Specialty Cotton Report

SPECIAL ISSUE
Invited articles from leading identity programs
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This special issue covers the invited articles from some leading Identity Programs. The authors have provided detailed information about their programs, production areas, and future work, amongst others. I hope you enjoy reading all these articles.

We welcome comments and suggestions: Parkhi@icac.org

Happy Reading!

Parkhi Vats
Commodity
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In the 2000s, cotton growing in Brazil ‘migrated’ from the northeast region to the Brazilian Midwest. The national spinning industry was already well-established, and this meant the opportunity arose to supply the domestic market by reducing imports and expanding our own cotton production. This was a dual mission. First, we searched for technologies to enable crop rotation in the Cerrado, which is the predominant biome in the Midwest. With the support of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa), we began to overcome the challenge. The second challenge was to overcome the impact caused by the boll weevil - an insect that had devastated large swathes of crops in the northeast and southeast of Brazil.
At the same time, we needed a farm management model where worker contracts would meet the requirements of labour laws. A new way of growing was required and the solution we found was to farm in a responsible and professional way. Very soon, we realised that we needed to unite and invest in professionalization. The Brazilian Cotton Growers Association (Abrapa), in existence since 1999, became essential for us to restart cotton cultivation. The big leap came in 2012 with the launch of 'Brazilian Responsible Cotton' (ABR), a national socio-environmental certification program. This is a story of overcoming obstacles, investment in science, and a huge commitment to responsible farming. The results came quickly: In 10 years, Brazil became the second largest exporter and main supplier of certified cotton to the world.

Tropical climate - It hasn’t always been an easy job. After all, here in Brazil we grow cotton in a tropical climate using a production system that is different from that adopted in countries with a subtropical or temperate climate. In practice, we discovered that the only way to grow on a large scale with high quality was to combine environment sustainability with good agricultural practices. The cotton growing areas cover just 0.2% of the total national territory. The states of Mato Grosso and Bahia stand out, accounting for 90% of the estimated cotton planted area for the 2022/23 crop.
Having a tropical climate and being in the Cerrado, means that 92% of our farming area uses the natural rainfall pattern. Only 8% of our production requires supplementary irrigation. In Brazil, there are no farms that use 100% irrigation for cotton growing. The tropical climate, combined with the use of modern technology, allows us to have two full crops in the same agricultural season. For the summer crop, planting takes place during the rainy season (which begins in October and lasts until December) and the harvest takes place in February and March. January is the main time for sowing in the areas that opt for double cropping. Genetic seed improvements helped to provide cultivars that efficiently adapt to both the first and second crops. In the 2021/22 season, 63% of the cotton area in Brazil was grown as a second crop. In the state of Mato Grosso, which is the largest cotton growing state in the country, 87% of its farming area was double cropped to make the most of the natural rainfall cycle. Mato Grosso, which is also a major soybean growing state, begins planting cotton right after the soybean harvest.

2022/23 season—Just as we went from the second largest importer of cotton to the second largest exporter in the space of approximately 20 years, we remained resilient when faced with the global scenario of unfavourable prices. So much so that for the current season (2022/23), Abrapa forecasts our cotton production at 3.018 million tonnes. This is a volume that corresponds to an increase of 20.9% compared to the previous harvest. If the estimate is confirmed, it will be the second time in history that we achieve this landmark. The first time was in the 2019/20 season. Of equal importance to the recovery of production volume was achieving this with certified social, environmental, and economic responsibility. Adherence to this Brazilian production model is high. In the 2021/22 season, 86% of our production was certified by the ABR program and our goal is for this percentage to continue to grow.
All of this is only possible because the ABR protocol reflects the modern Brazilian way of farming that is now widespread throughout the country. When it was set up by Abrapa in 2012, ABR unified several farming and management practices that were already in place across the country and added innovative sustainable practices. Today, when a bale of cotton is produced on an ABR farm, it means that it was grown with respect for people and in an ethical and environmentally responsible manner. In the beginning, ABR focused mainly on social criteria. At that time, the main aim was to ensure that Brazilian labour legislation was being complied with by the farms. We have come a long way since then and our good labour relations practices now also cover outsourced professionals who work on the farms.
Over the years, the focus has broadened to include environmental management requirements, such as the preservation of native vegetation. More recently, the search for better agricultural practices has intensified and now includes quality no-till sowing, action to improve soil health and the rational use of inputs. Currently, the ABR program consists of a long checklist with 183 verification items, covering social, environmental, and economic aspects. Of this total, there are four criteria that require compulsory full compliance. These are important values for Brazilian farmers which we will not relinquish, and they are as follows: the prohibition of child labour, the prohibition of slave labour or slave-like labour, the right of workers to associate freely, and the prohibition of any discrimination. In terms of the environment, the gains have been clearly visible. The certified farms are in full compliance with the Brazilian Forest Code. As a result of this each cotton farm has an ecologically responsible area. Depending on where a farm is located, between 20% and 80% of the farm area must be preserved to maintain the native vegetation and the riparian forests along rivers, streams and around rivers sources and springs.

This means that the wildlife can live safely within its native habitat. ABR is a voluntary standard and when a farmer joins the program, the farm goes through a diagnosis phase to establish where the farm is in compliance and where improvements need to be made. The checklist acts as a kind of compass that points towards responsible production. Abrapa trains and guides participants annually with the support of state producer associations spread throughout Brazil. Also, every year, the properties are visited by a team of external and independent auditors who verify in-loco that the ABR protocol is being followed. If the final report is positive, the farm gains ABR certification. In the 2021/22 season, the third-party companies responsible for auditing the protocol were ABNT, Genesis and Bureau Veritas.
Better Cotton
Soon after its creation, the ABR protocol gained a strategic partner: the global sustainability program Better Cotton, which propagates good cotton farming practices on a global scale. Better Cotton is the main socio-environmental protocol in the world cotton market and the ABR protocol covers all requirements, meaning our way of producing is aligned with the international cotton market. Currently all farmers approved in the ABR program are eligible for Better Cotton licensing. This partnership has been so successful that in 2021 Brazil supplied 42% of the global volume licensed by the Swiss institution.

