have you cottoned on yet?”

Worldwide demand for organic cotton is set to grow by at least 10% in 2011-2012. Without commitment from brands, it is farmers who bear the social, environmental and economic risks associated with cotton production. The campaign is launched by the Soil Association and the Global Organic Textile Standard

(GOTS), the leading standard for organic textile processing.

Consumers, manufacturers, brands and NGOs are urged to “cotton on” to organic by signing up on the new micro-site www.cottonedon.org, uniting supporters of sustainable cotton across the globe.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Seed Freedom: A Global Citizens' Report



A global citizens report on 'seed freedom' written collectively by more than one hundred organizations, experts, activists, farmers and grassroots level movements all around the world was released by Navdanya on October 2nd at the India International Center during Bhoomi 2012, a festival arranged by an organisation celebrating seed sovereignty and womanhood. The report is also the launch of the global campaign on seed freedom which will focus on stopping seed laws that are preventing farmers from saving and exchanging their native varieties. The campaign also aims at reversing the absurd practice of patents on seed.

The Report depicts the concentration and restrictions in the global seed sector as a result of Intellectual Property Right and corporate convergence. It also captures the movements in the defence of seed freedom in different continents including America, Africa, Europe and Asia. Moreover, the report features the voices from the grassroots - detailing, for example, the cultural implications of corn in the Andes region, the efforts of women farmers in India to keep their traditional seeds alive, and the description of seed systems in Africa.

Prominent personalities working in the seed and food sovereignty sector include Pat Mooney, Jack Kloppenburg, Salvatore Cecarelli and many more, all have contributed to the Report.

The Report is released by feminist scholar and human rights activist Dr Ilina Sen. Dr Vandana Shiva, Founder and Director of Navdanya, Blanche Magariños, Environmental advocate and activist, Kusum Panigrahi, Navdanya, Odisha, Farida Akthar, UBINIG, Bangladesh and Sarita Kumari, Ghanerao Foundation participated in the event. From the 2nd October (Gandhi's birthday) to the 16th October (World Food Day) an intensive fortnight of action was organized across the world. During this period the Global Citizens Report on Seed Freedom was released in Paris, Rome, the UN head quarters in Geneva, Stuttgart, Istanbul, and at the CoP of the Biodiversity Convention at Hyderabad.

The report can be downloaded from: <http://navdanya.org/news>

More information on Seed Freedom is available here: [Seed Freedom campaign http://seedfreedom.in/](http://seedfreedom.in/)

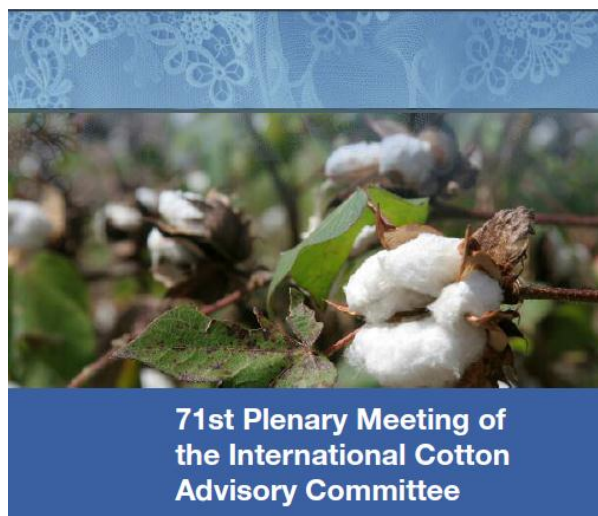
SPECIAL FEATURES

Cotton Industry Turns the Spotlight on Sustainability

The 71st Conference of the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) was held in Interlaken, Switzerland from the 8th to the 12th October 2012. Close to 500 participated in this unique Conference, *Shaping Sustainability in the Cotton Value Chain*. The meeting shone the light on issues pertaining to sustainability in the cotton value chain and sought to engage stakeholders at all levels,

including that of Governments. Several Governments were represented, as were important Non Profits, brands and retailers, and trade representatives.

