



Dear Friends



Welcome to Issue 22 of our Engage Newsletter - our first for 2013. In this Issue both our India and Latin America special features provides insights into government supported technical assistance programmes for cotton. From Africa, Silvere continues the theme with his report on government policy in Benin and its effect on organic cotton in West Africa. Also in West Africa, our Helvetas colleague Lazare Yombi brings us news of an exciting textile and jewellery exhibition in Benin.

The first few months of the year has seen the Farm Engagement team working hard at collecting data for our Farm and Fibre report, as well as our new Sustainability Impact Assessment study. Both reports are scheduled for release in April-May. If you are a farmer and not a member of Textile Exchange please contact Hanna (hanna@textileexchange.org) and join now! This will ensure you receive our reports as soon as they are

available.

We also launched our Collaborative Learning Series in January: *Rethinking and Reshaping Sustainable Sourcing*. This all important series consists of online blog discussions and webinars featuring guest speakers. Over the course of the year we will explore new and exciting theories and practices contributing to a more holistic sourcing regime, with social and environmental sustainability at the core. Contact Brittany (brittany@textileexchange.org) and become a collaborative learner. Farmers and members can join for free. We really do have a fabulous line up of panellists joining us. Take a look [here](#). I hope you will join the discussion in time for the next topic discussion and webinar where we will be focusing on Holistic Value Chains.

Meanwhile, enjoy this month's issue of Engage and if you enjoyed our range on initiatives in 2012 you can relive the year in pictures [here](#)!

Best Wishes

Liesl Truscott
Director Farm Engagement
Textile Exchange

News and Views



NEW Collaborative Learning Series - Focus on Sourcing

Between now and the next **Round Table on Organic Cotton** at our **conference** in Istanbul, Textile Exchange will be bringing you a unique opportunity to explore sustainable sourcing in a new and innovative way. Our exciting Collaborative Learning Series titled *Rethinking and Reframing Sustainable Sourcing* covers six related topics and consists of blogs, thought pieces, and live conversations. A new topic will be introduced every month. We see this program as potentially an incubator for rethinking and reframing sustainable sourcing of raw materials in the textile industry (with an emphasis on cotton). - Your participation will be the key to its success!

Rethinking and Reframing Sustainable Sourcing is a collective effort – a safe place and space to hear from your peers and other practitioners and to take a peek into the value chains at play in other industries. We hope you can take away ideas and inspiration to help make your business – and the world at large - a better place.

We will be inviting TE members and friends – from all walks of life - to share their expertise via our Q&A style webinars. It's here that you will be privileged to join first-hand conversations with our guest presenters and knowledge experts... plus the chance to ask your questions directly. To register for our webinar conversations contact Brittany: Brittany@textileexchange.org.

Rethinking and Reframing Sustainable Sourcing is centred on six webinars and each topic is introduced with a thought-provoking blog. The first two webinars in the series covered **Creating Shared Value** and **Measuring Sustainability**. Topics to come are:

- Holistic value chains: moving from disconnection to integration
- Three Dimensional Profit & Loss: will this be the next big thing
- Role of Certification: how to make it more than a piece of paper
- Telling the story: is communications the biggest missed opportunity yet

[Click here](#) to find out more about the six topics and to meet our webinar panellists.

Texas Observer – Seeds of Discontent



7th February: Eva Hershaw writes about the challenges faced by organic cotton farmers, of co-existing with genetically modified cotton, drawing on the experiences and insight of LaRhea Pepper.

"Under current patent law, organic farmers are responsible for keeping genetically modified varieties out of their fields. Failure to do so puts farmers in violation of patent law and exposes them to a potential

lawsuit, and should the contamination exceed 5 percent, it could cost them organic certification.”
Read the full article [online](#).

More Reading: The past few months has seen a number of well written and informative articles on organic cotton production – visit our [News Archives](#) to see what’s been in the news.

Farm Hub Latest News

A reminder that we update our 'Latest News' column regularly – to keep in touch with a range of breaking news items don't forget to visit us regularly <http://farmhub.textileexchange.org/#new>

All 'Latest News' has been carefully archived in our Farm Library for your convenience. To recap on 2012 click [here](#).

New Resources

Soil Association 2013 Organic Market Report



20th March: Soil Association 2013 Organic Market Report reveals significant areas of growth in organic sales.

The Organic Market Report published by the Soil Association on the 20th of March, highlights key areas of growth in online retail, independent outlets and a shift towards younger consumers during 2012.