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<th>Better Cotton Production (volume in millions of tonnes)</th>
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<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total BCI</td>
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<td>Brazilian Share (%)</td>
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Source: BCI, 2022

The Future-Year after year, the ABR program is updated and improved. Currently, the certification program gained two additional protocols which cover the cotton ginning stage (ABR-UBA – cotton ginning units) and the container stuffing terminals (ABR Log). This means we will be including more links of the Brazilian production chain in our social, environmental, and economic requirements. But there is still a lot to do over the coming years. We are currently engaging in the monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions during the production stage to better understand our carbon footprint and mitigate emissions. We continuously research and develop alternatives to conserve and improve soil which promotes biodiversity in the countryside.
Brazil is seeing a rapid expansion in the use of biological crop protection products in Brazil, which lead to a reduction in the use of chemical pesticides, providing beneficial effects for the health of the soil, people, and the environment.

The Brazilian government, with the support of Abrapa, is also working with partners to help smallholder cotton farmers both in Africa and poorer regions of Brazil, through technology transfer, with a special focus on women in farming as an important mechanism to keep families on their farms. What we can say for sure is that Brazil will continue along the path of sustainability. We constantly seek to meet the challenges of tropical farming, investing in innovation and science, and focussing on continuous improvement so that our agricultural production remains in the global forefront, growing for a better future for all.
The environment is in danger, climate change is at a tipping point, and the majority of cotton farmers and farmworkers are in some of the world’s poorest, worst-affected countries. This is why the world needs Better Cotton. Since Better Cotton was founded in 2009, we have been working to help cotton communities survive and thrive, while protecting and restoring the environment. Today, we are the world’s largest sustainability initiative for cotton. We are driven on by the realisation that Better Cotton is not a commodity, but a cause shared by everyone who cares about cotton and its sustainable future. We want to support farming communities socially, environmentally, and economically.

Our journey began in 2005, when, as part of a round-table initiative convened by WWF, a group of visionary organisations came together to make sure cotton had a sustainable future. Initial support came from organisations including adidas, Gap Inc., H&M, ICCO Cooperation, IKEA, International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), International Finance Corporation (IFC), Organic Exchange, Oxfam, Pesticide Action Network (PAN) UK and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). In 2009, after a period of research and consultation, Better Cotton was launched. In the 14 years that have followed, we have been joined by stakeholders who span the industry to be our partners. Farmers, ginners, spinners, suppliers, manufacturers, brand owners, retailers, civil society organisations, donors, and governments, adding up to more than 2,500 members in the Better Cotton network.
These members buy into our approach of supporting farming communities to produce cotton in ways that improve things for everyone, and everything connected to it. Along with our extensive network of partners and members, we are making cotton farming a more climate-resilient, environmentally friendly and responsible business. Our holistic, farm-level approach to improving cotton production is the key.

Through our partners, we train an ever-growing workforce in more sustainable farming practices. Not only farmers but farm workers and all those connected with the growing of cotton. This 360-degree approach to growing cotton and improving lives and livelihoods is as relevant to the tiniest smallholding as it is to the largest industrialised farm. For smallholders, it can mean an improved crop and reduced costs. For farm workers and farming communities, it can mean decent work, gender empowerment and less inequality. For farmers operating on an industrial scale, it can mean embracing new and more innovative practices, where sustainability translates into profitability.

We achieve this through the Better Cotton Standard System, a framework designed to ensure the exchange of good practices and encourage the scaling up of collective action to establish Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity. A critical component of this system is the Better Cotton Principles and Criteria, which lay out the global definition of Better Cotton through seven guiding principles. By following these principles, Better Cotton Farmers produce cotton in a way that is better for themselves, their communities, and the environment.
Under these Principles and Criteria, Better Cotton Farmers minimise the harmful impact of crop protection practices; promote water stewardship; care for the health of the soil; enhance biodiversity and use land responsibly; care for and preserve fibre quality; promote decent work; and operate an effective management system. We review our Principles and Criteria at least every five years in line with our commitment to continuous improvement, with the latest version set to be released imminently.

However, these principles are just one element of the Better Cotton Standard System. Through our Capacity Building and Assurance programmes, we train farmers to produce Better Cotton and help them to meet our Principles and Criteria. Our Chain of Custody connects these farmers to companies that source Better Cotton, while our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning programme ensures that we are delivering the intended impact. Lastly, our Claims Framework supports credible communications about Better Cotton by providing powerful and accurate information from the field.

Working with close to 70 different field-level partners to bring all these components together, we continue to reach more and more of the world’s cotton-farming communities. Over 2.9 million farmers in 26 countries now have a licence to sell their cotton as Better Cotton. Today, almost a quarter of the world’s cotton is produced under the Better Cotton Standard, and in total our programmes have reached almost 4 million people whose working lives are connected to cotton production. Helping them to enjoy better yields, improved working conditions and greater financial security has been transformative.
Where Better Cotton grows is not only a matter of geography. In Australia, Brazil or the United States, a farm can be an industrial operation. In parts of Africa, India, or Pakistan it can be a smallholder working on less than 20 hectares of land. What matters is that as a global standard, wherever Better Cotton is grown, it drives progress against the environmental, economic, and social criteria that we have set. For the same reason, we also recognise equivalent standards, successfully benchmarked against our own, in a range of territories including Australia and Brazil.

Our aim now is to build on Better Cotton’s position as a global, mainstream, sustainable commodity. To achieve this aim, in December 2021, we launched our ambitious 2030 Strategy. We have selected five impact areas, which will act as drivers of change for continued improvement in farming practices: climate change mitigation, soil health, pesticide use, smallholder livelihoods and women’s empowerment. These target areas have been chosen for their global relevance and because they are closely linked to several other areas, meaning progress here will lead to progress elsewhere. We will be releasing our impact targets in these areas over the coming months. Working to achieve these targets through our 2030 Strategy, we will continue towards our goal of transforming the sector, making cotton better for the farmers who produce it and for all those who have a stake in the future of the sector. To find out more about our mission and how we are helping cotton communities survive and thrive whilst protecting and restoring the environment, head over to our website.
For more than 15 years, the Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) label has capitalized on the growing global demand for sustainably produced cotton to help millions of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa secure better living conditions in a healthier environment. Today, 40 percent of the cotton produced in Africa has been verified according to the CmiA criteria. It is more than just a seal of origin. It stands for 715,000 metric tons of cotton traded at market price yet produced in an ecologically sustainable and socially responsible manner. This makes CmiA one of the leading sustainability labels in the cotton sector and one of the most successful origin and quality labels in the agricultural sector.

