BRAZIL REGIONAL WORKING GROUP 1 — SUMMARY REPORT

21 – 23 August 2007

Executive Summary

Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) held a successful 3-day meeting in Brasilia, on 21 - 23 August 2007. A 2-day meeting focussing on the production and environmental aspects of cotton production was held, while a separate 1-day meeting was conducted looking at the social and economic aspects associated with both small and large-scale cotton farming. On day 3 the two groups of participants joined together to share their respective findings and discussions.

The objectives for the environment-focused working group meeting were to:

- Introduce BCI
- Advise on the validity of BCI's draft global principles
- Advise what are the major criteria of the identified principles for that country/region (eg. under the principle of soil health, criteria could include soil management, erosion management and fertilizer management); and
- Advise what are the relevant tools, such as best management practices or good agricultural practices that are appropriate for that region for each of the identified criteria.

The social process meeting sought to:

- Consult with and develop relations with organisations relevant to the realisation of BCI's Social and Economic Principles (previously identified during 'Social Scoping' mission in July 2007)
- Explain the origins and intentions of BCI, the current state of BCI activity, BCI principles and the way in which BCI intends to develop its Better Cotton work in Brazil
- Understand the scope and nature of these organisations' activities, their views on BCI proposed Principles, and their ideas as to how BCI could begin to act in Brazil.

The environment working group agreed that the 5 environmental principles were all valid, noting the following:

- For the principle relating to safe and responsible use it was suggested that focus should be on plant protection, with integrated pest management being the main focus
- For the principle relating to fibre quality, it was suggested that an additional criteria, relating to ginning, be added

Broadly, Social Process participants agreed that all three socio-economic principles were valid, and that it was legitimate to distinguish between their application to larger-scale production (namely, the Decent Work draft principle) and small-scale family farming (to which all three socio-economic principles were deemed pertinent).

A number of participants in the environment working group noted both the importance of and the opportunity to develop (formalise) a set of "Best Management Practices" for cotton growing in Brazil, and that the BCI Working Group provided the opportunity for a range of views to share their views and reach a consensus as what the best practices are.

Acknowledgements

The generous support and assistance of the following organisations and institutions was instrumental in the smooth running and success of the meeting: ABRAPA, EMBRAPA and Dr. Sebastiao Barbosa.

The sincere thanks of Better Cotton Initiative is extended to all the participants in the meeting whose contributions were invaluable in achieving the objectives set out at the start of the meeting.

About this report

This report aims to record the many and varied issues presented and discussed during the 3 days. It should be noted that apart from the specific objectives of the meetings, the meetings did not endeavour to reach or agree on a position on all the issues raised. Thus the comments and answers recorded reflect the opinion of the person making the comment, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of BCI or any other person or organisation participating in the meetings.

Environment Working Group goals and objectives

Environmental Principles — Regional Working Group (RWG) Meeting

The Working Group was advised that its role is to provide advice & recommendations on:

- The validity of the draft global principles for that country/region
- What are the major criteria of the identified principles for that country/region (eg. under the principle of soil health, criteria could include soil management, erosion management and fertilizer management)
- What are the relevant tools, such as best management practices or good agricultural practices that are appropriate for that region for each of the identified criteria.

Overview of presentations at the Environment Working Group Meeting

Introduction

The meeting adopted the following schedule: presentations by Brazilian cotton growers, from various regions (Goias, Mato Grosso, Bahia) on the general issue of sustainability in cotton farming, an overview of the Better Cotton Initiative, presentations from a range of experts on the current 'state of knowledge' in Brazil on a variety of issues, and a presentation of the draft environmental principles in the Better Cotton Framework.

A working session on the definition of Better Cotton focussing on the draft environmental principles was then held, with the meeting breaking into four groups, under the headings of the draft principles addressing water management, soil management, pesticide management and fibre quality. The principle addressing habitat preservation was considered by the entire working group.

Presentations by Growers

The vice-president of Associação Brasileira dos Produtores de Algodão (ABRAPA), Dr. Haroldo Rodrigues da Cunha, made the following points on the matter of sustainability:

- Sustainability includes a number of aspects, i.e. economic (technology cost and availability, effect of subsidies, infrastructure constraints), technical (are tools appropriate available for some of the long term challenges, eg. boll weevil control, varieties, disease control) and environmental (eg. no till planting, choice of crop rotations)
- To identify what are 'sustainable practices', it may be necessary to differentiate between regions, with different zones requiring different models or sustainability 'packages'

The president of Fundo de Apoio à Cultura do Algodão (FACUAL), representing Associação Mato Grosso dos Produtores de Algodão (AMPA), Dr. Alvaro Salles highlighted the following issues:

- (Lack of) profitability is a major challenge; family farming is slowly disappearing in Mato Grosso, and it may not be possible to farm cotton there on a small scale
- A program monitoring agrochemicals in the environment (i.e. soil) has been in place for 5 years
- Even though legislation has existed controlling deforestation since 1910, including aspects such as buffer areas to reduce run-off contamination, issue that needs addressing is lack of enforcement of the existing legislation
- Cotton has not lead to deforestation in Mato Grosso
- Noted that cotton creates more jobs than soy cultivation

Representing the Bahia Cotton Growers Association Bahia, Dr. Celito Breda highlighted the following issues and challenges:

- Machinery costs
- Lack of trained labour

- Logistical challenges, eg. distance to ports.

The following topics were raised during questions: is it possible to regulate the area planted to cotton to avoid the large fluctuations, and subsequent problems? (not really; each individual is entitled to make their own decision as whether to plant cotton); it was commented that governmental policy and structural issues make it more difficult for smaller farms to 'compete' in some states (but programs are being developed to address this).

Presentations by BCI (1)

The vision and mission of BCI were highlighted, together with the approach and philosophy being adopted by BCI in its dealings with regional cotton industries. This was followed by the timeline ('Road Map') for the development of the Better Cotton system.

Vision

To enable millions of farmers around the world to grow cotton in a way that is more economical, and healthier both for the farming community and the environment.

