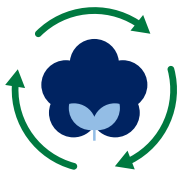




REEL Cotton Code is a flagship three-year agricultural training programme by CottonConnect for sustainable cotton production. CottonConnect has been working to improve the sustainability of cotton production for over ten years with global brands and cotton farming communities to deliver positive results with huge environmental and social benefits.

Sustainable cotton is grown and produced in a way in which high levels of production can be maintained while ensuring minimal environmental impact.



REEL Cotton Code provides farmers with training on sustainable cotton farming practices. These practices aim to reduce the use of water, chemical pesticides and fertilisers, thereby reducing environmental impact. The farmers are introduced to composting and crop rotation methods which reduce the need for chemical fertilisers and are also taught to use non-chemical methods of pest control, identify friendly and enemy insects, and apply pesticides accordingly. These practices reduce input costs and protect soil's health.

The evaluation is done by a second party and is verified by CottonConnect on a 50% sample of the farmers in training programmes compared with conventional farmers. Results for specific customer programmes are also third-party verified.

REEL COTTON IMPACT RESULTS 2019-20



Boosted profits by
24.4%



Increased yields by
8.2%



Cut water use by
6.6%



Reduced pesticide use by
14.1%

The evaluation was conducted by CottonConnect on approximately 50% of the farmers in the REEL training programme (2019-20) compared with conventional farmers.

- Supports viable producer livelihoods and communities

REEL Cotton farmers experience increased yield, profit and income. This is essential to support viable livelihoods of smallholder farmers and their communities that rely on growing cotton to make a living.

- Long-term practices for long-term ecological constraints and socioeconomic pressures

CottonConnect helps brands to re-imagine supply chains by supporting them in taking a holistic approach to farmer and supply chain resilience. During the REEL Cotton programme, farmers are carefully trained on the long-term practices which aim to improve the viability of their cotton farm. CottonConnect also considers long-term ecological impacts on REEL farmers, for example, CottonConnect conducted research in 2020 to understand the impact of climate change on women cotton farmers in India and Pakistan.

Defining characteristics of sustainable cotton, agreed on by Cotton 2040 partners (and reflected through the Delta Framework of common impact metrics) encompass social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

The REEL Cotton Code encompasses criteria to promote social, environmental and economic sustainability, under the categories of:

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
9. Employment

As part of continuous improvement, the next revision of the Code, which is currently underway, includes reviewing the 15 indicators of the Delta Framework, many of which are already covered by the REEL Cotton Code.



PROMOTES EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

In addition to providing agronomic training to farmers, REEL Cotton programmes also intend to improve their livelihoods through the social intervention programmes such as **Women in Cotton**, **Farmer Business School** and **Health and Safety in Cotton Gins**.

The **Women in Cotton** programme focuses on both social and agronomic training, allowing women to understand the ways improve income from agriculture and fostering an environment of empowerment through literacy & numeracy, and by educating them on rights and health. This enables women to take advantage of increased livelihood opportunities.

The success of this programme helped CottonConnect to recommend and urge brands and retailers engaged in agronomic training to include gender training into their programmes, thus promoting equality and empowerment.



LABOUR CONDITIONS

CottonConnect strongly believes in safeguarding the rights and interests of the workers in all its programmes and therefore does not tolerate forced or bonded labour, does not employ children in the workplace and is committed to the principles of protecting children from child labour exploitation through its operations.

The **Decent Work Policy** discourages discrimination amongst labour based on nationality, caste, sex, or religion. Workers are not to be subject to any form of corporal punishment, abuse, harassment, or intimidation and equal wages are paid to male and female farm labour as required by ILO 100.



TRACEABILITY

CottonConnect works with global brands and manufacturers to run sustainable cotton programmes, and the cotton grown by these farmers, including REEL Cotton, is traceable via TraceBale (CottonConnect's bespoke, proprietary traceability software tool which provides dynamic and potentially real time source information and chain of custody of any apparel product produced in a CottonConnect's supply chain) all the way up to the final product.

Traceability through TraceBale starts from the farm, where the field officers record all the vital information about farmer, farm, and the cropping pattern and can be fed with data from farmers, ginners, spinners, and other processors in the chain.

To download the REEL Cotton Code, visit: www.cottonconnect.org/sustainable-practices



CottonConnect is a company with a social purpose to re-imagine the cotton supply chains and help textile producers and farmers enjoy better livelihoods.

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