Photo credit: Martin J. Kielmann for CmiA
The history of CmiA - important milestones

In 2005, the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) was founded by the German entrepreneur Prof. Dr Michael Otto. His goal: to use the know-how of his company, the Otto Group, a globally operating multichannel retail and services company, to increase the demand for African cotton and thus to improve the precarious living and production conditions of African cotton farmers.

To this end, a comprehensive list of criteria for the CmiA standard was initially developed in collaboration with experts from development cooperation and environmental protection as well as from the Wageningen University in the Netherlands. The next step was to win leading African cotton companies as cooperation partners for CmiA. These cotton companies brought their contracted smallholders into the initiative. Finally, a verification system was developed, and the standard was being implemented in cooperation with the GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation.) In 2006, the first pilot projects were launched with around 100,000 smallholder farmers in three African countries.

The AbTF oversaw the coordination of network activities, the development of the brand and the acquisition of new members for the demand alliance, the core of CmiA. Since 2016, CmiA has been operating with almost no public subsidies or donations. The label is financed by the license fees paid by the 66 members of the demand alliance to be allowed to sell around one billion garments per year with the CmiA label.
Principles, procedure and goals of CmiA

"Africa is a continent of proud nations and finally deserves our respect" says Michael Otto and declared from the beginning cooperation and partnership as well as help for self-help to be the principles of CmiA. Global trade instead of charity brings about change for the better, based on a "symmetry of discussion" of all actors. The primary goal of CmiA is to improve the living and working conditions of smallholders and their families in an intact environment. In addition to reducing economic risks, the resilience of smallholder structures to the consequences of climate change is to be strengthened through ecologically sustainable production of cotton.

Cotton plays a key role in the

fight against poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, retailers and fashion brands purchase CmiA-labeled cotton at market prices through their textile value chains and pay volume-based license fees to CmiA for the use of the label. With these fees, CmiA finances third-party verification, agricultural training, and social projects.

The CmiA advantages

In 2013, there were 25 million CmiA-labeled textiles on the market; by 2022, this number grew to one billion. In view of such figures, it is clear that the goal of "Cotton made in Africa" is not just a niche but can appeal to the mass market. This can be achieved by involving as many players as possible along the entire production chain - from the producer to ginners, retailers, and brands. This, in turn, is only possible because so many players at all levels are convinced of the advantages of sustainably produced CmiA cotton. CmiA gives the hitherto anonymous commodity a face.
Benefits for international manufacturing and trading partners:
For companies in the Demand Alliance that include cotton traders, spinning mills, fabric and textile producers, and international retailers, sustainably grown *CmiA cotton* helps them reduce the environmental impact of their business as well as meet government requirements, for example under supply chain laws. At the same time, it makes it easier for them to achieve their internal environmental and social sustainability targets. They can also use the *CmiA label* on their products and in their communications to signal their global commitment to consumers and investors. *CmiA* also offers members of the Demand Alliance to invest their CSR budget in projects of the *CmiA Community Cooperation Program (CCCP)* and thus generate immediate positive impact. *CmiA* works closely with the demand alliance global procurement teams. *CmiA* retail and brand partners can use two Chain of Custody systems: The *CmiA Mass Balance system (MB)* or the *CmiA Hard Identity Preserved system (HIP)*, which allows cotton to be traced from the final product to the growing region and gin.

Benefits of *CmiA* for producers:
The *CmiA* model enables farmers to optimize their cultivation methods and produce socially and environmentally sustainable cotton. Through agricultural training initiated and conducted by *CmiA* and the cotton companies, smallholder farmers are supported in increasing their yields, improving the quality of their soils, reducing operating costs and minimizing the use of pesticides. The social projects of the CCCPs further improve their quality of life.
Implementation and verification of the *CmiA* quality criteria

In the implementation of the sustainable *CmiA* criteria, the cotton companies occupy a key position. These *CmiA* partners have good management skills and are willing to invest in training for the farmers. In return, the growing productivity of farmers improves the profitability of their business. Furthermore, *CmiA* supports the cotton companies in organizing training for the farmers and in implementing the standards. The cotton companies usually already have extension workers who work in the farmer communities and organize the purchase of the crop. These advisors go through trainings to train farmers in groups. The training material provided by *CmiA* focuses on sustainable cotton farming practices where diversification and crop rotation play an important role as well as topics like water stewardship, biodiversity, soil fertility and IPPM. To apply the content easily by users regardless of their education level it is designed with pictures, cartoons, and videos. The *CmiA* standard complies with state-of-the-art requirements for sustainability standards and is composed of four pillars: Management, People, Planet and Prosperity. In addition, each level includes exclusion criteria, e.g. child labour, as well as criteria that can be met incrementally, e.g. the proportion of women among trained farmers. External auditors not only examine compliance with exclusion criteria, but also the continuous improvement process.

Facts and figures

*Cultivated area for CmiA-labeled cotton 2022:*

- 1.825.000 hectares
- 715,000 tons (ginned)
In the production of raw cotton and textiles were involved 2022:

- 900,000 smallholder farmers
- 19 cotton companies
- 29 cotton merchants
- 290 spinning mills
- 66 trading partners
Benefits of the CmiA initiative for smallholder farmers:
According to the latest impact study, CmiA positively affects the living and working conditions of participating cotton farmers. Comparisons to data from 2015 reveal that the average farming family in Côte d'Ivoire is now earning nearly 18 percent more from CmiA cotton sales. An area of strength is the training CmiA offers, which has proven to lead to increased cotton yields if conducted regularly. CmiA was able to employ its established training mechanisms to successfully reduce the harm done by unfavourable external factors, thereby slowing the further deterioration of the Zambian cotton farmers’ situation. Farmers who completed at least three training units produced yields around 23 percent greater than farmers who had not completed any training.

Life cycle assessment of cotton produced according to CmiA standard:
- 13 percent less greenhouse gas emissions than conventional cotton
- Two litres of water/kilogram of cotton instead of 1,563 litres of water on global average

Through the CmiA Carbon Neutral Initiative and in cooperation with the non-profit organization atmosfair the first 3,318 tons CmiA cotton could be produced CO2-neutrally.