Mission

BCI encourages the adoption of better management practices in cotton cultivation to achieve measurable reductions in key environmental impacts, while improving social and economic benefits for cotton farmers worldwide.

Approach & philosophy of BCI

BCI will:

- Develop a market for a new mainstream commodity; i.e. it seeks to include and involve a significant proportion of the world's cotton crop
- Define 'Better Cotton' at a global level with national / local relevance & validity; i.e. develop a definition that allows for a common and consistent global definition, but which will also allow for regional considerations to be taken into account
- Focus on on-farm activities; whilst it is recognised that there are other important considerations in the supply chain, in order to keep the initiative manageable, it is currently limiting its scope to farm-level activities and issues
- Engage stakeholders and players along the supply chain
- Build capacity rather than "police"
- Not directly address global policy & trade issues
- Not be designed with certification/product label in mind
- Endeavour to complement Certified Organic and Fairtrade cotton
- Be technology neutral.

Current focus regions

BCI advised that it is currently working in four country's / regions: Pakistan, west Africa, Brazil and India.

A number of questions were posed to BCI, as follows (answer in italics):

Why is cotton being targeted and what organisations started the process? *The process was initiated by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), who commissioned research to identify which crops had the most significant impact on the natural habitat. Cotton, along with soy, palm oil and sugar cane, was identified as the most significant crops that should be targeted. While similar processes, deriving from the same starting point are therefore underway for these commodities, each initiative is independent of the other.*

Who is sponsoring and financing the initiative? *The members of the Steering Committee contribute funds for the on-going operation of BCI, and funding from 2 development agencies (in Switzerland and Sweden) is in the process of being finalised.*

What is the legal status of BCI? *BCI currently has no official legal status; it was noted that totally contradictory advice had been received on this issue: that BCI should establish itself as a legal entity as soon as possible, and that BCI should wait until as late as possible before committing to a particular form (eg. company, association joint venture etc.).*

Why is the US not included as one of the focal regions? *BCI advised that even though it is a global initiative, cotton is grown in over 90 countries, so for matters of practicality and resource availability it has chosen to start work in the 4 country's / regions outlined; its choice of 4 focal regions was influenced by a number of factors, including the existence of activities involving BCI member or partner organisations and the desire to have a range of growing conditions taken into account during the development phase of BCI. In any event it was also stressed that just because a country was not involved in a regional working group did not mean that BCI was not engaging with and talking to that region; thus BCI is in contact with other industry's (eg. USA, Australia, Argentina, Paraguay).*

How are the Better Cotton principles going to be implemented? *BCI advised that does not have any fixed ideas on this challenge (which it believes presents a far greater challenge than defining Better Cotton). Implementation will be influenced by the particular circumstances of the country under consideration, with the general approach being to seek out like-minded partners who are interested in collaborating with BCI, and implementing the system. So for example in Pakistan, given that both the Government and WWF are closely involved with BCI there may be a role for both – via the normal extension system, and WWF's Farmer Field School activities – to implement the Better Cotton principles. It is an important issue to be explored in detail during both the working group process and the testing phase of Better Cotton.*

Presentations by researchers

Dr. Napoleão Beltrão, EMBRAPA provided an overview of the work being undertaken by the 60 EMBRAPA researchers working in cotton, such as breeding (including coloured varieties), working on issues for both small-scale and large-scale farmers, making cotton seed oil more suitable and irrigation opportunities.

Dr Celso Omoto provided an overview of the insecticide resistance monitoring being undertaken, and some of the strategies being developed to manage and prevent resistance from developing. The pests being monitored for resistance include cotton aphids (against carbosulfan), fall army worm (pyrethroids, chlorpyrifos, lufenuron). The importance of managing the entire production system – that is, choice of rotation crops, adopting a regional focus, adopting IPM, post-harvest management, etc. was stressed. Brief mention was also made of the need to utilise refugia in the pre-emptive management of resistance in Bt cotton crops. *Issues noted during discussion included:* Given that resistance can be reduced, would it be possible to put a temporary recall on products? (no; commercial considerations would preclude this, hence emphasis on product rotation to manage resistance); it was noted that the introduction of Bt cotton should reduce the number of insecticide applications, and therefore allow for a recovery in their effectiveness, if the experience in China is repeated; while there is no formal resistance strategy for conventional insecticides, a formal resistance management strategy for Bt cotton will be required.

Dr. Paulo Degrande provided an overview of the critical components of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system for Brazil: appropriate seed treatment, planting varieties resistant to disease and virus, having well–trained pest scouts, good sampling protocols, stalk destruction, boll weevil control, good application techniques, appropriate use of plant growth regulators, protecting natural predators, early diagnosis of problems, use of economic thresholds, good choice (taking into account volatility, safety/toxicity), good training in application techniques, proper calibration and maintenance of application equipment.

Dr. Fernando Lamas discussed soil management and noted that excessive soil movement, and a lack of crop rotation presented the two major challenges for improving soil management. An option to reverse soil degradation – the physical, chemical and biological decline in soil health – was suggested, being a system based on a cotton/corn/soy/ cattle rotation, and employing no-till planting was proposed (it was stressed that it should be seen as a flexible system, not as a strict formula). One criticism made of no-till systems is the lack of an appropriate cover crop, so current work on options for straw production was also highlighted. Potential species identified include *Brachiaria ruzizienses.*

Dr. Luiz Chitarra provided an overview of the challenges for managing diseases in cotton in Brazil, and highlighted the many diseases that cotton needs to be protected against, and the difficulty in sometimes identifying what disease (if any) may be causing a problem – especially as symptoms can be confounding. It was also stressed that disease issues can occur at all stages of the production cycle. Control measures highlighted were ensuring high-quality seeds, use of

appropriate seed treatments (to help protect seedlings, provide a uniform plant stand etc.). An overview of the specific activities being undertaken to combat the major diseases was provided; activities include developing resistant cultivars and identifying chemical control options. Best practices for disease management were listed also: stalk destruction, crop rotation, using good quality seeds, field monitoring, seeking technical advice, using good and appropriate application techniques when applying a chemical control.

