

Throughout 2014, we are working with pairs of ginners and spinners to highlight the efforts of those who are making Better Cotton a reality. They are proof of a system that works, and which is gaining momentum. Here they tell us in their own words why others should join the movement and continue to procure more and more Better Cotton.

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OUR BCI GINNER AND SPINNER PAIR:



Jamna dass Murshid, from Murshid Cotton Ginners: MCG was founded in 1980, and has served farmers in Sindh, Pakistan, with three Ginnall gins which incorporate the highest technology available in the area.



Mr. Sajid Haroon, Director, Alkaram Textile Mills: Alkaram Group is a leading Pakistani exporter of textile products to the US, Europe and China. The group was founded in March 1986 with a vision to be a provider of innovative textile solutions worldwide. We manufacture and supply distinguished fabrics for apparel, home and industrial markets with clients all over the world. Our ability to create forward-thinking solutions that give our clients a competitive advantage is what sets us apart. Our core services include: fibre manufacturing; spinning; weaving; knitting; processing; garments division.



WHY BETTER COTTON?

MCG: We feel that supporting farmers in the production and marketing of Better Cotton improves the security of the supply chain, improves the well-being of farmers, and ultimately is good for business.

ALK: We've been associated with BCI since 2009 and are using Better Cotton for well-known brands such as IKEA and Walmart. As a BCI Supplier & Manufacturer member we are supporting the BCI objectives and goals for the betterment of social, economic and environmental factors in the cotton industry. BCI is building close relationships between ginners, supplier and manufacturers, and brands and retailers – bringing them to the same table and facilitating the exchange of knowledge on the Better Cotton supply chain system. By using Better Cotton we are moving towards sustainability, which is a fundamental need for the textile sector.

HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN PARTNER?

MCG: We were first contacted by Alkaram enquiring about a delivery of Better Cotton. We always maintain a stock of Better Cotton so we were able to respond immediately. We are known as quality producer in Sukkur region so we regularly receive enquiries.

ALK: We were first introduced to Better Cotton by IKEA who use it in their textile products. So we then approached BCI registered ginner to supply us with Better Cotton bales. Since being associated with BCI we've actively participated in its programs, using the traceability systems to see availability of Better Cotton and keep our inventory in good order. We appreciate the efforts of BCI for connecting supply chain actors in the textile sector.

HOW DO YOU FIND AND PURCHASE BETTER COTTON?

MCG: Our agents travel to villages where we know there are Better Cotton licensed farmers, thanks to the information provided by BCI. We train our agents on the importance of segregation at field level for Better Cotton, keeping it separate from conventional cotton, and we also contact large farmers who we know have produced Better Cotton exclusively on their farms. Though it used to be a challenge, we are now better equipped to deal with this.

ALK: Our team visits cotton fields in different regions of Pakistan early in the season, also contacting local ginner to assess quality, quantity and availability of cotton, as well as crop position. In the second phase on the basis of visit reports, contacts are established with the brokers to assign task for purchasing of cotton. We received samples from ginner and after testing on HVI, we purchase cotton lots. Testing is then performed again for purchased lots and the accepted lots are incorporated into our inventory. The BCI Mass-Balance system is very helpful to be able to deliver on buyers' demands for Better Cotton yarn on time.

WHY SHOULD OTHER COMPANIES BECOME BCI MEMBERS?

MCG: There are two reasons: firstly if you are a businessman, it represents a good current and future business opportunity. Secondly, if you want to be a good citizen, Better Cotton is trying to save our planet's scarce resources such as water, as well as keeping us safe from disease by minimising the use of harmful pesticides.

ALK: The BCI goal for the betterment of social, economic, and environmental factors affecting the cotton sector is in the greater interests of all stakeholders. Everyone knows the importance of environmental issues which face us globally, such as water issues, environmental issues, and health issues - especially in the developing world.

BCI's work is to continually improve cotton-growing practices and to have Better Cotton recognised as a mainstream sustainable commodity. Farmers associated with this program and the BCI farming practices enjoy a lot of benefits including environmental benefits, lower production costs, and better use of water.

To create good quality products you need good quality cotton, so the focus is not only on improving productivity but also on seed selection to create a better yield for the farmers and better fibre quality for spinners. So other supply chain actors should take the initiative to come forward and join the Better Cotton movement, to support it and to make it a success for the socio-economic development of their country.

WHAT DIFFERENCES HAVE BEEN MADE TO YOUR BUSINESS AFTER LEARNING ABOUT AND WORKING WITH THE BETTER COTTON STANDARD SYSTEM?

MCG: At buying level (farm level), the major difference is that our farmers are well aware of the criteria for using water, pesticides and how to reduce contamination, and we feel reassured to work with them.

At ginning level, we are also better aware of how to make best use of our resources to increase production, minimise production costs, improve working conditions by taking safety measures, decrease noise levels, and improve fibre quality.

At selling level we are now maintaining online our daily production report, daily buying and selling report and daily stock report with specification of fibre quality, which increases the demand for Better Cotton.

ALK: Our overall business volume has increased thanks to our long-term commitment to use Better Cotton in our products. Since Alkaram has been in forefront for procuring Better Cotton, more customers are approaching Alkaram for future business.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE FOR BETTER COTTON?

MCG: Our vision is to see the cotton supply chain in Pakistan modernised from the ground level up, with the help of the BCI Implementing Partners (who work with farmers to train them to grow Better Cotton). We are very grateful to all BCI Implementing Partners.

ALK: Our senior management is committed to adopting and successfully implementing the Better Cotton Supply Chain System and is committed to increasing Better Cotton volumes in its total cotton procurement. Our target is to increase our volume in the current season up to 25-30%, and up to 35-40% in 2015.

As the 4th largest cotton producer in the world, we feel that Pakistan has a lot of potential to benefit from BCI's work to make improve the social, environmental & economic impacts of cotton production, and their aim to develop 30% of global cotton production as Better Cotton by 2020.

‘Better Cotton represents a good current and future business opportunity.’

Jamna dass Murshid, from Murshid Cotton Ginners

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