



Global Organic Cotton Production Grows 20% in 2009, New Organic Exchange Report Shows

India, Turkey, and Syria are the leading organic cotton producers.

For Immediate Release

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Lubbock, TX. February 16, 2010 - Organic cotton weathered the global economic storm during the 2008/09 farming season, albeit with challenges, according to a new report by [Organic Exchange](#) (OE) documenting growth and challenges in the global organic fiber sector. Production grew an impressive 20 percent over 2007/08 to 175,113 metric tons (802,599 bales) grown on 625,000 acres (253,000 hectares). Organic cotton now represents 0.76 percent of global cotton production.

According to the fourth annual *Organic Exchange Farm and Fiber Report 2009*, organic cotton was grown in 22 countries worldwide with the Top Ten producer countries being led by India, and including (in order of rank) Turkey, Syria, Tanzania, China, United States, Uganda, Peru, Egypt and Burkina Faso. Approximately 220,000 farmers grew the fiber.

Not all is rosy, however. Despite major market players sticking to their commitments to use organic cotton in their apparel and home textile products, there simply wasn't the market for products (organic or conventional) in general, given the global economic downturn. In addition, a number of farmers had planted vast acreage of organic cotton on speculation and in response to what had appeared to be a healthy, burgeoning marketplace. As a result, unsold stocks which represent between 17 and 22 percent of production (some 30,000 to 35,000 tons (137,789 to 160,754 bales) of organic cotton has yet to find buyers

"2008-09 was a year of challenges for the organic cotton sector, but also one that highlights the need to improve recordkeeping, forecasting, pricing, and communication systems and gain more firm commitments and contracts," noted Simon Ferrigno, OE Organic Exchange Farm Development Team manager and lead author of the report.

LaRhea Pepper, OE senior director agrees. "While the 2008-09 season was very challenging for organic cotton farmers, the marketplace is recovering and there are indications that some of the surplus organic cotton is being utilized. Indeed," she continued, "it has been reaffirming to see that leading brands and retailers have retained their commitments to use to organic and sustainable fibers so as to bring about changes in agriculture. In many cases, they are actually *stepping up* their commitment to organic cotton in order to utilize the stocks and keep organic land in production."

According to the *Organic Exchange Organic Cotton Market Report 2009*, global retail sales of organic cotton and home textile products topped 3.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2008. Data from the 2009 market will be available soon.

Organic Exchange Farm and Fiber Report 2009 not only provides data on land under organic cotton, quantities, and yields of organic cotton produced, but also detailed analysis of the challenges and barriers to this successful industry, examples of how the sector is responding, and a special overview of three major production regions: India, Latin America and Africa. In addition, it provides an in-depth overview of the conventional cotton market.

Organic production is based on a system of farming that maintains and replenishes soil fertility without the use of toxic and persistent pesticides and fertilizers or genetically-modified seeds.

OE will be speaking at the [BioFach Germany](#) February 17-20 and the [Los Angeles International Textiles Show](#) March 15-17, 2010.

About [Organic Exchange](#)

Founded in 2002, Organic Exchange facilitates expansion of the global organic cotton fiber supply by working closely with the entire value chain, from farmers to retailers, to help develop organic cotton programs. OE has hosted numerous organic cotton conferences and trainings in supply chain centers around the world, including Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

For more information on Organic Exchange or a copy of the report, see www.organicexchange.org or email info@organicexchange.org.

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