Dr. Fernando Lamas provided an overview of weed management in the Brazilian cotton farming system, noting that weed control has been estimated as accounting for 7% of production costs. A list of the major weeds and the currently registered herbicides was provided, chemical control (herbicides) being the principal control method utilised for weed control. Some of the issues for the current weed control system listed are: resistance to herbicides, use of non-registered products, non-recommended use (eg. on sandy soils), run-off of water soluble herbicides, residual effects on following crop, need to improve timing of application (sometimes applied too soon), need for a more integrated approach and incorporation of natural alternatives. The need for more crop rotation, and the use of cover crops to provide for a more integrated approach to weed control was highlighted.

Dr. Ricardo Machado of Conservation International (CI) provided an introduction to the organisation, and its work in Brazil, which dates back to 1992. The collaborative approach of CI was highlighted, and an overview of their work with farmers was then presented. It was argued that there is a need to go beyond the mere legal reserve limits if forest conservation is to have the desired effect; they also have to be managed properly, which requires that there be close and constructive interaction with landholders – an approach being adopted by CI, in collaboration with Bunge, whereby they are engaging with Bunge so as to reach more landholders via a personal (door-to-door) approach with private landholders. Support is being given to farmers through the provision of mapping services, which is then linked to the regional priorities and issues, such as animal movement, and the need for corridors. A map linking the concentration of cotton growing and priority areas for conservation identified by CI was shown, noting that it could provide the basis for BCI prioritising its initial on-ground activities in Brazil. *Issues noted during discussion included:* the importance of developing collaborative, multi-stakeholder partnerships to address issues was emphasised; the example of getting farmers to agree not to kill jaguars, in return for being compensated for any cattle losses, was noted as a good example of a positive achievement from a partnership – no jaguars have died on the farms involved since the agreement was entered into; also stressed the need to overcome the perception that conservation was a burden, and highlighted the importance of identifying the benefits that accrue to producers of conservation, such as preventing soil erosion, enhanced populations of beneficial insects, enhanced pollination (and sometimes yield) and clean water.

Dr. João Rando provided an overview of the drum recycling program instituted under the auspices of inpEV. Drum recycling is regulated by laws enacted in 2000 that outline the responsibility for each stage of the supply chain, i.e. farmer (washing), distributor (provision of a collection point) and manufacturer (transporting empty drum to final destination). 215 M reis has been invested over the last 5 years, in aspects such as collection points (currently 365, aiming for 375), training (250 people employed). Material that can be recycled is re-used in new containers, and other forms of plastic; the ultimate aim is to close the cycle. Brazil leads the world on the total % of containers recycled, with 87 % recycled in 2005. *Issues noted during discussion included:* How are costs shared? (5-10% farmer, 15-20% collection system, balance of c. 70% taken up in logistics, destruction, recycling etc.; this last component shared between the manufacturers).

Dr. Félix Balaniuc outlined the history behind the Instituto do Algodão Social (IAS), and its current activities. IAS started 2 years ago as producers were concerned about the negative image (such as child labour, forced labour) associated with cotton production, and the impact that it was having in the market place. The approach of IAS is that cotton production should be socially just, environmentally correct and economically sustainable. Some of the challenges seen by IAS are the need to amend urban-focussed labour laws so that they better reflect rural conditions and needs. Implementation of the IAS standard is undertaken by a team of dedicated staff, who have conducted 18 courses over the last 2 years, with 2,000 participants; this is followed up by a farm visit, where a check-list (based on SA 8000) is run over a farm's operations. Compliance is currently 70 %, with over 2 M bales produced by complying growers; a certification system for the social aspects has just been introduced (certifying that no child, slave or bonded labour was used to produce the bale of certified cotton), and environmental issues will be included in the check list from next year. *Issues noted during discussion included:* How is it financed? (15 % tax break from government, and have just instituted a program to charge 30 cents for every bale that receives a certificate; aim is to be self-financing); also aiming to extend the program to all states.

Dr. Ronaldo Schröter gave a presentation highlighting the importance of using good quality seed, and the risks associated with not using good quality seed, such as reduced fibre quality, lower germination rates, reduced yield, and increased presence of 'rogue' plants. It was suggested that using certified seed was an important method for improving yield and quality, and therefore profitability.

Dr. Camilo Morello outlined the current focus of the EMBRAPA breeding program: high yields, and multiple disease resistance, with a target quality of strength 30 gpt, length 30 mm and a micronaire range of 3.5 -4.2. Also aiming for an oil content of greater than 20 %. The large number of transgenic 'events' currently underway was also highlighted, with mention being made of Bollgard I & II, Widestrike, VIP, CpTi, LibertyLink, RoundUp Ready and RoundUp Ready Flex. Future efforts will include boll weevil control. One of the issues highlighted was that the companies that own the transgenic traits are concerned that they be inserted into good quality germplasm so that the full value of the trait can be realised (nevertheless it was also stressede that god production methods are still critical, and shouldnt rely just on the germplasm).

Dr. Eliana Fontes provided an overview of the role of the biosafety committee that advises on the introduction of transgenic crops in Brazil. Points made included: while approval for genes that have been in production in other countries for some time (eg. Cry Iac, IIAb, If, VIP, glyphosate and glufosinate) may be forthcoming soon, approval for 'newer' genes will take some time, especially those not derived from Bt that have not been in the marketplace for as long; the biosafety committee's focus is on ensuring that the technology will not damage the environmment (the committee is therefore not addressing food safety); they have to take into account regional differences when assessing the potential for environmental impact; for example, when assessing the impact of the technology on beneficial insects (defined widely, eg. roles in pollination enhancement, predation etc.), regions can vary markedly, with two regions looked at having 70 different species, and only 4 in common; other isses taken into acocunt include impact on biodiversity and geneflow; the concern of organic farmers with the technology was mentioned – they are proposing a 'no-plant' zone – however it was noted that this approach would deny all farmers within the zone access to the technology; co-existence is thus being proposed as the apprroach to take, with monitoring, use of plant barriers to help prevent contamination.