Welcoming remarks were made by the State Secretary, Marie Gabrielle Ineichien-Fleisch, who spoke of Switzerland's pioneering role in addressing sustainability, and that 5% of her consumption was organic. She pointed out cotton was spun in Basel as far back as the 1780s and that the first regulation against child labour was adopted in Switzerland in 1864. She welcomed the discussion on issues of sustainability in cotton, and spoke of Switzerland's support of initiatives to improve practices in cotton growing, and to 10,000 cotton farmers in Kyrgyzstan and West Africa. Ms Ineichen-Fleisch drew the attention of the multi-stakeholders present to the fact that cotton leaves a much bigger environmental footprint than required and that farmers in producing countries remained poor.



Jens Soth of Helvetas was also invited by the Chair, Mr Terry Townsend of ICAC, to make welcoming remarks and he set the context by speaking of a shrinking world, the reduction of arable land due to issues like soil degradation, salinization and erosion, and reminded the audience that sustainability is not a luxury. Jens Soth spoke of Helvetas' aim to contribute to poverty alleviation and introduced the audience to the World Cafe that was scheduled for the 8th Oct. His definition of sustainability as "a *Good life today and an even better one tomorrow*" was perhaps one that appealed most to many members of the audience. Jens Soth also spoke of the impermanency of balance, and of the need to constantly find it.

Gilles Dana of Switcher, Switzerland, made crucial mention of the role of retailers and brands in achieving sustainability in cotton, and also made a call for more transparency at each point in the value chain and respect for all the players in the value chain. He said Switcher has focussed on producing garments with respect and transparency since 1981, and offers information to the customer on each of their products environmental footprint.

The delegate from the USA, hosts of the 69th meeting, extended thanks to the organisers and sponsors and said that the agenda of the meeting was not a destination, but a journey and that plenty of work had to be done to achieve the goal of sustainability in cotton, and that goals for the next five years should be set.

ICAC recognised two distinguished researchers, Dr Andrew Paterson of the USA, the current chair of the International Cotton Genome Initiative and Dr Yusuf Zafar, a biotechnologist who had contributed to the cotton industry in Pakistan with more than 30 years of work in the Public Sector.

The Inaugural Session was followed by the First Plenary Session, with Statements from WTO, UNCTAD, FAO, ITC, and others and by statements from member countries.

The **First Open Session** on Monday the 8th October had the theme "*Sustainability in the Cotton Value Chain: its meaning relative to cotton: how does it apply in developed and developing countries, producing and consuming countries.*" Chaired by Peter Otterson, the session had interesting presentations. Berrye Worsham of Cotton Inc, presented a Life Cycle Analysis of Cotton, touching upon LCA, Higgs Index and the shrinking footprint of US Cotton, with 30 years of improved environmental management. Allan Williams of SEEP, Australia, spoke of the achievements in sustainability work in cotton. He raised the question of the levels of performance that defined sustainable production and said that profitability is a critical issue of sustainability. He said that benefits delivered to cotton farmers should have outcomes and should be measured. This session evoked interesting responses, such as "*how is the industry going to see engagement? How is recycling measured? What data do we have on second hand clothing?*" The most interesting

comment was with reference to the powerful role of collective action, and the importance of brands and retailers in ensuring sustainability.

Alejandro Plastina of ICAC presented an overview of “*Identity Cottons*” in the **Second Open Session** on the 8th “*Preparing the Cotton Industry for the challenges of the Century*”. His session titled “*Report on Production Initiatives*” attributed the growing awareness about rural poverty, climate change, and sustainability as the reason for the emergence of 4 major Identity Cottons: Organic, Fair Trade, Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), and the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI). He outlined and reviewed each one of them and drew comparisons. He also mentioned some of the challenges faced by each. Mr Plastino said that 2.2% of total world cotton was from the 4 sustainability initiatives. Textile Exchange was quoted as the key reference for the data regarding organic cotton.

Alejandro’s provocative final comments as to who are the real beneficiaries of Identity Cottons drew interesting responses from the Reactors of the session: Frank Eyhorn from IFoam, Roger Peltzer from CmiA, Damien Sanfilippo from Fairtrade International, Lise Melvin from BCI, and Mark Messura from Cotton Inc USA.

