

Better Cotton Statement

Better Cotton is the world's largest sustainability initiative for cotton. We work with partners worldwide to help farmers produce cotton more sustainably and with leading businesses to build demand across the fashion and textile sectors. Our standards are regularly reviewed and improved and we work with third party auditors to check they are followed. We welcome the work of organisations like Earthsight to highlight areas for additional scrutiny.

We have conducted an independent audit of the highly concerning issues raised which relate to three Better Cotton licensed farms in the state of Bahia in Brazil. We are committed to making a summary of the findings of the audit available to Earthsight and all our Members.

As per our operating procedures, if there is evidence that the farms do not comply with requirements of the Better Cotton Standard, their licenses will be suspended or revoked. We will work closely with the Brazilian Cotton Growers' Association (ABRAPA), our partner in Brazil and owner of the Brazilian Responsible Cotton Protocol, a national programme recognised as equivalent to Better Cotton's Standard, throughout this process.

Our standard is designed to stop land with high conservation values being converted to cotton farming and land from being converted without the consent of the community. Our earlier standard and the latest one both reflect that.

Prior to Earthsight's report, we have strengthened long-standing provisions relating to the issue of land conversion and, in 2023, announced an updated standard (P&C v.3.0). As per our benchmarking procedure, ABRAPA is now updating their standard to be in alignment with the Better Cotton standard in time for the next growing season in November, as part of our process of continuous improvement and review.

The report covers several aspects that include matters in court and undergoing due process, fires that took place on farms that are not Better Cotton related and fines that have since been overturned – these matters are out of scope for us.

Certain issues raised in the report do support our existing priority to enhance due diligence with partners especially with regards to land conversion, illegal deforestation and local community impact. We are working with stakeholders to strengthen mechanisms for oversight processes including more rigorous reviews and cross-checks of partner alignment with Better Cotton's Standard.

Consumers and the brands that supply them must have confidence that the cotton in their clothing is produced responsibly. We will continue to work with farmers, governments, and the industry at large to lift standards in Brazil and around the world.

Better Cotton is experiencing a high volume of enquiries at this time. Please direct yours to chris.remington@bettercotton.org and BetterCotton-UK@fgsglobal.com.