Dr. Camilo Morelo provided some more specific details on the quality targets of the breeding program, noting the particular challenges of: reducing short fibre content to less than 6 % so as to ensure Brazilian cotton is suitable for 40/1 Ne count yarns; avoiding stickiness/honeydew, and reducing the number of neps. *Issues noted during discussion included*: It was noted that it is important to emphasise the role that better crop management practices have in improving fibre quality, especially nutrition, pest management, harvest management and ginning.

Presentations by BCI (2)

An overview was provided of the BCI framework for defining Better Cotton, i.e.

Term	Explanation of Term
Principle	Broad goal which we hope to achieve (high level 'what')
Beneficiary	Target group for which tools will be provided and criteria will be applied (target group of persons to benefit)
Criteria	Key elements that must be met to achieve principle ('detailed what)'
Tools	Tools and resources that farmers can use to meet criteria
Implementation Strategy	How tools and/or resources will be provided to farmers
Indicators	Measurements used to indicate whether criteria are met

In particular, the current draft environmental principles:

- Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for the health of the soil
- Better Cotton is produced by farmers who maintain the quality and availability of water
- Better Cotton is produced by farmers who use pesticides safely and responsibly
- Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for and preserve the quality of the fibre
- Better Cotton is produced by farmers who preserve natural habitats

were outlined in detail.

Summary of participant feedback on draft BCI Environmental Principles

Following the outline of the BCI framework and draft principles, the meeting broke into 4 small groups, based on the first four environmental principles, i.e. those addressing water management, soil health, pesticide management and fibre quality. The principle addressing habitats was considered by the entire working group. Each Group were asked to consider the following questions for their principle:

1. Are the current draft environmental principles applicable in Brazil? (if no, why not?)
2. Are the listed criteria relevant for this principle in Brazil?
3. Are there any other issues that are important for the principle that are not captured by the listed criteria?
4. What are the current best practices associated with each of the criterion?
5. What are the reasons for non-adoption of the recommended best practice?
6. Are there any practices associated with the criterion that you believe are essential to qualify for better cotton?
7. Are there any practices associated with the criterion that should disqualify as better cotton? (eg. use of particular pesticides).

The collective response to the above questions (except question 4, relating to best practices specific to the principle under consideration) were as follows:

Are the current draft environmental principles applicable in Brazil? (if no, why not?)

It was agreed that the proposed principles were all relevant, **noting** that it was suggested that the principle relating to pesticides be modified to focus on plant protection, with plant protection being defined broadly, i.e. it "Embodies crop phytosanitary management (use of cultural control, biological control, varietal control, behavioural control) and aspects related to pesticide application technology, operator safety and drum recycling. It contemplates management of insects, microorganisms and weeds."

It was also noted that the soil health principle should include an element of improving the health of the soil, or at least protecting and maintaining its characteristics (in reply it was stated that while the principle does not include this aspect, these issues are planned to be taken into account in the wording of the criteria).

For the water principle, it was suggested its focus is "Better Cotton uses water from sustainable sources".

Are the listed criteria relevant for this principle in Brazil?

Each group was also provided with suggested criteria for the principle under consideration, and all these criteria (listed below) were considered to be relevant. The pesticides group stressed the importance of defining pesticides as part of IPM even as a last resource or preventative under special circumstances.

Principle	*Suggested criteria relating to …*
Soil health	Soil management, erosion control, fertiliser management
Water management	Efficient use, extraction, water quality
Pesticide management	Occupational health and safety, application, IPM, choice of pesticides
Fibre quality	Agronomic aspects, harvesting and handling aspects
Habitats	No specific criteria proposed

Are there any other issues that are important for the principle that are not captured by the listed criteria?

The fibre quality group identified 4 criteria, namely planning, crop management, harvesting and ginning, whereas BCI listed only agronomic management, and harvesting and handling. It was suggested that planning and crop management could be included under the general heading of agronomic management. The inclusion of ginning however requires more consideration. While BCI is limiting itself to dealing with on-farm issues, and did not therefore consider ginning as an on-farm issue, in Brazil, gins are often owned by farmers, and can therefore be reasonably claimed to be within the scope of BCI. However, the criteria need to be designed to be applicable globally, and while not unique, farmer-owned gins are certainly not typical.

What are the reasons for non-adoption of the recommended best practice?

A range of reasons were provided: Economics (financial constraints), technical limitations (i.e. some solutions require research), lack of education/training, lack of legislative enforcement, lack of awareness.

Are there any practices associated with the criterion that you believe are essential to qualify for better cotton?

This and the following question can be characterised as representing two sides of the same coin, for example, adoption of IPM can be described as an essential qualification and / or non-adoption of IPM can be described as a disqualifying practice. It was proposed that rather than having the same issue listed as both a qualifying practice, and its opposite listed as a disqualifying practice, that 'good' practices (eg. adoption of IPM) would be noted as qualifying practices, while adoption of 'poor' practices would be listed under disqualifying practices.

While not noted as a qualifying or disqualifying practice, the water group highlighted the importance of ensuring that cotton is grown in areas with suitable rainfall patterns, so as to avoid planting cotton in regions with excessive rainfall that will lead to problems with disease control in particular.

Essential

- Adoption of IPM
- Drum recycling
- Erosion control techniques implemented.

Are there any practices associated with the criterion that should disqualify as better cotton? (eg. use of particular pesticides)

- Use of non-registered products
- Pesticide application without the use of I.P.E. (protective equipment).

Best Practices Identified

Best Practices listed for soil management (Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for the health of the soil)

The best practices identified included:

- Direct Planting
- Minimum Tillage
- Stubble Sowing
- Fertilizer Management – use of fertilizers as per tested and validated technical recomendations.

Erosion control was highlighted as an issue that that was essential to qualify as a better cotton farmer. For no-till farming systems, the challenge presented by residue management was noted (i.e. that it reduces the effectiveness of herbicides).

Best Practices listed for water management (Better Cotton is produced by farmers who maintain the quality and availability of water)

- Optimum sowing dates for efficient water use, based on regional climate
- Ensuring water is controlled properly on-farm (both irrigated and rain-fed)
- That there are appropriate distances between wells and the irrigation field
- That appropriate extraction methods are used.