Overall, the market has dipped by 1.5% as the UK continues through its most challenging economic downturn for many decades. In the Report Foreword, Rob Sexton Chief Executive of the Soil Association says the UK government is "out of step".

"European sales of organic products have increased by more than 25% since the start of the global economic downturn in 2008. Our government has much to learn from its European counterparts, who back the organic sector strongly through a combination of environmentally based producer support, firm

targets for public-sector procurement of organic, and investment in promoting organic products." says Rob Sexton
However, the report predicts a positive future for the UK organic market.

Read the [Report Summary](#) or download the [Full Report](#).

WorldWatch Institute reports on Organic Farming



30th January: New research conducted by the Worldwatch Institute shows that the global land area farmed organically has expanded more than threefold to 37 million hectares since 1999. Organic farming is now established in international standards, and 84 countries had implemented organic regulations by 2010, up from 74 countries in 2009.

Taking into account that the majority of population growth is concentrated in the world's poorest countries, it is to be expected that sustainable food production will become increasingly important in developing countries. Find out more and purchase the full report [here](#) or download the [Report Summary](#).

Third World Network

TWN is an independent non-profit international network of organizations and individuals involved in issues relating to sustainable development, the South and North-South relations.

It was set up in 1984 with the objective to promote the interests and perspectives of the South by conducting research on economic, social and environmental issues pertaining to the South; publishing books and periodicals; organising and participating in meetings; and providing a platform to broadly represent Southern interests and perspectives at international fora and processes such as the United Nations. Visit the TWN website: <http://twinside.org.sg/>

About TWN News Among TWN's activities is to disseminate information on the various issues it is working on through the TWN News information service. This is a free service that sends out news, reports of meetings attended/organized, research reports and other announcements to NGOs, government officials, research institutions/universities, media and individuals around the world.

The topics covered are:

- Climate Change
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Health
- Free Trade Agreements
- International Trade
- Finance
- Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge

Subscribe to News: <http://twnnews.net/index.html>

Special Features

Nice To Meet You!

We are excited to introduce our new intern at Textile Exchange...



My name is... Alice Dos Santos

I live... in Wageningen in the Netherlands and I will move soon to Lima for a few months.

I am ... student in the Fair Trade Management Bachelor in Van Hall Larenstein (the former applied part of Wageningen University) and the new intern in the Farm Engagement Team! Despite I am studying in the Netherlands I am French (I was born in Annecy close to the Alpes).

I'm passionate about... clothes and fashion but about agriculture too. I like

how agriculture gathers the biology, the economic and the social areas. I particularly enjoy understanding what the nature can offer us and how we can respect it in return, how plants grow, how ecosystems run but also what the farmers' needs are and how work the agriculture markets. That is for my scientific part, my artistic side likes the beauty of clothes and how fashion is a splendid way of expression. That is why I found the cotton crop and the textile world the perfect match.

I believe that... the textile industry can do much better with sustainability. I am convinced art, industry and environment can go and do amazing things together. I think making the textile industry more sustainable is one of the most fascinating challenges nowadays. The good thing is that sustainability in cotton production can only improve.

My ambition is... to participate in contributing to make fashion more sustainable and in convincing the textile industry to help the farmers reducing chemical uses and managing better the water resources and even one step further to encourage them to go organic and stop using GMO.

Right now I am... enjoying my first steps in the Farm Engagement Team and in the sustainable textile world. I am also getting ready for what comes next which is going to Peru and working with Alfonso with cotton producers of Latin America.

Hasta luego!

Regional Updates

AFRICA

Organic Cotton & Government Policy in West Africa: Benin enters a new age

During the season 2012-13, the Government of Benin withdrew all agreements regarding the intervention of the private sector in the industry of the country. Many people saw this as a highly political action, through the making of this decision, to put a number of opposition leaders in difficulty. The Government itself explained this decision with two arguments: a) the miss management of 12 billion FCFA provided by the Government as subsidy of cotton inputs during the season 2011-12, b) the lack of trust between the Government and the private sector regarding the collection, management, and the communication of cotton sector statistics.



Previously all operations (inputs provision, extension, crop finance, marketing, etc.) necessary for cotton production and sales were led by the SONAPRA (the Government company in charge of the cotton sector).

Organic cotton sector stakeholders have been worried about the future of organic cotton in Benin, because, since 1996 when they started promoting organic cotton in Benin, they have never experienced a direct intervention by the Government. In November 2012, the various organic cotton farmers' associations started discussing with Government officials about options to market their cotton under the new scheme where the entire cotton sector is managed by the Government alone.