Balance of the CmiA Community Cooperation Program (CCCP)
The following social projects were supported until the end of 2022:
- the construction of 110 classrooms, and
- ... 67 school canteens
- ... 54 school gardens
- ... 8 teacher building
- ... 1 vocational training center
- ... 1 girls dormitory
- ... 85 women’s clubs and five other women’s projects
- ... micro business promotion
- ... 119 wells
- ... 4 health stations
- ... 660 collection points for pesticide containers
- ... 452 latrine (384 of them at schools)
- ... 23 buildings equipped with solar panels

96% of all participants in CmiA education projects expressed satisfaction or great satisfaction.

The future of CmiA
The focus of CmiA activities in the future will be on more ecologically and socially innovative topics - for example, on the CmiA Carbon Neutral Initiative activities as well as a focus on the topic of soil health and, related to this, on dealing with the effects of climate change. The market opportunities for sustainably produced cotton are growing - and opening new opportunities to make Cotton made in Africa even more visible in the world.
ABOUT COTTONCONNECT

Established in 2009, CottonConnect is a pioneering social enterprise set up to improve cotton supply. We help retailers source more fairly and sustainably by creating resilient and successful raw material supply chains. Our employees, based in the UK, South Asia, and China, have farm, value chain management and textiles expertise, and an extensive on-the-ground network in key cotton-growing countries. We play a key role in enabling a resilient cotton sector. We work at both ends of the supply chain with strong sourcing partnerships with brands and retailers, and support to local implementing organisations which includes the transfer of skill and knowledge to farmers and producers, building capacity and capability in markets in key cotton-growing countries like - India, Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Turkey. We’re proud of our long-term relationships with some of the world’s leading retail brands. During the last 14 years, we have worked with over 25 brands and retailers, including Amazon, PVH, C&A, Primark, Mark’s, Kering, Volcom, John Lewis, Carrefour, Whitbread, and Lindex.
Our work helps them better serve their customers and achieve their environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals by addressing challenges in four key areas: raw material sourcing; climate change mitigation; social impact; and traceability.

**RAW MATERIAL SOURCING: OUR REEL COTTON PROGRAMME**

We help brands procure cotton and raw materials in the most responsible way. **REEL (Responsible Environment Enhanced Livelihood) Cotton Programme** is our specially designed three-year agricultural training course that promotes sustainable cotton farming practices. REEL Cotton is produced in alignment with the **REEL Cotton’s code of conduct**, developed with, and independently verified by the global third-party verification body FLOCERT. REEL Cotton Code covers both environmental and social criteria, enabling and supporting sustainable agricultural practices, such as sustainable pest management, improved soil health and reduced fertiliser. With FLOCERT's verification in place, we can be confident that the farmers participating in our programme are delivering traceable, verifiable, and sustainably produced material.

Through our REEL Cotton Programme, we can provide retailers with a programme that gives them not only sustainable cotton but verified agronomic training to farmers, improved social mobility and engagement, supply chain verification and brand reputation. REEL Programme farmers receive module-driven training at each crop stage, beginning with pre-sowing, and till picking, harvesting, and procuring cotton. These practices aim to reduce the use of water and chemical pesticides and fertilisers, thereby reducing environmental impact. The farmers are introduced to composting and crop rotation methods which reduce the need for chemical fertilisers and are also taught to use non-chemical methods of pest control, learn to differentiate between beneficial and enemy insects, and apply pesticides accordingly.
CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

Extreme and erratic weather, a loss of biodiversity and diminishing soil quality present severe challenges not only to rural farming communities but to companies relying on a resilient supply of raw materials. As a result, climate action remains the number one sustainability issue, and an ESG priority for most companies. That’s why we’re focused on delivering sustainable cotton programmes, solutions and interventions that cut greenhouse gases in line with the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C by 2050, while helping farmers adapt to global warming.

The results from our recently launched Life Cycle Assessment of REEL Cotton show that the sustainable practices it sets out effectively reduce the impact on climate change, eutrophication, acidification, water consumption, water use, and abiotic depletion potential.

In response to a growing desire of brands to enable farmers to foster mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and restore biodiversity and natural habitat, we developed the REEL. The Code introduces farmers to various regenerative farming practices and new techniques, helping them address climate change. This includes promotion of good agricultural practices, including addressing over-dependence on chemical fertilisers and pesticides to preserve the biodiversity of farmland. In our REEL Cotton Programme too, we encourage farmers to use regenerative farming techniques and practices to help them adapt to climate change. These interventions include intercropping, border and mix cropping and improving soil health through carbon sequestration. We support our farmers by providing carbon mapping and data management tools that can help them make more informed on-farm decisions that will cut their carbon footprint. And we use the Cool Farm Tool, an online calculator of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which quantifies on-farm GHGs and soil carbon sequestration.
IMPROVING SOCIAL IMPACT

We work to support farmers and source cotton in communities across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, and Turkey. Our training and programmes help farmers to improve productivity and profitability, address issues such as worker safety and protection and gender rights and learn relevant business skills. For brands and retailers, the health, wellbeing and success of farmers and their families is of paramount importance in sustaining a robust and resilient supply chain. New and more stringent regulation demands that businesses put a greater focus on labour and human rights along the value chain.

The value of empowering women – giving them the skills, knowledge, and opportunity to succeed – is increasingly well understood in powering economies and maintaining successful businesses. More than 164,000 women have taken part in our Women in Cotton programmes, giving them training and education in everything from health and rights to running their own businesses. More than 25,600 farmers have benefited from our Farmer Business School programmes, giving them training in financial literacy and management and introducing them to new technology, microfinance, and credit. Through our Health, Safety, Security and Environment (HSSE) programme, we ensure labour rights, decent working conditions and gender inclusion, and prohibit child labour in all our programmes.
Traceability

Supply chain mapping requires an in-depth understanding of how the cotton production, procurement and manufacturing process operates in each country. CottonConnect has dedicated supply chain specialists in key cotton origin markets and has a proven approach to mapping supply chains from seed to finished garment. We help brands and retailers connect with farmers at the opposite end of their supply chain, and offer a number of specialist services, including access to our bespoke, proprietary traceability software tool TracBale.

Our relationships with all links in the chain mean we can trace garments back from Tier 1 suppliers all the way to the farm. This provides visibility on all farmer transactions, verifying farm production against ginner procurement. Retailers can use TraceBale data to integrate into their existing yarn ID system to give their customers a full view of the cotton supply chain. This is increasingly important as both legislation and consumer expectation now expect brands to demonstrate knowledge of their supply chains and the conditions under which their garments were made; increasingly, production location and sustainability are linked.