The water group focussed on the water principle from an irrigation perspective, but following the reporting back of the water group to the meeting, it was agreed that the water principle should be seen more broadly than this, and that it includes issues such as management of underground water, managing/preventing run-off and surface water contamination, protection of riparian zones etc. It was noted also during discussions that legislation exists (or is being introduced) that seeks to protect receiving waters through the mandating of buffer zones.

There was also considerable discussion as to whether planting cotton in zones of very high rainfall should be a disqualifying practice (it could be dealt with either under the pesticides principle, or the water management principle). It was agreed that it was not an issue that should disqualify, but rather an important risk factor (for fibre quality as well as pesticide run-off potential) that need to be taken into account and managed via appropriate tools.

Best Practices listed for pesticide management (Better Cotton is produced by farmers who use pesticides safely and responsibly)

The group based its discussions on an initial assessment of the risks associated with pesticide use, which were identified as including: toxicity to humans and to beneficial fauna and other living organisms, pollution to air, water and soils, pest augmentation, persistence, potential for resistance development and research gaps (lack of knowledge).

Important issues to take into account in managing pests and pesticides were listed as follows (these form the base of the suggested best practices for the principle):

- Adoption of IPM
- Control decision based on sampling (control decision based on sampling criteria)
- Product selection

- Technical monitoring
- Quality of the applications
- Weather conditions
- Product rotation
- Efficacy of products and application
- Selectivity
- Toxicity
- Dosage
- Compliance with legislation
- Compliance
- Cultural/legal measures
- Use of registered products only
- Product selection based on sound technical advice, including choice of registered products, that take into account the various risks noted and which are of proven efficacy
- Drum recycling
- Legislation enforcement
- Occupational health
- Adequate use of individual protecting equipment (IPE).
- Training
- Training of pesticide applicators
- Recognize pesticide application as a risky activity.

Tools available to assist in the growing of Better Cotton include:

- Legislation
- Use of I.P.E.
- Presence of pest scouts
- Technical monitoring at all levels
- A drum recycling system in place.

Issues highlighted needing attention were:

- Excessive number of pesticide applications
- Multiple pesticides being tank-mixed (noted that this is not subject to any legislative restriction)
- Pesticide drift
- The challenges involved in getting workers to wear protective equipment in a tropical climate.

Other best practices identified during the meeting included use of disease resistant cultivars and integrated regional programs for boll weevil control.

Best Practices listed for fibre management (Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for and preserve the quality of the fibre)

1 Crop Planning

1.1 Cultivar selection: make information available on adaptability of cultivars to local conditions and adoption of good quality seeds

1.2 Dates of planting (including risk zoning and avoidance, also need Regional testing and validation of better sowing dates)

2 Crop Management

2.1 Cropping systems: adoption of soil mulching

2.2 Fertilizer Management: soil & plant analysis; Area data tracking (precision agriculture?); Technical assistance

2.3 Pest Management (adoption of economic threshold levels for insects, diseases and weeds, with emphasis on sucking insects)

2.4 Crop phenology: correct use of plant growth regulators

2.5 Preparation for harvest: proper use of defoliants and crop finishing chemicals.

3 Harvesting

3.1 Planning machinery use

3.2 Proper equipment handling and operation

4 Ginning

As per market specifications, including also appropriate training of personnel

Other best practices identified during the meeting included use of better cultivars and constant improvement of harvesting and ginning practices.

Best Practices listed for habitat protection (Better Cotton is produced by farmers who preserve natural habitats)

Following comments from the cotton growers it was agreed that this is fundamentally a regulatory issue, so the principle should be formulated on the basis of the need follow existing legislation on environmental protection, such as complying with buffer distances, reservation requirements etc.

Social Process Meeting goals and objectives

Social and Economic Principles — Social Process Meeting, under auspices of RWG

The aim of the Social Process meeting was outlined to participants as:

- To consult with and develop relations with organisations relevant to the realisation of BCI's Social and Economic Principles (previously identified during 'Social Scoping' mission in July 2007)
- To explain the origins and intentions of BCI, the current state of BCI activity, BCI principles and the way in which BCI intends to develop its Better Cotton work in Brazil
- To understand the scope and nature of these organisations' activities, their views on BCI proposed Principles, and their ideas as to how BCI could begin to act in Brazil.

The Social Process meeting took place in parallel to the Environmental RWG, and participants in both groups worked together for the last half-day. The Social Process day-long meeting followed the broad structure of:

1. Overview of the Better Cotton Initiative
2. Presentations on current activities underway in Brazil aiming to address social sustainability of large-scale farming and to support livelihoods of family farmers in the cotton sector
3. Presentation of the draft social and economic principles in the Better Cotton Framework
4. A working session on definition of Better Cotton in the light of the draft social and economic principles.

Overview of BCI presentation by BCI at the Social Process Meeting

The BCI presentation was aimed at providing a broad overview of BCI, including the global context within which BCI is working, the current framework for the definition of Better Cotton, the proposed global principles and criteria that will define Better Cotton, and the process that BCI is using to define Better Cotton in collaboration with regional stakeholders.

BCI clarified that, while family farming constitutes only c.5% of total national production, BCI is committed to involving both larger commercial farms and family farms in the BCI process. This is for two reasons: while the total production of family farms is slight in comparison with the national total, this small-scale production directly or indirectly supports the livelihoods of significant number of households; moreover, cotton is the single most important cash crop for many of these households.

In particular, it was emphasised that, in seeking to define and apply its draft Global Principals on socio-economic impacts of cotton cultivation, BCI is guided by needs assessment. That is, the Principles under which BCI undertakes to facilitate producer organisation and access to equitable forms of finance are deemed to be relevant where these aspects give rise to negative socio-economic impacts. For this reason, in the Brazilian context, the draft social Principle on producer organisation and draft economic Principle on equitable finance are perceived to be relevant only to smallholders/family farmers, given that large farmers are well-organised under the auspices of ABRAPA and have access to a range of viable credit options. Conversely, the draft Principle on Decent Work is understood to be relevant to both large-scale and family forms of cotton farming.

