REEL Cotton Programme

The REEL Cotton Programme is a three-year agricultural programme providing farmers with training on sustainable cotton farming practices.

Run by CottonConnect in partnership with leading brands and retailers, the programme is proven to increase yields and farm profits; while reducing environmental impacts. REEL Cotton can be fully traced from farmer to store.

Since its creation in 2010, more than 100,000 farmers have been, or are currently being, trained by the REEL programme, predominantly in India, China, Pakistan and Peru, well exceeding the goal to reach 50,000 farmers by 2020.

The REEL Cotton Programme is independently verified by a code of conduct developed with FLOCERT, the organization that provides Fairtrade International certification.

About the REEL Code
CottonConnect and FLOCERT have developed a code of conduct that is internationally recognised and verified by FLOCERT www.flocert.net.

The REEL Code verifies that farmers in the REEL Cotton Programme are using sustainable practices, with added elements that ensure traceability and decent work.

The code is based on eight principles:
1. Management skills
2. Plant and field management
3. Soil nutrient management
4. Pest management
5. Water management
6. Ecosystem protection
7. Waste management
8. Institutional grouping

“Thanks to the REEL cotton programme we learnt about the essential nutrients required for healthy cotton growth. For the first time in so many years we received a better quality of cotton with increased yields which resulted in a high market price for our cotton.”

Godiben Vasani, Cotton farmer from Surendranagar, Gujarat, India.

In a water footprint study in 2016, REEL farms outperformed the conventional farms with 1.5 times as much yield and a reduced water footprint. (Source: Towards sustainable water use in the cotton supply chain. Water Footprint Network, May 2016)
What is CottonConnect?
CottonConnect is an enterprise with a clear mission to transform the cotton industry for good.

We partner with brands and retailers and use our global, multi-stakeholder network and local contacts to help develop more robust and resilient cotton supply chains.

CottonConnect in numbers
Creating economic opportunities for more than 520,000 cotton farmer families in India, China, Pakistan and Peru, and impacting over 2.5 million livelihoods.

Our ambition is to improve the livelihoods of more than 3 million people in cotton farming communities by 2020.

Services from CottonConnect
Supporting the work of REEL, further services from CottonConnect promote sustainable cotton agriculture and develop thriving lives and livelihoods:

WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT - RIGHTS AND LIFE SKILLS
Working with women to increase their knowledge and confidence through an education programme which covers health, rights and enterprise development.

FARMER BUSINESS SCHOOL
By focusing on financial literacy and financial management we encourage farmers to see their farm as a business. We are introducing farmers to new technologies, microfinance and credit.

ORGANIC INTEGRITY AND FARMER TRAINING
Focusing on organic agricultural practices, bio-diversity and improving integrity of cotton through initiatives like seed management.

BETTER COTTON INITIATIVE (BCI)
CottonConnect is an implementation partner helping to train farmers to use more sustainable farming practices and grow BCI cotton.

TRANSPARENCY AND VERIFICATION
End-to-end supply chain mapping and traceability of supply delivers reassurance on sustainable cotton supply. The CottonConnect traceability software tool is called Tracebale.

Call to Action for Brands and Retailers
It is critical for the textile industry to manage reputational risk and address sustainability in the cotton supply chain.

Cotton is a labour and environmentally intensive crop often grown in dry regions, and prone to disease. Over 60% of the world’s cotton is produced in developing countries and by cotton communities of smallholder farmers with limited worker protection, education and gender equality.

Only 15% of the world’s cotton fibre is currently classed as sustainable and of this around 20% is purchased as sustainable cotton. We invite brands and retailers across the cotton industry to join us to work to increase this figure and to transform the world’s cotton for good.

Please get in touch to find out how we can help:
www.cottonconnect.org
info@cottonconnect.org