Our Impact

For over 13 years, CottonConnect has been focused on delivering positive, measurable impact for the smallholder farmers taking part in our programmes, for their communities, and for the environment. For CottonConnect, it’s not just about reducing the negative impacts of cotton cultivation on the environment; we aim to maximise the positive impact our programmes have on the natural environment through improved soil health, biodiversity, and water management.
Our other programmes

We have an organic training programme covering various agronomic interventions with a focus on establishing good agricultural practices, organisation of farmer collectives, and improving biodiversity. Our REEL Linen Code, was developed in partnership with Kingdom, one of the largest linen yarn manufacturers in the world. Like REEL Cotton, linen fibre produced according to the REEL Linen Code is traceable from farm to yarn. This Code requires farmers and processors to adopt more sustainable practices when producing flax fibres which are spun into linen yarn. We’re also an implementation partner for the Better Cotton Initiative.
myBMP - Best Management Practices

Introduction
myBMP – Best Management Practices – is the Australian cotton industry’s voluntary cotton production certification standard. It is a comprehensive farm and environmental management system designed to improve all aspects of on-farm cotton production. myBMP uses practical tools to ensure growers are implementing world’s best practice to produce economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable cotton. myBMP best practices has enabled the Australian cotton industry to reduce its insecticide use by 97% and use 52% less water to grow a bale of cotton in Australia. myBMP provides Australian cotton growers with:
- a central, online access point to the industry’s best management practice standards,
- technical support,
- self-assessment mechanisms,
- practical tools,
- independent auditing, and
- an industry extension team to support growers on-farm.

myBMP also acts as the industry’s assurance mechanism. The program helps the industry to manage risks and provides evidence to stakeholders and the wider community that the industry is committed to the highest possible social and environmental standards of practice. The journey started with a whole-of-industry, independent environmental audit in 1991, with the fourth Independent Environmental Assessment of the industry commissioned in 2021 recently being completed.
Information within myBMP is categorised into 10 key modules for growers:

- **Biosecurity** – for prevention, management and control of pests and diseases.
- **Energy and Input Efficiency** – for more efficient energy inputs such as electricity, fuel and fertilisers.
- **Fibre Quality** – for growing the best quality cotton possible.
- **Human Resources and Work Health and Safety** – helps growers manage employees and contractors whilst providing a safe and compliant workplace.
- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** – for management of pests, weeds and diseases.
- **Sustainable Natural Landscape** – for managing the vegetative and riparian assets on farm.
- **Pesticide Management** – for all aspects of pesticide management, storage and use on farm.
- **Petrochemical Storage and Handling** – for managing fuels and lubricants on farm.
- **Soil Health** – for maintaining and/or improving soil quality and fertility.
- **Water Management** – covering water quality, efficiency of storage and distribution for both dryland and irrigated farming practices.

Teams of researchers and industry experts review each module annually to ensure they reflect current best practices and to reflect any new research knowledge. Australia’s myBMP-accredited farms produce the world’s best cotton using responsible and efficient management practices. The program includes online self-assessment mechanisms and practical tools and independent environmental auditing processes to ensure that Australian cotton is produced according to best practices.
History

myBMP was developed in response to the need for the industry to improve, manage risks and to support its social licence to operate. The program originated in an extensive joint research and development program and continues to be informed by the latest research findings. It took several years to develop and is the result of consultation with growers, researchers, industry bodies, governments, and NGOs, taking into consideration the requirements of the cotton industry now and in the future.

Where is myBMP Certified Cotton Grown in Australia?

myBMP certified cotton is grown in many regional Australian communities stretching over 4,000 km from Kununurra in northwest Australia to the Victorian boarder in the southeast. The number of myBMP certified farms growing cotton fluctuates depending on water availability. Australia is a small global cotton producer, but the world’s fourth-largest cotton exporter in a good season. The preferred planting time for cotton in Australia varies from region to region starting in Late August in Central Queensland through to December/January in Northern Australia.
Production levels of cotton grown in Australia over the last 30 years are shown in the tables below.

**Bales of Australian cotton produced (year listed is when season finished)**

**Hectares of Australian cotton planted (year listed is when season finished)**

Global Recognition for Australian Cotton Sustainability with our Partners

**Better Cotton**

Better Cotton (BC) is the world’s leading sustainability initiative for cotton. Their mission is to help cotton communities survive and thrive, while protecting and restoring their environment (BC website: March 2023). The Strategic Aims of BC are:

1) *Embed sustainable farming practices and policies* so that on cotton farms, the soil is healthy and land, water and other resources are managed for the good of local communities and the planet.
1) **Enhance the well-being and economic development** of cotton farmers by helping to make cotton farming economically viable for them and their communities, with improved working conditions, good health prospects and a better quality of life.

2) **Drive the global demand for sustainable cotton** throughout its complex supply chains, by making more sustainable 2030 Strategy: cotton the preferred choice for growers and buyers.

BC has members throughout the supply chain, committed to the production and supply of cotton to a set of on-farm BC standards covering social and environmental issues like pesticide management and child labour. Generally speaking, BC:

- Partners with organisations (such as Cotton Australia) to facilitate cotton farmers’ use of BC best practices, then audits them to ensure compliance.
- Partners with brands and retailers to encourage demand for BC cotton.
- Channels funds from membership and public-private partnerships back into the supply of Better Cotton through farm-level training and verification.
- Facilitates Better Cotton into the supply chain using a mass balance model.

In 2012, CA began discussions about producing BC in Australia. This led to CA joining BCI as a member organisation and embarking upon a benchmarking process to align myBMP with the Better Cotton Production Principles and Criteria. In June 2014, following a resolution on the alignment of myBMP with BC, a formal partnership agreement was signed on behalf of Australia’s cotton industry. Now cotton produced under Australian myBMP certification can be sold into the global market as Better Cotton.
The certification standards of the myBMP program are among the most rigorous in the world and participation in myBMP has allowed Australian growers to access cotton markets by opting into programs such as Better Cotton. In 2022, approximately 30% of the total Australian crop was sold as Better Cotton. There are currently 395 myBMP certified farms in Australia and the goal is to increase that number to 500 by March 2024.

COTTON LEADS™ PROGRAM
Cotton LEADS™ is a joint program, initiated by Cotton Australia and The Cotton Foundation (United States), that offers manufacturers, brands, and retailers a reliable cotton supply chain solution and confidence that their raw material is responsibly produced and identified. myBMP’s certification standards and continuous improvement-centred approach dovetails neatly into the Cotton LEADS™ objectives.