The questions — designed to help achieve the outcomes sought from the meeting — to be answered during the afternoon working session of the Social Process meeting were:

Group 1: Large-scale (*fazenda*) farming

- What is 'Decent Work' in the context of cotton fazendas?
- What are challenges: for producers (in implementing labour law) and for workers (in realising their rights under law)?

- What are examples of good practice in promoting Decent Work in the cotton sector, and in other rural sectors in Brazil?
- How do these initiatives respond to the expectations of cotton purchasers, consumers and broader civil society?
- How can BCI work with current initiatives to promote Decent Work?

Group 2: Family farming / Smallholders

- What are the key socio-economic challenges for family farmers producing cotton – particularly with regard to the BCI principles on producer organisation, access to credit and Decent Work?
- What are current initiatives working with smallholder cotton farmers to address these socio-economic challenges (eg Embrapa, NGOs, Organic, Fairtrade); what practical steps are being taken to address smallholders' needs?
- What is the potential relation between BCI and these initiatives?
- How should BCI understand the relationship between smallholders and large-scale production?

Summary of participant/consultee feedback on draft BCI Global Framework

Broadly, Social Process participants agreed that all three socio-economic principles were valid, and that it was legitimate to distinguish between their application to larger-scale production (namely, the Decent Work draft principle) and small-scale family farming (to which all three socio-economic principles were deemed pertinent).

Draft Social Principles

Better Cotton Initiative will promote Decent Work (for workers on larger commercial farms and for smallholders)

[It should be noted that, whilst invited to the meeting, neither ILO-Brasilia, CONTAG, Fetagri-MT nor the MTE Labour Inspectorate were able to attend the Social Process meeting. While broad discussion of the issues was attempted, there was no direct representation of worker interests, or of specialist labour agencies, at the meeting, and therefore the consultation on labour practices on large-scale farms and smallholdings must be considered partial.]

Large-scale farming

The Social Process meeting proposed that, in the context of Brazilian large-scale agriculture, 'Decent Work' would entail not simply respect of the core ILO conventions – such as those on forced or child labour – but compliance with the entirety of national labour legislation (CLT and Constitution) and health and safety regulations. It was contended by participants that Brazilian labour and OHS legislation is rigorous, comprising ratification of all of the core ILO conventions, and affords sufficient protection of employees' rights to provide an effective practical benchmark for 'Decent Work' in the national context. It was suggested that while forced labour remains an issue, focused in remote areas, the most common instances of non-compliance with the labour legislation related to working hours, daily and weekly rest, and non-formalisation of employment contracts.

The meeting also noted substantial scope for improvement in the role of workers as 'active partners' – and the concomitant need for investment in skills development and training for workers.

The principle challenges to achieving Decent Work, from the producer-employers' perspective, were noted as:

- Lack of access to information about legislation and its implications for agricultural employers, particularly on smaller/medium-sized farms: it was noted, for example, that some smaller landowners may rely on an external advisor such as an accountant for labour law advice. It was also observed that employers' organisations – in particular the CNA farmers'/rural employers' association – offer advice and information on various aspects of labour law and other regulatory requirements (cf legal checklists available at www.cna.org.br)
- Lack of human resources management capacity and expertise
- Lack of flexibility under current labour regulation – particularly with regard to inability to derogate from terms of CLT labour legislation on working hours by means of collective agreement. (The CLT currently only provides for

derogation from statutory terms in cases of 'special need' and seasonal peak labour requirements – such as planting or harvesting – are not deemed to constitute such cases.)

- 'Culture of resistance to change' among both producers and workers in relation to accepting and promoting change necessary to achieve Decent Work: an example was given that, where personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided, this may not be worn by workers, as it is not perceived to be either appropriate or comfortable. There was extended debate as to how producers should be responsible for ensuring that PPE is not only provided but worn properly. It was also suggested that producers need to be engaged to understand the long-term importance in competitiveness of changes in some practices which potentially may not entail immediate economic gains, but which may, for instance, respond to the needs of international markets.

(Given the non-attendance of worker representatives and specialist labour agencies, it was not possible fully to discuss the important challenges for *workers* in achieving Decent Work.)

A series of initiatives were cited as demonstrating good practice in achieving Decent Work on commercial cotton farms:

- SA8000 certification of Human Resource (HR) management systems (as currently being undertaken by Maeda Group)
- The activities of the IAS (Instituto Algodão Social) 'Social Cotton Institute': monitoring labour standards on cotton plantations in Mato Grosso and proposing corrective actions where required. This model was considered particularly relevant as it will provide the model for expanding and developing similar labour standards management initiatives in other ABRAPA member states (see box below for more detail)
- Legal information and labour/OHS/social security law compliance checklists (such as those developed and distributed by CNA and IAS)
- Awareness-raising and capacity-building activities amongst employers and workers on larger cotton farms: training (technical, OHS, labour rights), basic education/literacy,
- Employer provision of health and transport facilities
- Development of competency and capacity in rural Human Resources management
- Development of 'social performance indicators' – such as those formulated by Ethos Institute – in order to assist employers in gauging and monitoring performance toward achieving sound HR management practices

Instituto Algodão Social

IAS was created in 2005 by producers in MT 'to 'regularise labour relations' in MT cotton sector, in response to concerns of Government, civil society and buyers relating to use of forced labour. IAS has made considerable steps toward implementing a farm-level labour auditing system. The Institute is a private not-for-profit, currently funded by the FACUAL cotton growers' support fund for Mato Grosso (MT) and AMPA, the MT state growers' association, affiliated to ABRAPA. With the launch of the 'Seal of Social Compliance', IAS seeks to become self-funding through a levy (30 cents per bale) on issuing the seal.

