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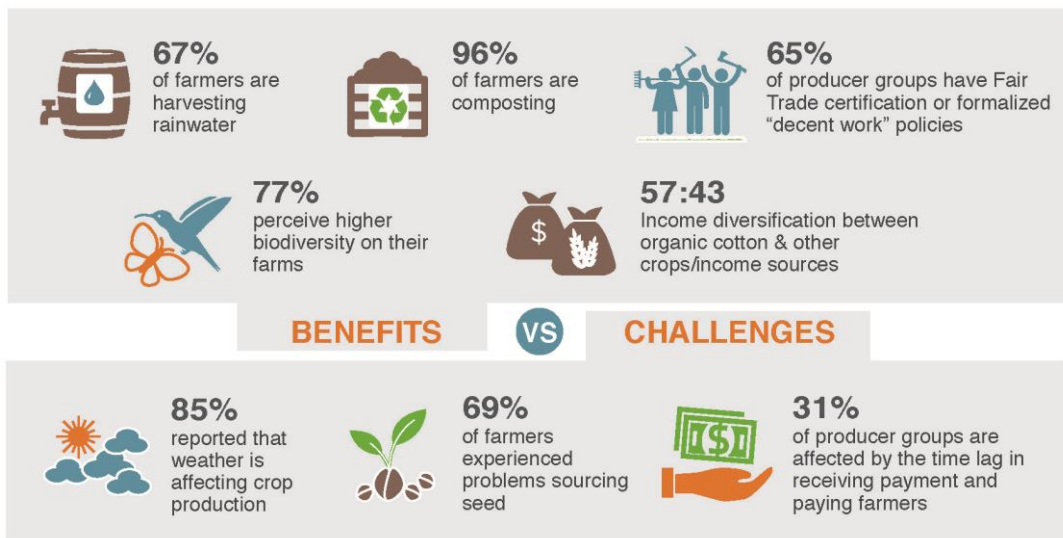
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Textile Exchange Builds On Success With Organic Cotton Sustainability Assessment

Hands-on Tool Allows Producers, Brands and Manufacturers to Assess the Full Spectrum of Organic Cotton's Benefits

March 24, 2015 - - (Lubbock, Texas) - - Textile Exchange (TE), an international nonprofit organization committed to a more sustainable textile industry, today announced the release of an online tool for the textile industry that measures the environmental, economic and social aspects of organic cotton production. The Organic Cotton Sustainability Assessment Tool (OC-SAT) is the first mechanism in the industry to provide an all-encompassing view of organic cotton's benefits. While the tool has been road tested on organic cotton, the assessment framework could be developed for other initiatives in the sector. Textile Exchange will hold an interactive webinar to review the OC-SAT on April 22 ([register here](#)).



The OC-SAT is part of Textile Exchange's continuing effort to chart tangible data on organic cotton cultivation. In 2014, TE commissioned PE International to conduct a global [Life Cycle Assessment \(LCA\)](#) of organic cotton. The LCA showed the quantifiable environmental benefits of organic cotton cultivation including significant reduction in global warming potential, energy demand, water use, and soil erosion. Downloaded by more than 400 members of the textile industry, the LCA pushed forward the organic cotton agenda because it provided much-needed hard facts and scientific evidence.

Encouraged by the momentum of the Life Cycle Assessment, Textile Exchange continued to research organic cotton's broader range of impacts beyond the LCA's environmental focus. TE worked with producers, TE members and field partners in fourteen countries to collect data for the study. The Organic Cotton Sustainability Assessment Tool provides a holistic

assessment of organic cotton's impact on economic and social aspects, as well as environmental. The program was made possible by sponsorship from both Eileen Fisher and ICCO, the interchurch cooperative for development cooperation.