Cotton LEADS™
500-plus program partners include manufacturers, brands and retailers that have supported the program by signing The Commitment to Cotton. Cotton LEADS™ partners have the opportunity to be active participants by supporting research projects, helping to disseminate information on best practices, or creating partnerships for continual improvement. Partners who choose to donate funds support activities under the Cotton LEADS™ program and contribute to continuous improvement in cotton production.
Textile Exchange’s Preferred Fibre and Materials Market Report (PFMR)

Textile Exchange is a global non-profit seeking to drive industry transformation in preferred fibres, integrity and standards, and responsible supply networks. The goal of the Preferred Fibre and Materials Market Report (PFMR) is to help brands, retailers, educators, NGOs, and everyone participating in the textile supply chain understand the preferred fibre and material market. Textile Exchange researches and consults with all sectors of the textile supply chain in preparing the report. The PFMR identifies the Better Cotton and myBMP among its preferred fibre programs.

Partnership for Sustainable Textiles

The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles is a multi-stakeholder initiative with about 150 members from the fields of economics, politics, and the community. Together they are striving to improve conditions in global textile production, from the production of raw goods to the disposal of textiles. Today, members of the Partnership already cover more than half of the German textile market.

In December 2017, the myBMP Certification Standard was accredited by the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles, a multi-stakeholder initiative comprising representatives of business, civil society, the German government, standards organisations and trade unions. The Partnership is committed to bringing about social, environmental and economic improvements all along the textile supply chain.
Leveraging Cotton as a Solution Towards Climate+

Textile Exchange is a global non-profit driving positive impact on climate change across the fashion, textile, and apparel industry. We guide and support a growing community of over 850 brands, retailers, manufacturers, farmers, and others toward more purposeful production, right from the start of the supply chain. At the heart of our strategy is the goal of driving a 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from fibre and raw material production by 2030. But it doesn’t stop there. Our strategy is unique in that we look at sustainability holistically, accounting for impact areas like soil health, water, and biodiversity. We call it Climate+.

We convene the industry to collectively achieve these goals by providing clear and actionable guidance, equipping people to accelerate the adoption of what we call “preferred” materials. By “preferred,” we mean “a fibre or raw material that delivers consistently reduced impacts and increased benefits for climate, nature, and people against the conventional equivalent, through a holistic approach to transforming production systems.” Ultimately, we want to build a global fibre and raw material production model that makes resilient, regenerative, and circular use of the Earth’s resources, giving back more than we take from our planet.
Accelerating the adoption of preferred cotton

In 2021, cotton made up 22% of global fiber production, according to our Preferred Fiber and Materials Market Report. To produce this natural, land based raw material, we need healthy, functioning ecosystems. But we’re already seeing climate change putting cotton farmers’ livelihoods at risk. After years of growth, the market share of "preferred" cotton – defined by a list of recognized, ecologically and/or socially progressive programs – decreased from 27% in 2019-20 to 24% in 2020-21. There are many reasons for this, including weather variations, changes in the Better Cotton program, market conditions, and socio-political challenges.

Textile Exchange's Sustainable Cotton Challenge is pushing to increase this to a 50% market share of more sustainably produced cotton by 2025. This will require significant acceleration in the transition towards preferred programs, as well as improved impacts of all cotton. To get there, firstly we need to maximize the potential of existing efforts across all cotton programs and schemes.
This means incentivizing scalable solutions and rewarding our partners at the farm level. Secondly, there’s no better indicator of cotton’s environmental impact than soil quality. That’s why we’re advocating for holistic approaches, looking to upscale organic and regenerative agriculture. Thirdly, progress also requires increased traceability and assurance so stakeholders can feel confident in their sourcing decisions. This means forming direct, long-term relationships along the whole supply chain.

Cotton: opportunities for improvement
As a widely used fibre, cotton is not immune to challenges. We recognize that as a global industry, the conditions under which cotton is grown and the issues associated with its cultivation vary enormously due to a range of environmental, agroecological, climatic, socio-economic, and political factors. However, it is essential to address some of the common challenges associated with cotton production and embrace a new path. Firstly, the management of soil fertility – using fertilizers and tilling practices – can have important implications for greenhouse gas emissions at the farm level. According to the UNFCCC Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action’s report, Identifying Low Carbon Sources of Cotton and Polyester Fibers, 29% of conventional cotton’s greenhouse gas emissions come from fertilizer production, then 27% from field emissions, and 13% from farm machinery use.

What’s more, the misuse and overuse of synthetic inputs raise many concerns related to human health, water contamination, and the degradation of soil systems. Beyond that, soils can end up depleted of their critical nutrients, making them less able to adapt to climate change. Switching to organic and regenerative systems promotes healthy soils, ecosystems, and people, through a locally adapted approach – rather than relying on external inputs that may have adverse effects.
However, according to our 2022 Organic Cotton Market Report, only 1.4% of cotton was grown organically in 2021. One of our recommendations is to support more 'in-conversion' cotton, which comes from farmers who are currently transitioning to organic, a process that takes two–three years. As biodiversity expert Helen Crowley notes, these investments are a 'no-regrets pathway for companies'.

**Our direction of travel for cotton**

The diagram below shows the four levers that drive us toward our goals, from reducing negative impacts to accelerating the adoption of practices that have measurable positive impacts. This is made possible by two continuous streams of work: firstly, by generating and improving access to reliable data and secondly, by improving traceability in cotton supply chains.

*Reducing* negative impacts is just the beginning.

Our mission is to go beyond minimizing harm and actively start healing from the ground up. We can start by building on existing solutions, for example by working with farmers and producers to scale organic and regenerative farming methods. Putting pressure on farmers, growers, and producers won’t lead us to sustainable progress. Instead, we need to ensure that those at the beginning of the supply chain are valued and rewarded for positive impacts.
It’s worth pointing out that organic and regenerative approaches needn’t be seen as competing concepts. There’s so much that unites them, and both movements can learn from one another on their shared path to creating equitable and restorative agricultural systems. For a deep dive into regenerative agriculture, read our 2022 Regenerative Agriculture Landscape Analysis report.