This session also had a key presentation from Andreas Engelhardt of The Fiber Year GmH, Switzerland who spoke on the long term challenges in fiber demand. Cotton currently has 30% of the fiber market compared to almost 50% plus for man-made fibres. The long term outlook depends on structural changes in the textile market, consumer awareness in the direction of sustainability, raw material availability; inter fibre competition and competition for arable land. According to Andreas Engelhardt, if business as usual continues “*we would collapse in 30 years*”.

The **Third Open Session** on Tuesday the 9th of October, focused on “*Responsibility in the Cotton Value Chain, the Roles of Producers, Commission agents, Merchants, Input Manufacturers, Textile mills and Retailers*”. Simone Seisl from Remei AG gave a summary of examples for responsible actions along the chain and successful partnerships from their experiences in India and Tanzania. Many in the audience were surprised at the level of commitment demonstrated by Remei AG in Ms Siesl’s lucid presentation. Henrik Lampa from H&M gave an overview of H&M (2500 stores in 44 countries with 700 suppliers), and spoke of H&M’s seven commitments to sustainability, key of which was their commitment to be ethical, to use natural resources responsibly, and to strengthen communities from where they sourced.

The **Fourth Open Session** on the 8th October was the World Café, which was excellently organised by Helvetas with Riff Fullan at the helm. The World Café concept is designed to promote participatory dialogue in an informal and stimulating setting. Riff Fullan explained to the moderators that the World Café methodology is basically:

- Modelled on a real café where small numbers of participants sit at tables
- They discuss a topic, then most move to a new table to continue
- The movement provides opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas

The Konzerthalle was set up with 35 to 40 tables with 12 chairs per table, grouped by language. Each table was covered with flipchart paper and had several markers so participants could draw pictures and write notes as the discussion went on. The World Café sessions were organised in two rounds of approximately 40 minutes each, with a specific question for each round which were:

World Café Round 1: What are the key factors that influence sustainability in the cotton sector at national, regional, global levels?

World Café Round 2: What can governments do to promote sustainable cotton?

The outcomes from the World Café were summed up by three people and formed the basis of the discussions for the 6th Breakout Session: *The Role of Governments in Facilitating and and/or Promoting Organic Cotton, Fair Trade Cotton and BCI.*

The session that followed was the **Fifth Open Session** that discussed *Cotton Supply, Use and Prices*, which had the ICAC present a paper on the subject, followed by an excellent presentation on *Chemical Fibre Outlook* by Bruna Engel of PCI Consulting, UK.

Other interesting sessions that followed on the 10th and the 11th Oct, included a technical discussion on *Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and the Role of Private Breeders*. There was a general concern about the withholding of IPR by seed companies.

Tools and Platforms for Sustainability and Traceability

An *Open Session on Tools and Platforms for Sustainability and Traceability* which was chaired by me (Prabha Nagarajan of Textile Exchange). The session was designed to give the audience an overview of certification and standards and emerging new tools and had brands from Switzerland explain their experience and approach to sustainability.

This session started with Oliver Von Hagen of ITC, an agency of the UN which enables business success globally, outlining a Standards Map, showing existing standards. His online demonstration of the standards was an excellent start to the session. The next presentation was made by Fritz Brugger of the Syngenta Foundation. Fritz presented "*FarmForce*" - an online mobile application and tool for farmers that enabled them to stay connected to the world of agronomy, markets, and many other resources.

Daniela Suter of Migros Genossenschafts Bund, the largest retailer in Switzerland, having been in business since 1925. She quoted their founder Gottlieb Duttweiler, as saying "*The bigger an enterprise, the bigger its obligation to contribute, beyond the commercial aspects, to solving the problems of mankind.*" She outlined three main hypotheses that Migros believed in:

1. Responsible Companies will gain their Customers Trust
2. Transparency and Traceability are a Must
3. Responsible Partners will be Partners of the Future

Listening to Ms Suter, one could understand how long term vision and a belief in sustainability played a huge role in the long and successful innings that Migros enjoys as one of Switzerland's most trusted retailer.

The last presentation was from Heinz Zeller of Hugo Boss, who outlined the strategy behind the sourcing of Hugo Boss and their commitment to quality, fashion and sustainability.

