



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1629 K Street NW, Suite 702, Washington DC 20006 USA

Telephone +1-202-463-6660 • Fax +1-202-463-6950 • email secretariat@icac.org



From the Secretariat

For Release September 7, 2009

The Role of Cotton in Economic Development and Ensuring Food Security During a Period of Global Economic Crisis

68TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

During the
**International Year of Natural Fibres:
“Discover Natural Fibres”**

Cape Town, South Africa

The role of organic production in the cotton industry

The 68th Plenary Meeting of the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) is underway. Speakers during a Roundtable discussion on Sunday the 6th suggested that organic cotton has the potential to provide new ideas that can influence and support wider sustainability drives in the sector. The organic cotton sector continues to grow, albeit more slowly in the global economic slowdown, reaching over 180,000 metric tons of lint in 2008/09.

Organic cotton is one option to meet the challenges of land use, food security and water scarcity. Small growers exposed to variable rainfall and problems from debt produce most organic cotton in India. Many farmers view organic cotton as a risk reduction tool, but the use of fewer purchased inputs involves a tradeoff with productivity. Often the smallest and most resource poor farmers come to organic, and in fact organic works better in marginal or tribal areas. Certification of organic cotton is expensive and in some states of India the government is supporting certification costs. Speakers conveyed a collective message that organic cotton requires technological knowledge.

An essential element of organic cotton production is to have more planning and certainty through partnerships to ensure long-term viability. Organic cotton production, processing, spinning and marketing at the retail level involve a long and complex chain requiring traceability and communication links between producers and consumers. The future of organic cotton production may involve contract farming with direct links to retailers.

(Press releases are available via e-mail. To register for this free service, send your contact information to [<publications@icac.org>](mailto:publications@icac.org))

The Secretariat of the Committee publishes information related to world cotton production, supply, demand and prices, and provides technical information on cotton production technology. Detailed statistics are found bimonthly in *COTTON: Review of the World Situation*, \$185 per year via email, \$225 per year in hard copy. A monthly outlook is available by email for \$295 per year. Access to the latest weekly estimates of world cotton supply and use by the Secretariat is available on the Internet for \$460 per year. Access Secretariat reports at [<www.icac.org>](http://www.icac.org).