During the weekly meeting of the Government, on the 13th February 2013, the price of organic cotton was fixed after the consulting meetings with stakeholders. For the transition season of 2012-2013, a kilogram of organic seed cotton is now being bought at 332 FCFA including 20 FCFA/kg as contribution to the sector management. Farmers then receive 312 FCFA/kg (almost the fair-trade minimum guarantee price) of organic seed cotton and are paid directly just some weeks after the transportation of the cotton to the ginneries. Farmers cannot hide their satisfaction of such a quick intervention in the marketing of organic cotton. The organic cotton fiber will be sold by the SONAPRA.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and OBEPAB, the two NGOs that promote organic cotton in Benin are surprised (but pleased) by this new support from the Government in the marketing of organic cotton. The positive feelings of these promoting NGOs have for them two important meanings: first, farmers are paid quicker and these NGOs no longer need to wait for the cotton to be sold before paying the farmers and this can potentially improve their relationship with farmers. Second, they are no longer responsible for the marketing of organic cotton and can give their energy to other areas of the sector such as ensuring seed quality, improving communication and extension methods and tools. However, the promoting NGOs are still sceptical about the continuity of this intervention over time and show their availability to collaborate with the Government on this.

The Government set new objectives to the organic cotton sub-sector: a) to increase the production of organic cotton to 1,000 tons during the season 2013-2015 and b) to progressively extend the production of organic cotton to all cotton production zones of the country. These ambitious objectives are like a new age for the development of organic cotton in Benin.

Image: Farmers discussing marketing with their field agent in Aklampa



Reported by Silvere Tovignan
Regional Director Africa
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AFRICA (cont.)

An Exhibition with A Difference



More than ten years ago in West Africa, Helvetas got closely involved in the management of natural resources. To promote organic agriculture with cotton as a starting point and to confer an added value of raw materials by local and artisanal processing was one of the challenges to address.

After organic cotton production began in Benin, in 2012 HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation supported the local promotion of the fibre through the AFVA NGO and small artisan business people: in particular, Silvia Bairardi Valenghi (sbaiardivalenghi@gmail.com) who is dedicated to design and the search for markets. She is a jewellery lover and she has gained significant experience in the sector through many years spent in Africa and Asia. Each of the creations which wear the brand label **CAMELEON** represents a story for her, a feeling, and references to her travels. Through her design activities, she often collaborates with Mariane Montaut (niarela.rue420@hotmail.com).



Mariane has lived and worked in Mali (West Africa) since 1998. She likes to combine culture and savoir-faire. She created her textile design studio under the name of **Niarela rue 420**, which is also the brand label of her creations. She designs and makes her original pieces. These decorative tailor-made items are made from 100 percent cotton, hand-spun and woven. Mariane benefits from a strong textile design experience. She won the first prize of the itinerant exhibition "Design Made in Africa", "Prix de la créativité au SIAO" in 2004 and 2010.

Mariane and Silvia like to work together; they show complementary and convergent ideas. Fighting for the local value creation of raw materials particularly in West Africa is their challenge. Both of them think that raw materials processed and commercialised locally to a local customer base contribute to supporting the green movement. To achieve this it involves training artisans, using different channels and having a bit of patience to provoke interest.

In the search for markets and to raise interest, Silvia and Mariane started an exhibition about textile products and jewellery in Cotonou, Bénin. This important and unique event was held in la Maison Rouge, boulevard de la Marina, Résidence CENSAD LAICO. Exhibited products were made from



organic cotton which was grown in Mali or in Benin by smallholders in farmer groups and which has been hand-spun and woven by small scale artisans.

Over the course of four days, more than two hundred people with various monthly incomes, from different ethnic groups visited the exhibition place decorated with taste by Mariane and Silvia. They have been delighted with the experience and enjoyed the great success. Talking about it Silvia said

"Now, I can see from the success of the exhibition, that by word of mouth it is truly possible to mobilise people for such an event..."

This exhibition will be added to further fairs such as: le Salon Maison & Objets of Paris in France; Biennale des Arts de Dakar in Sénégal, Salon International de l'Agriculture de Ouagadougou (SIAO) in Burkina Faso, the exhibitions "Eloge d'Ocre et Bleu" and "S.O Macine" at the Musée National du Mali; the exhibitions "Bogolan" and "Vision d'Afrique" at the Centre d'Art Graphique de la Métairie Bruyère.