Action and Ensuring Sustainability

The last day of meetings on Thursday the 11th October saw discussions on "*Action Steps to a Green Economy*", and "*Ensuring Sustainability for Natural Fibres through Demand Enhancement*". The session was lively and touched upon many aspects of cotton, such as the important role of designers in decisions around fibre choice, the evolving nature of the debate around sustainability, why consumers of textiles do not want to pay more for a sustainably produced piece of clothing, and why natural fibre was subject to so much scrutiny when synthetic fibres had virtually no scrutiny at all!

That sustainability could no longer be a marketing tool, and what can you change in cotton so that companies can stay ahead rather than behind were some interesting asides that one heard.

At the end of four days one could feel the consensus building around the fact that the industry does need to have a larger, more enveloping vision of humanity if cotton was to survive in the next decades. This was a big movement from a very sceptical, almost suspicious view of the conference theme of Sustainability which could be inferred on day one!

A huge achievement indeed, for Terry Townsend and his able team from ICAC, and the co-sponsors and partners, especially Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. One left Interlaken with a hope that good

things were beginning to happen in cotton, and that governments and other stakeholders would drive change rather than rely on a few innovative movements in cotton and the leadership of a few individual companies to trigger sustainability.

Reported by Prabha Nagarajan, Regional Director India, Textile Exchange

REGIONAL UPDATES

AFRICA

Innovation for Food Security, Climate Change Adaptation, and Poverty Alleviation



Syprobio is a research project led by FiBL and funded by the European Union with the objective to identify, test and disseminate innovative technologies, practices and strategies for food security, adaptation to climate change, and poverty alleviation in the cereal-cotton belt in West Africa.

The project covers three countries (Benin, Burkina-Faso, and Mali) and brings together national research institutes (INRAB, INERA, and IER), the NGO Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, and farmers' organizations (U-AVIGREF, UNPCB, and MOBIOM).

The project relies on a transdisciplinary approach by cross-fertilizing different aspects of scientific knowledge (agronomy, sociology, economics, and entomology) with farmers' knowledge. In this frame, many participatory research-development activities have been initiated to improve soil fertility and pest management techniques and to clarify the economic performance of organic and conventional cereal-cotton production systems.

Comparing Organic and Conventional Cotton Production Systems in West Africa

In Benin, the team in charge of the economic comparison of organic and conventional cereal-cotton production systems is constituted of researchers from the University of Parakou, the national agricultural research institute of Benin (INRAB) and farmers' groups producing cotton under organic and conventional systems.

The team held a methodological workshop in September in Parakou (North of Benin) to further define the methodology of this comparative socioeconomic research. One important methodological consideration is that data should be collected directly along with farming operations during the season to avoid reliance on farmers' memory and to strengthen direct observation by the researchers in the field. Moreover, to ensure that all categories of farmers are considered, the sampling is preceded by a characterization of research areas and farmers according to agro ecological and socioeconomic criteria. As a result, three research areas have been selected: the bordering area of Pendjari reserve (Batia), Banikoara (the biggest cotton basin in the north of Benin, and Aklamkpa (one of the most experienced organic cotton production zone in the centre of Benin).

The expected outcomes of this research are: a) One master thesis on “economic comparison of gender differences in organic and conventional cotton production systems”, b) One master thesis on “comparative assessment of the impact of organic and conventional production systems on farmers’ living conditions” (Regarding this aspect, the quantitative key performance indicators developed by Textile Exchange are used as a methodological framework), c) A detailed farm budget under organic and conventional production systems of cotton in Benin, and d) One peer reviewed article on the economic comparison of organic and conventional production systems of cotton in Benin.

Outcomes, in their entirety, should be considered as input for a global policy brief that will be made available at the end of the research activities.

For more information on this initiative, please contact Laurent GLIN (email: glinlaurent@yahoo.fr) See Rural 21: the international journal for rural development ([Vol. 46](#)) for a full outline of the benefits of organic agriculture and an up to date snapshot of the latest research.

Reported by Silvere Tovignan, Regional Director Africa, Textile Exchange

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We hope you enjoy reading Engage. Please feel free to contact any of the team, we welcome your feedback and ideas for improvement.