IAS currently covers 400 large-scale growers in MT – the vast majority of production – of which 357 have been audited. Working with five 2 two-person teams comprising health & safety and labour specialists, the Institute delivers training to farm managers, monitors farm labour standards and proposes corrective actions. The IAS audit protocol comprises a series of questions similar to most standard labour auditing protocols, and covers a broad series of compliance benchmarks to national labour law. During monitoring visits, a proportion of workers are interviewed (15%), alongside questions put to management. IAS is seeking to expand the scope of work to include environmental impacts: monitoring already includes health and safety – pesticide use and storage, provision and use of PPE – and it is intended to include this to cover input usage levels and better agronomic practice.

While IAS currently only covers MT states, there are plans for ABRAPA to support the establishment of similar initiatives in other key producing states - Bahia, Paraná, Goias and Mato Grosso do Sul - in all except Paraná, these would be funded by the equivalents of FACUAL in MT – cotton growers' support funds.

Smallholdings

It was suggested by participants that smallholders represent a rather different context in which to understand – and apply – the concept of Decent Work, as the family is the basic economic unit. There are commonly no formal relations of employment between family and community members.

It was observed that the one of the most significant challenges in achieving Decent Work on family smallholdings is the promotion of safe working practices, particularly with regard to pesticide application. However, it was also noted that family farms tend to use significantly lower levels of pesticide than large commercial farms.

There was some discussion among participants of the importance of access to education for children in smallholder cotton-farming communities. Participants working with family farmers asked for clarification on the application of ILO conventions on child labour to family smallholdings: unfortunately the ILO was not present to provide its view. Those participants working with smallholder cotton farmers suggested that, in their experience, children's participation in cotton cultivation was limited, and did not impede school attendance nor endanger their physical well-being.

Better Cotton Initiative will facilitate producer organization (for smallholders)

Participants suggested that producer organisation was key to any initiative seeking to work to improve the socio-economic situation of smallholder producers, and should be regarded as the basis for any such work.

In analysing the needs of family cotton farming in relation to producer organisation, the following points were raised by those participants working with family farmers:

- Family farmers need to increase their negotiating power – in terms of accessing inputs and finance, as well as selling and marketing their crop
- Small growers need to organise around the concrete activities of cultivation and processing of cotton, and attempts to engender organisation should centre on the relation of the act of organising to these activities
- In order particularly to add greater value to their crop cultivation, family farmers need to improve access to appropriate forms of mechanisation – namely, 'small mechanisation' such as micro-ginning facilities – and this access can be facilitated by collective organisation
- It is important that any activity aimed at promoting producer organisation should seek to balance a 'political' focus with the economic dimension of production and sales
- There is no single organisation representing smallholders – there are a variety of political, union- and church-based organisations – the most significant are MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra) and CONTAG

Draft Economic Principle

Better Cotton Initiative will facilitate access to equitable finance (for smallholders)

The draft Economic Principle on equitable finance was perceived by participants to be relevant and important. The key current challenges for smallholders with regard to credit were highlighted by participants as follows:

- State credit lines – administered by PRONAF programme of Ministry of Rural Development – are provided on the basis of agricultural products rather than scale of landholding. This means that small family farmers – who typically grow cotton alongside a variety of other food and non-food crops – do not currently have access to a credit line tailored to their needs.
- While access credit for capital investment is readily available, credit for cash-flow and working capital is subject to high interest rates
- Participants suggested that it is difficult for farmer organisations to access credit unless they are established as a cooperative
- It is difficult for women to access credit

While access to credit was widely viewed as a key factor for family farmers, several other accompanying economic pressures were cited by participants:

- Rural depopulation: the size of the average family unit working family smallholdings has declined from 6 persons to 3; this has substantial negative impacts on the ability of a family-based agriculture to sustain itself
- Yields and profitability for small growers are in decline: certain other crops, some illegal (eg cannabis) may represent a potentially higher return on investment
- Market access: initiatives such as Organic and Fairtrade have sought to establish links through value chains to a higher-value market; these initiatives were regarded as positive, and could potentially be expanded, pending apt public policy

Other issues emanating from Social Process meeting:

Distinction and relation between 'large' and family farms

Participants suggested that BCI should understand the distinction between large and family farms as one of production arrangements, rather than technical differences.

Smallholders are most densely located in climatically-suitable belt of the North East region – this is where most cotton production in Brazil was located until the advent of the boll weevil in 1980s; 50% of growers in NE farm fewer than 5 hectares; remaining 25% fewer than 25 hectares. Developments over the last 20 years have decimated smallholder production of cotton – smallholders in the North East, who number some 4,500 (EMBRAPA), are responsible for a very small percentage of total output (c.5%). The main challenges facing smallholders are: absence of extension resources, lack of access to credit and markets, low levels of organisation, and a lack of capacity to add value (eg through micro-ginning facilities). Moreover, it was suggested that small growers are less knowledgeable about the value of their produce, a situation exacerbated by their needing to sell their crop into the same market as cotton grown on large, commercial farms. It was also suggested by some participants that, with the exception of EMBRAPA, state support – such as through agricultural extension services – has been geared to larger-scale farms.

Few, if any, smallholder growers in NE grow cotton exclusively – most grow it alongside 5-15 other crops; smallholders tend to grow hybrid between perennial (arborial) and upland cotton; however, cotton retains singular importance as cash crop and is economically key to the livelihoods of c2m people in families dependent smallholder cotton-growing.

Some participants working with smallholders pointed out that large commercial growers and family farmers are not necessarily in direct competition – family smallholders require far lower returns. The government is supportive of the re-introduction of cotton to smallholder production, but there have been few successes to date; EMBRAPA-COEP and ESPLAR projects are some successful, if small-scale, counter-examples (see 'Activities in Brazil relevant to BCI' below for full list).

Stakeholder engagement and responding to market and stakeholder expectations

There was much discussion during the Social Process meeting of the expectations of national and international markets and stakeholders – within which BCI was identified.

