

REACH - POTENTIAL IMPACT ON COTTON INDUSTRY

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Abstract

REACH is a new European Regulation (EC 1907/2006) that came into effect on June 1, 2007. This presentation will review the basics of the new REACH regulation including timelines and will discuss its potential impact on the use of cotton in products destined for sale in Europe.

REACH stands for Registration, Evaluation, and Authorization of Chemicals and will impact the use of over 30,000 existing chemicals. The regulation provides a transitional arrangement for substances already in the European market. These substances are designated as phase-in chemicals and must be pre-registered prior to November 30, 2008, to remain in commerce.

Natural fibers such as cotton are exempt from the regulation but any chemical treatments on cotton such as flame retardants are not exempt. Any substance applied to cotton and designed to be released from the product in-use must also be registered.

Articles in commerce are technically exempt from the regulation but a supplier must demonstrate that the article is made from REACH compliant substances. Also, a list of SVHC (substances of very high concern) chemicals will be developed and any article containing > 0.1% of a SVHC will be required to notify the governing European Agency.