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INDIA

Indo-African Forum and the Cotton Technical Assistance Programs



The genesis of the Cotton Technical Assistance Program (TAP) for Africa and the India Africa Co-operation was the WTO, Geneva. This initiative of the Government of India was under the aegis of the 2nd India Africa Summit and took initial shape in Ethiopia in the year 2009 when a large technical delegation from India visited and assessed possible areas of support from India. The initial countries chosen were the Cotton-4 countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali, where cotton had a huge role in the economy, and declining incomes in cotton had a major impact on the lives of millions of cotton farmers and the countries' economies. Uganda, Nigeria and Malawi subsequently joined the C4 countries.

The TAP aims at strengthening the cotton sector in African countries through interventions for transfer of technology for improved productivity, post harvest practices, enhancing downstream competence and capacity building of stakeholders. The programs are designed on the needs and requests from the African countries.

The words of the Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh are well worth reproducing here:

"India will work with Africa to realise its vast potential. We believe that a new vision is required for Africa's development and participation in global affairs. We do not have all the answers but we have some experience in nation building which we are happy to share with our African brothers and sisters."

The Implementing Agencies for the TAP are the Department of Agriculture and Co-operation, the Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology (CIRCOT), the Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR) and IL&FS, a leading institution for development of SME clusters specialising in value chain development. The experience and technological skills of the Indian cotton and textile industries would be transferred through a series of interventions that is believed would be of high value to the African countries. The main thrust areas would be Production Technology, Extension Mechanism, Post Harvest and Textile Industry Exposure and Value Chain Strengthening. Other important areas would be Support for Policy Design Frameworks, IT enabled networks for crop improvement and investment promotion.

According to Dr Milan Sharma of the IL & FS, New Delhi, almost 108 scientists from these seven countries have received exposure and training since the inception of the program. The targets include training of over 600 scientists and 2500 farmers and extension workers. Recent programs include a training event at CIRCOT and a training program in CICR Nagpur on Production Technology. Special mention must be made about the training program on Organic cotton Farming held by the CICR, Coimbatore for 6 scientists from Uganda, on the request of the Government of Uganda. According to Dr Prakash, Head of the Institute, the five day program from Jan 21st to 25th 2013 covered the basics of organic cotton farming, lectures on third Party Certification, exposure to lectures on the best use of land in rain fed organic farming and inputs management. There were field visits to gins and farms.

"For the Ugandan participants this training was an eye opener." says Dr Prakash. "They had seen nothing except cotton growing and even the visit to the Gin was a new experience."

According to Dr Milan Sharma, future programs planned for 2013 and 2014 include several visits by Indian technologists to the African countries for transfer of technology support, setting up of 'Regional Knowledge Cluster cum Training Centre on Post Harvest & Ginning Technology' by CIRCOT, development of a (ICT based) Pest & Disease Surveillance System by IL&FS and NCIPM, promotion of "Appropriate Agricultural Implements" and setting up of a 'Bio-pesticide Production unit' in Uganda by CICR.

A long program of 120 days training under the DOCD (Development of Cotton Directorate) is also under preparation. All expenditure for travel and other expenses are being met by the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India. Without a doubt this inter regional co-operation in the area of cotton will prove to be a role model in sharing, learning and creating synergies. India's spirit will undoubtedly inspire the African cotton sector and offer opportunities to millions of our African fellow farmers. It is our fond hope that the organic cotton sector in Africa would also continue to benefit from this interregional co-operation.

Image: Field visit to Organic Cotton Farm, Nagpur, Maharashtra (credit: [TAP For Cotton](#))



Prabha Nagarajan

Regional Director India
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LATIN AMERICA

\$20 million project aims to transfer Brazilian know-how in support of cotton farmers



A new South-South cooperation agreement was signed on the 17 October 2012, at the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation's Rome headquarters. According to FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva, the agreement comes as an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of South-South cooperation between developing-world partners as a vehicle for sustainable economic growth. South-South cooperation aims to strengthen the rural development and agricultural livelihoods. Participating countries targeted will receive technical assistance and training in best practices in cotton cultivation and marketing.

\$20 million will be invested to channel Brazilian expertise in cotton production to other developing countries. The four year collaborative effort will take place between FAO, the Brazilian Cotton Institute (Instituto Brasileiro del Algodón, IBA) and the external cooperation wing of Brazil's Foreign Relations Ministry (Agencia Brasileña de Cooperación, MRE). The initial focus will be on Haiti and the MERCOSUR zone of South America, with a possible later extension into other developing countries in Latin America and Africa.

Image: Cotton collecting centre in Brazil where cotton is separated from the seeds before being compressed and stored.

For further details

visit: <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/162607/icode/> and <http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc.html>



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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.