"The OC-SAT is an elegantly designed, user-friendly tool that seamlessly organizes and makes assessable a global treasure trove of up-to-date data on organic cotton. It's like having a room-full of organic cotton experts at your fingertips. Loomstate can't wait to integrate and utilize this tool for our future sourcing, marketing, and communications," said Scott Hahn, Co-Founder, Loomstate.

The framework for the OC-SAT was developed in line with the work of the Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations as well as other organizations that have spearheaded this new science of broader sustainability assessment.

"It is only with assessment tools that are simultaneously very practical and science-based that we can sufficiently understand the social, economic, and environmental impacts of cotton production. If we are committed to improving the overall strategies of sustainability then such an investment is necessary in order to better manage spending, engage all stakeholders, and optimize good practices to attain the outcomes that we collectively seek". Daniele Giovannucci, President & Co-Founder of the Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA).

Textile Exchange has released a "Phase 1" report that covers the key findings of the OC-SAT with data from eight countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, China, India, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania, and Turkey). TE will complete the picture in 2015 as Phase Two will explore the remaining organic cotton producing regions including Latin America, the United States, Egypt and Central Asia.

"I have been an organic cotton farmer for more than 25 years and I've seen many positive impacts of what we do - using water wisely, increased bio-diversity and building life in the soil and community. We are most successful when we work together to harness the power of collective knowledge. I'm delighted to see that coming through so clearly in this Sustainability Assessment Tool," said La Rhea Pepper, Managing Director for Textile Exchange.

Note to Editors:

The OC-SAT provides insight into the sustainability status of farmers and producer groups certified to one or more of the internationally accepted organic agricultural (farm) standards. The reporting period was between 2011 and 2013 and covers 66,980 farmers, 82,016 ha of land, and 41,882 metric tons organic fiber. Data analysis was carried out in 2014.

The results demonstrate both challenges and promising findings. Challenges at the farm level include pricing and payment, productivity and lack of access to non-genetically modified seed. On a more encouraging note, farmers are having more success diversifying their crops, organizing their farming communities and supporting female farmers.

Innovative water management is key to the survival of small-scale rainfed farmers. With approximately 80 percent of organic cotton under rainfed conditions it is inspiring to see techniques such as rainwater harvesting prevail. In terms of land management (which also

plays a role in water conservation) composting, cover cropping and crop rotation are frequently carried out by farmers as a component of successful organic farming.

“The sheer depth and breadth of this baseline survey made for a complex task, but we now have an extraordinarily comprehensive dataset,” said Liesl Truscott, European and Farm Engagement Director for Textile Exchange. *“This is the United Nation’s International Year of the Soil (IYS) and these findings coincide with the IYS message stressing the importance of soil and land management. Organic agriculture is a holistic concept but one that leans heavily on soil conservation and fertility.”*

The OC-SAT is now available online (<http://farmhub.textileexchange.org/learning-zone/organic-cotton-sustainability-assessment-tool>) for industry use. Textile Exchange encourages feedback so the organization can continue to improve its products and services for the industry. TE will create a forum through their Organic Cotton Round Table to encourage information exchange. TE is committed to building on the baseline study, refining the tool, and sharing all the findings with the industry.

For more information on Textile Exchange’s work with organic cotton and other preferred materials, visit www.textileexchange.org and TE’s Farm Hub <http://farmhub.textileexchange.org>.

About Textile Exchange

Textile Exchange (TE) is a global non-profit organization that works closely with all sectors of the textile supply chain to find the best ways to minimize and even reverse the negative impacts on water, soil, air, and the human population created by this \$1.7 trillion industry. We accomplish this by identifying and sharing best practices regarding farming and ranching, materials, processing, and end-of-life. To learn more about Textile Exchange, visit our website: www.textileexchange.org.

About COSA

The Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA) is neutral and non-profit global consortium of 39 institutions whose mission is to advance sustainability in agriculture via mutual collaborations that support the science-based assessment tools for generating insights and recommendations that serve governments, private enterprise, producers, and consumers. Website: <http://thecosa.org>