**Getting granular with a place-based approach**

Companies need to be locally informed. This means building direct relationships with farmers to recognize their unique circumstances, collecting better data, and enabling the industry to understand impacts in context. In countries where organic is already well established, it’s best to require organic certification as a prerequisite for shifts towards regenerative practices. Where organic is less prevalent, companies can focus on enabling a transition to regenerative approaches and on the implementation of rigorous outcome-based certification.

**An attitude of 'continuous improvement'*

Right now, there are data gaps – particularly with the increase of non-conventional cotton types in recent years. It’s vital to recognize that, although impact data, methodologies, and innovations are constantly evolving, there will always be gaps in our knowledge. That’s why we take a standpoint of “continuous improvement”. We’re currently working on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) studies to refresh the impact data used for conventional and organic cotton, using our “LCA+” approach to go beyond the impact areas typically covered in LCA methodology. With the increased availability of reliable data, growers and producers are more equipped to protect their farms, businesses, and livelihoods – and we’re more able to demonstrate the need for new business models and incentives. More information will follow in the next 18 months, but we can’t let that stop us from acting now.
Advancing innovative solutions

Another vital course of action is to reduce our dependency on virgin fibres. This can be achieved by scaling innovation in textile-to-textile recycling, using cotton waste as feedstocks. This requires new partnerships and investment in technologies, as well as data collection mechanisms and methodologies to prove beneficial outcomes. Once we have data to assess and evaluate these innovative fibres and raw materials, then we can then classify them as proven, “preferred” options. We can only leverage cotton as a solution towards our Climate+ goals if we improve access to reliable data and secure supply chain traceability. This is fundamental for companies to make informed sourcing decisions and confidently measure their impacts on the ground.

What’s next?

Access to more reliable and timely data will be key to overcoming adversities and accelerating the adoption of organic, regenerative, and preferred cotton. Data sharing should be a basic requirement. We can’t enforce it, but together we can create demand for key stakeholders to share their data openly, helping us to understand what’s happening on the ground. We must call on the industry to be more transparent in sharing valuable data. This includes government agencies, accreditation bodies, certification bodies, suppliers, voluntary supply chain standards, and umbrella organizations.

There’s no “one-size-fits-all” solution for systems change. But going forward, we must be driven by closer collaboration, greater innovation, and a firm shared long-term commitment to standing side by side and playing our parts. Let’s work together to make transparent data sharing an industry best practice.
Sustainability and raw materials sourcing are at the forefront for brands and retailers. Their companies have witnessed a changing regulatory landscape in the European Union and the United States that provided increased scrutiny, amid a backdrop of macroeconomic uncertainty. At the same time, consumers have a growing awareness of their broader environmental impacts which in turn influences their purchasing behaviours. Launched in 2020, the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol was designed to set a new standard in sustainably grown cotton, ensuring the program contributes to the protection and preservation of the planet by using environmentally and socially responsible practices.
It is the only system that provides quantifiable, verifiable goals and measurement and drives continuous improvement in six key sustainability metrics - land use, soil carbon, water management, soil loss, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy efficiency. It is also the world’s first sustainable cotton fibre program to offer article-level supply chain transparency to all members. Its core values focus on U.S. cotton’s legacy of authenticity, innovation, and excellence, environmental stewardship, caring of people, and personal and corporate integrity with a Theory of Change that is grounded in science-based measurement and feedback.

A Year of Growth
The program has continued to lay the groundwork to be further recognized as a sustainable cotton sourcing option that brands and retailers can use to fulfil their sustainability commitments. As a result, the Trust Protocol was accepted as an ISEAL Community Member, approved as a standard for sustainable cotton by German Federal Government Initiative Siegelklarheit, and recognized and published in the standard mapping process by the International Trade Centre. And we’ve seen the supply chain positively respond. Grower participation for the 21/22 crop doubled since the program’s pilot year, with an estimated 1.1 million U.S. cotton acres enrolled across all 17 cotton producing states. This equates to an additional 88 counties across the Cotton Belt from the year prior as well as doubling the data sample size.

Additionally, mill and manufacturer membership increased by more than 50% over the prior year with 30 countries represented. The program has also welcomed 40 international brands and retailers since its launch, including Levi Strauss & Co., Gap Inc., Target, and J.Crew.
Article-level Supply Chain Transparency

The Trust Protocol is the world’s first sustainable cotton fibre program to offer unparalleled article-level supply chain transparency through the Protocol Consumption Management Solution (PCMS). The platform was created to record and verify the movement of U.S. Cotton and Protocol Cotton throughout the entire supply chain, starting at the gin and ending at the finished products delivered to brand and retailer members. The PCMS was designed as a ‘fibre forwards’ system, with the ability to capture details of transactions in near real time.

Unlike other solutions available to the textile and apparel industry today, assurance has been built in where the PCMS offers two levels of verification for every transaction captured in the system. The first occurs within the blockchain-enabled inventory ledger that ensures production volumes shipped never exceed the volume of available raw materials in any individual company’s system account.
The second ensues on the commercial invoices and shipping documents that each supplier must upload in support of shipments recorded in the system. The PCMS saw nine completed pilots with global brands and retailers in 2022 along with nearly 150mills. The first products made with Protocol Cotton were also released by J. Crew, and Next PLC became the world’s first retailer to fully track U.S. Cotton into finished products. Most recently, the program announced the milestone of tracking over 3 million kilograms of cotton and more than 11 million finished articles through the system.

Learning through Data, Supported by Technology

The U.S. Cotton Belt spans the lower half of the United States, stretching from Virginia to California and encompassing 17 states. Planting runs from mid-March until early June in a normal year. Across this vast region, soil types and weather patterns vary greatly, meaning sustainability practices are not one-size-fits all. This variability offers the ultimate opportunity for on-farm research and experimentation, with growers regularly implementing new practices and learning from peers across the country. Trust Protocol growers are also continually improving techniques, including incorporating regenerative agriculture practices such as conservation tillage and cover crops, to aid soil health and increase soil carbon levels. Thanks to robust technology, not only is peer-to-peer information sharing more accessible than ever before, but so is aggregated sustainability data through the Trust Protocol. Year-on-year data allows growers to anonymously measure and analyse the impact of implemented changes—and further fine-tune their practices as they work to continuously improve.
The advanced technology that cotton growers employ allows them to not only measure, evaluate and improve—but to do so with precision. Over 50% of cotton growers use GPS-enabled swath control to ensure they are not overlapping crop practices such as planting, fertilizer applications, and crop protection applications. With precision mapping technologies, growers can determine the most productive areas of their fields and then identify areas better suited for wildlife or pollinator habitats to increase biodiversity. Last year, 89% of Trust Protocol growers reported utilizing precision agriculture on their farms.

