

Regular readers of the ICAC RECORDER are likely acquainted with the ongoing discussions around sustainability in cotton production systems. However, in this issue, we take a slight detour from the well-trodden path to explore the intersection of textiles and agricultural R&D funding. Despite this departure, the articles presented here share a common concern with sustainability, specifically the sustainability of agriculture, textiles, and agricultural R&D funding.

The concept of 'sustainability' has become a critical consideration in every aspect of our lives, guiding the direction of our plans for a safe and secure future for future generations. It is not an overstatement to say that the world is now fully engaged with the topic of sustainability. In essence, all paths ultimately lead to the goal of sustainability.

The current edition of the ICAC RECORDER highlights four articles that address the topic of sustainability. Included among them are two articles by Mr. Kanwar Usman concerning textiles, an article by Dr. Akhteruzzaman on carbon farming, and an article by Dr. Alexandro Plastina and Dr. Terry Townsend on 'World Spending on Agricultural Research and Development'.

Mr. Kanwar Usman was appointed by the ICAC to lead its new textiles division last year. During the past 18 months, he has focused on developing platforms to assist ICAC members with policies related to textiles, with a particular emphasis on improving sustainability throughout the textile value chain. In his article titled 'Organic Standards in Textiles Processing and Product Certification,' Mr. Usman proposes a roadmap to enhance policies and collaborations in existing sustainability initiatives, which can lead to a reduction in GHG emissions related to energy, logistics, and manufacturing of raw materials and chemicals. In his second article, as Chair of a session at the 80th ICAC plenary meeting, Mr. Usman summarizes lectures delivered by seven prominent speakers in the session titled 'Rethinking Fashion and Textiles for 2030.' Interestingly, all the speakers emphasized the role of textiles in contributing to national economies and highlighted the emerging challenges related to sustainability.

In his article titled 'Low Carbon Agriculture for a Better Environment,' Mr. Akhteruzzaman outlines fundamental strategies for achieving carbon efficiency in agriculture. He emphasizes that "The transition to carbon-efficient practices in agriculture is critical for balancing economic, environmental, and social objectives, with the primary goal of mitigating climate change and promoting sustainable development."

Dr. Alejandro Plastina and Dr. Terry Townsend address concerns regarding the decreasing allocation of funds for agricultural research and development (R&D) and its potential impact on sustainability in their article titled 'World Spending on Agricultural Research and Development'.

A recent report published by the Breakthrough Institute, Berkeley, echoed similar sentiments. The report 'Growing Green The Environmental Benefits Of Public Agricultural Research & Development' https://thebreakthrough.imgix.net/Growing-Green_Report_v7.pdf states that "...after years of steady growth, public agricultural R&D funding in the United States is waning. The United States no longer leads the world in public agricultural R&D funding. Falling R&D investment threatens to forfeit the advantages and benefits of agricultural advancements in the face of increasing global competition and new threats, such as climate change, geopolitical strife, and the COVID-19 pandemic." The report also states that "Increasing federal R&D funding can maintain, if not increase, the competitiveness of US farmers while representing one of the greatest opportunities to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, reduce land use, and keep food prices low around the world". Indeed "Growth in agricultural productivity has reduced food prices; cut the carbon footprint of milk, chicken, beef, and many other products; reduced land use; and led to more efficient use of many resources. This modern miracle of agricultural abundance owes much to over a century of public funding for agricultural research and development (R&D)".

In conclusion, this edition of the ICAC RECORDER has shed light on the crucial role that sustainability plays in the cotton industry and beyond. From the importance of organic standards in textile processing to the need for low-carbon agriculture and the challenges facing agricultural R&D funding, the articles presented in this issue provide valuable insights into the efforts being made to achieve sustainable development. We hope that this discussion will inspire readers to engage further with the subject of sustainability and encourage them to take action towards building a more sustainable future.

– Keshav Kranthi