It was agreed that different markets have different requirements. With regard to social performance, it was highlighted that much interest had emanated from EU and US end-users around labour practices on large-scale farms. IAS observed that this was a key driver in their developing the IAS 'Seal of Social Compliance'. IAS launched a 'Seal of Social Compliance' (Selo de Conformidade Social) in July 2007, to guarantee 'no forced labour, no child labour', in response to 'international demands' for a guarantee of sound labour practices in cotton cultivation. The Seal, which is already likely to be granted to some 250 farms in MT for the 2006/7 season, is intended to enable Brazilian textile manufacturers and cotton exporters to gain assurance of the 'ethical' provenance of the cotton they purchase. A Commission composed of ABIT (the Brazilian Association of Textile Industry), ANEA (the National Association of Cotton Exporters of Cotton) and the Vetor C consultancy retained by IAS will be able to refer to a farm code included on the Seal, and may then contact IAS in order to verify that the farm in question has undergone certification. Although IAS originally intended to adopt SA8000, this was rejected on grounds of high cost, as well as the inclusion of environmental and management standards which producers are not yet ready to adopt. IAS has begun talks with the Brazilian standards-setting agency – ABNT/SABC (Sistema Brasileiro de Avaliação da Conformidade) – to assure the quality of the certification process.

It was also noted by participants that much NGO and government attention had been paid to the issues of child labour and forced labour, whereas other aspects of labour compliance – such as OHS and working hours – represented more common challenges for the sector.

Participants also debated the distinction between certifying management processes – as does the SA8000 scheme – and certifying outcomes – as does the IAS Seal of Social Compliance. Participants also agreed that there is potential for productive engagement of stakeholders – including critical stakeholders – in order to advance and strengthen initiatives such as IAS.

Activities in Brazil relevant to BCI draft Global Principles

(NB: these were not discussed during either meeting, but are included given their potential relevance).

Introduction
While the 3 of the programs listed below have a focus on social issues, they also include, or are looking to include, Environmental Principles:

Programa de Educação Ambiental para a Sustentabilidade (PEAS) or Educational Environmental Program for Sustainability has been introduced by the State authorities of Bahia and is sponsored by the Bahia Cotton Growers Association.

The Instituo Social de Algodao, (ISA) has been introduced by the Mato Grosso Cotton Growers Association.

The Pure Brazil Cotton (PBC) has been introduced by the textile industry together with cotton farmers.

While the specific requirements of the environmental aspects of these programs is not yet available, a presentation by a Brazilian speaker at a recent cotton conference provides some indication of the likely approach (note that an exhaustive list was not provided, so the following is only a selection of the potential environmental requirements)

Pesticide use
- The farm owner must apply only herbicides and pest control products on the crops which are biodegradable, or packaged with the green safety label
- He must use an IPM program to monitor the methods of the application of these products.
- He must maintain a location for storing and eventual 100% return of all packaging for the chemical products mentioned above.
- The farm owner must provide proof that methods to avoid spillage of left-overs to control concentrated pollution, or contamination of the environment, have been undertaken.
- The farm owner must show evidence with technical documentation, that he has reincorporated into the soil, or eliminated the cotton stalks, within a maximum of 60 days after harvest with the objective of controlling pests and diseases in the cotton fields, and especially the boll weevil.

Water management
- The farm owner must show evidence with technical documentation as regards their water consumption, and must implement a program of water conservation which ensures the rational use of the water resources.
- The farm owner may not discharge, or deposit, industrial or domestic waste in natural springs without first demonstrating that, the material being discarded has been treated in an appropriate manner.

Natural Habitats
- There must be available a report on the animals which are under captivity. Animals threatened with extinction may not be held captive
- Hunting, capture, removal or the trading of native animals on the farm is prohibited. There must be a written record of the wild animals in the area and their natural habitat.

- All the natural existing eco-systems, both as regards the water and land, must be identified, protected and conserved. The conservation program must include the restoration of the natural eco-systems and the reforestation of those areas within the farm which are unsuitable for agriculture, all subject to an independent audit.

Soil management

- The farm owner must provide evidence with an official technical report as regards the soil preservation and the methods utilized for the prevention of erosion.
- The farm owner must have a fertilizer program, based on the characteristics and the properties of the soil. Soil samples must be made periodically under the supervision of an impartial and competent professional. The number of samples drawn should correspond to the area under production, the types of soil, and the variations in their properties, as well as the results of previous analysis.

Decent Work on large-scale farms

- SA8000 certification
- IAS 'Social Cotton Institute'
- 'Pure Brazil Cotton'

Socio-economic/working with family farmers

- Various programmes working with smallholder producers (see details below for indications of organic projects) – particularly PRONAF credit lines, EMBRAPA-COEP joint project, ESPLAR organic cotton. For instance, the EMBRAPA-COEP is a collaboration between the state agricultural research centre and the COEP 'social mobilisation' NGO working with family farmers. Working with 1000 families in 25 communities, it aims to: improve seed quality; improve pest control practices; add value to raw cotton through provision of micro-gins; organize farming families in collective structures; support food production and security; promote access to potable water and education; promote 'digital inclusion' through provision of internet access to farming communities; provide permanent technical support.
- Other organisations working with smallholder cotton farmers in Brazil include: Fimep, MET, CNPQ, URCA, ASPTA (NGO), PATACA (NGO), Chasf

Indicative summary of smallholder organic/agro-ecological cotton projects in Brazil:

Region	Producer organisation	Support organisation	Participating commercial actors
North-East			
Ceará	ADEC & Sindicatos de Trabaladores Rurais de Quixadá, Choró e Massape	ESPLAR & Universidade Federal do Ceará	Veja Fair Trade Justa Trama
Paraiba	Associação de Assentamentos Arribaçã	EMBRAPA Algodão	COEXIS
Pernambuco	AASP - Associação Agroecológica do Sertão do Pajeú	Diaconia	Conventional market
Rio Grande do Norte	Associação de Agricultores/as Agroecológicos Oeste Verde	Diaconia	Conventional market
South			
Paraná	APROAP – Associação dos Produtores Orgânicos das Águas dos Rios Paraná e Piquiri	IBS; SEBRAE; EMATER; Prefeituras Universidade Estadual de Maringá ; SENAR	COEXIS

Source: PRODUÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE ALGODÃO ORGÂNICO E AGROECOLÓGICO EM 2006 – Pedro Jorge Lima & Maria Célia Martins de Souza

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