The program is also partnering with global agricultural equipment manufacturer John Deere to enable growers to collect up to 40% of the sustainability data needed for program enrolment through their Operations Centre software, which will provide greater data accuracy. In the 21/22 period, the Trust Protocol was able to provide farm-level data reporting showing significant improvements with grower members having demonstrated tangible results across the six key metrics measured by the program. Using peer-to-peer data sharing and aggregated sustainability data provided by the program’s growers, when compared to the 2015 baseline we saw:

- A 13% increase in land use efficiency
- A 14% increase in water use efficiency
- A 25% reduction in energy use
- A 21% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- A 78% reduction in soil loss
- Positive Soil Conservation Index for 70% of growers
U.S. Climate Smart Commodities Grant Secured
In September 2022, the Trust Protocol was announced as the lead recipient of a $90 million grant to implement the U.S. Climate Smart Cotton Program. The project equips U.S. cotton farmers with the knowledge and tools to adopt new farming practices that meet the global fashion and textile industry’s demand for cotton with a lower carbon footprint. It also provides technical and financial assistance to U.S. cotton farmers supporting long-term adoption of climate smart practices including nutrient management, no/strip tillage, and cover cropping. Growers are also empowered to learn, grow and explore new opportunities for reducing climate impacts. The program aims to advance adoption of climate smart conservation practices on 1.2 million U.S. cotton acres allowing for production of over 4 million bales of climate smart cotton for brand and retailer partners over five years. There is a goal to enrol 1,650 U.S. cotton farmers, including 330 farmers from historically underserved communities, with a requirement to be a member of the Trust Protocol to participate.

A Look Ahead
Long-term, we understand that crucial to the program’s success will be our unwavering commitment to, and support of, our growers as they work towards the U.S. cotton industry’s 2025 National Goals for Continuous Improvement. Maintaining a focus on innovation and implementation of the latest technologies will also be required to further improve our environmental footprint.

Finally, our commitment to innovation, transparency, and providing measurable, verifiable data will remain at the forefront of our efforts. However, we will continue to listen to all segments of the industry and value chain. This will enable the program to identify potential challenges, as well as opportunities, and make decisions in an informed, thoughtful way with program integrity at its core. To learn more about the Trust Protocol, visit trustuscotton.org.
Genetically modified organisms (GMO) are created when one or more changes are made to the genome of a plant, animal, or microbe using high tech genetic engineering to alter its characteristics. For the cotton plant, GMO varieties focus on insect resistance and herbicide tolerance, but with the future possibility of other varieties with traits that include drought resistance and other characteristics.

In this context, the product obtained from a cotton plant grown with GMO seeds is referred to as ‘GMO cotton’, while product obtained from cotton grown with GMO-Free seeds is called ‘GMO-Free cotton’.

**Development of GMO-Free Turkish Cotton Brand**

Cotton has great importance both as a fibre and as a food plant. Cotton and its by-products are used to make products that come in direct contact with (or are consumed by) people in dozens of industries ranging from textiles to food and from health to cosmetics and more. Cotton is the world’s most widely used natural fibre.

While the production of GMO cotton is spreading rapidly around the world, Türkiye, together with Greece and Spain, have banned the use of GMO cotton seeds, including for research and development purposes, adhering to the European laws. Consequently, Türkiye only produces GMO-Free cotton.
Türkiye is one of the few major producers planting GMO-Free cotton. Within these limits, Türkiye has achieved success in the breeding of GMO-Free cotton with modern breeding methods that do not include genetic engineering. This work combined with cotton farmers’ developing experience and expertise. These developments have enabled Türkiye to develop a strong record as a producer of GMO-Free cotton and its by-products, as well serving as a genetic source of GMO-free cotton. To further develop its markets, GMO-Free Turkish Cotton Project has been implemented by the Izmir Commodity Exchange and the Turkish National Cotton Council to ensure that GMO-Free Turkish Cotton is recognised around the world, and that GMO-free cotton production is recognized by consumers. As a result of this earlier work, Türkiye was able to oversee an official registration process under the auspices of the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office that resulted in a warranty mark provided to that Izmir Commodity Exchange and the National Cotton Council. This culminated in approval of the phrase ‘GMO-Free Turkish Cotton’ by the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office on 15 August 2018.

This official recognition institutionalised the GMO-Free project and helped with the branding of GMO-Free cotton produced in Türkiye that extended to the textile and apparel products produced from this cotton. This GMO-Free status is reflected in all industrial processes where cotton and its by-products are processed. This process is supported by a set of standards and backed by monitoring the purchase, processing, and use of GMO-free cotton and its by-products.
## Production

**Raw Material Cotton Used in Textiles, 1990-2022**

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<td>882 009</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>5 186 447</td>
<td>5 186 342</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>4 778 866</td>
<td>4 778 681</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>814 021</td>
<td>2 200 000</td>
<td>814 000</td>
<td>460</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3 592 414</td>
<td>3 592 200</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>4 322 790</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>832 527</td>
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<td>5 732 068</td>
<td>5 731 613</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 017 537</td>
<td>2 750 000</td>
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Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

(1) Data have been compiled since 1991.
(2) Area sown is the same for cotton (raw).
To distinguish its products, the GMO-Free label is marked by new logos within the scope of the warranty brand registration. This includes two types of logos: one as a label on cotton bales and the other as a label on products manufactured from cotton with the GMO-Free label. To ensure compliance, all Turkish companies in the cotton, textile, and apparel business that want to use these labels will be audited by authorised certification companies, as it is with organic certification.

Mission and Scope
Türkiye is one of the countries producing only GMO-free cotton. However, Türkiye stands out among other countries in terms of textile production. For the sustainable project to cover all sector stakeholders and to promote it more effectively in international markets, rights to the ‘GMO-Free Turkish Cotton’ brand was transferred to the Istanbul Textile and Raw Materials Exporters’ Association, with equal rights for the Izmir Commodity Exchange and the National Cotton Council. To organise the operation of the ‘GMO-Free Turkish Cotton’ brand and its promotional activities in national and international markets, the plan is to establish an executive board consisting of representatives from the three organisations that own the brand. Lastly, this executive board was appointed as ‘GDOsuz Pamuk A.Ş.’ and established the company and started its activities.