

# Better Cotton

## Production Principles & Criteria



This document lays out the **global definition of Better Cotton**.

Cotton producers should always abide by national legislation, unless that legislation sets standards which are below the referenced internationally recognised standards and conventions, in which case the international standards prevail. However, where national legislation sets higher requirements on a specific issue than these standards, then national legislation shall apply.

Better Cotton is cotton produced in a way that is **measurably better** for the environment and farming communities.

We want to **transform** the cotton sector by turning Better Cotton into a **global sustainable, mainstream** commodity.

# Better Cotton is produced by farmers who minimise the harmful impact of crop protection practices



## 1.1 An Integrated Pest Management Programme is adopted that includes the following principles:

- I growing of a healthy crop; and
- II prevention of build-up of pest populations and of the spread of disease; and
- III preservation and enhancement of populations of beneficial organisms; and
- IV regular field observations of the crop's health and key pest and beneficial insects; and
- V management of resistance.

## 1.2 Only pesticides that are:

- I registered nationally for the crop being treated; and
- II correctly labelled in the national language are used.

## 1.3 Pesticides listed in Annex A and B of the Stockholm Convention are not used.

## 1.4 Pesticides are prepared and applied by persons who are:

- I healthy; and
- II skilled and trained in the application of pesticides; and
- III 18 or older; and
- IV not pregnant or nursing.

## 1.5 Use of pesticides in any of the following categories:

- I WHO list of hazardous pesticides Class 1a and 1b
- II those listed in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention

**is phased out, with the timeline based on the availability of better alternatives and ability for the risk to be properly managed.**

**1.6** Pesticides are always prepared and applied by persons who correctly use appropriate protective and safety equipment.

**1.8** Pesticides are applied in appropriate weather conditions, according to label directions, and or manufacturers' directions, with appropriate and well-maintained equipment.

**1.7** Pesticide application equipment and containers are stored, handled and cleaned so as to avoid environmental harm and human exposure.

**1.9** Used pesticide containers are collected by a recycling programme, or disposed of safely.



# 2

**Better Cotton is produced by farmers who use water efficiently and care for the availability of water**



**2.1 Water management practices are adopted that optimise water use.**

**2.2 Management practices are adopted to ensure that water extraction does not cause adverse effects on groundwater or water bodies.**



**Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for the health of the soil**

**3.1 Soil management practices are adopted that maintain and enhance the structure and fertility of the soil.**

**3.2 Nutrients are applied on the basis of crop and soil needs. Timing, placement and quantity applied are all optimised.**

**3.3 Management practices are adopted that minimise erosion, so that soil movement is minimised and water courses, drinking water sources and other bodies of water are protected from farm run-off.**



# 3

# 4

Better Cotton is produced by farmers who conserve natural habitats



**4.1** Practices are adopted that enhance biodiversity on and surrounding the farm.

**4.2** The use and conversion of land to grow cotton conforms with national legislation related to agricultural land use.



Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for and preserve the quality of the fibre

**5.1** Management practices are adopted that maximise the fibre quality.

**5.2** Seed cotton is harvested, managed, and stored to minimise trash, contamination and damage.



# 5

# 6

**Better Cotton is produced by farmers who promote Decent Work**



## Freedom of Association

**6.1** Smallholders (including tenants, sharecroppers and other categories) have the right, on a voluntary basis, to establish and develop organisations representing their interests.

*(For provisions on worker organisation in the context of non-family employment, see additional criteria below.)*

## Health and Safety

**6.2** Access to potable and washing water is provided.

*(See also Crop Protection Criteria)*

## Child Labour

**6.3** There is no child labour, in accordance with ILO Convention 138.

Exceptionally, in the case of family smallholdings, children may help on their family's farm provided that the work is not liable to damage their health, safety, well-being, education or development, and that they are supervised by adults and given appropriate training.

**6.4** For hazardous work, the minimum age is 18 years.

## Forced Labour

**6.5** Employment is freely chosen: no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour.

## Non-discrimination

**6.6** There is no discrimination (distinction, exclusion, or preference) practiced that denies or impairs equality of opportunity, conditions, or treatment based on individual characteristics and group membership or association.

## Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

**6.7** All workers and employers have the right to set up and join organisations of their own choosing, and to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives and to formulate their programmes.

**6.8** Workers and employers have the right to bargain collectively.

**6.9** Workers have the right to belong to a trade union and carry out lawful union activities without any fear of anti-union discrimination.

**6.10** Employers should provide access and reasonable facilities for workers' representatives.

## Health and Safety

**6.11** Workers receive regular health and safety training appropriate to the work that they perform.

**6.12** Employers meet their workers' basic requirements, as specified above, and including a clean place to eat, and access to adequate medical care at no charge.

**6.13** Employers identify work hazards, inform workers of safe work practices, and adopt preventive measures to minimise hazards in the workplace. Employers maintain records of any accidents and occupational diseases.

**6.14** Employers ensure that measures are in place to deal with accidents and emergencies, including first aid and access to appropriate transportation to medical facilities.

## **Employment Conditions**

**6.15**

Waged workers are paid wages at least equivalent to the applicable legal national minimum wage or regional norm, whichever is higher.

**6.16**

Where workers are paid at a piece-rate, this rate permits the worker to earn the applicable national minimum wage or regional norm (whichever is higher) during normal working hours and under normal operating conditions.

**6.17**

Workers are paid regularly in cash, or in a form that is convenient to them.

**6.18**

The principle of equal pay for work of equal value is observed.

**6.19**

The worker's consent is obtained in advance as regards all working conditions.

**6.20**

Workers are employed under legally binding (preferably written) contracts of employment.

**6.21**

Adequate records are kept in accordance with national law, but in any event sufficient to enable monitoring.



**6.22** Temporary, seasonal and (sub-) contracted workers receive equivalent benefits and employment conditions to permanent workers in relation to their period of employment.

**6.23** Working hours comply with national laws of relevant collective agreements, whichever is more favourable to the worker.

**6.24** Overtime is voluntary and remunerated in accordance with the law or applicable collective agreements.

## Basic Treatment and Disciplinary Practices

**6.25** Employers do not engage in or tolerate the use of corporal punishment, metal or physical coercion, sexual or other harassment or physical or verbal abuse of any kind.

**6.26** There is a transparent and clear policy and system for disciplinary measures and this is communicated to workers. The system includes fair warning principles and any disciplinary actions are proportionate to the conduct in question.

