

The National Cotton Women's Committee
Wants You
to know that...

Cotton Counts



You can count on the softness, durability and comfort of cotton — from t-shirts to towels.

You can count on access to hundreds of other life-enhancing products that contain cotton linters or cottonseed oil — from toothpaste to salad dressing.

You can even count on cotton for mop heads and dollar bills.

Speaking of money, the National Cotton Women's Committee wants you to know that the U.S. cotton industry not only contributes enormously to America's quality of life but contributes significantly to the nation's economic health.

Stimulating to the economy, sensitive to the environment and satisfying to the consumer, cotton is not only the No.1 food and fiber crop in the land, it is truly one of America's cornerstone industries.

Count these Cotton facts:

Economic Stimulation

The purchase of more than \$5.3 billion worth of supplies and services is involved in the production of each year's U.S. cotton crop. The average farm value of the harvested U.S. cotton crop is about \$4.68 billion.

Processing and handling of the annual 8.2 billion pounds of cotton after it leaves U.S. farms builds in even more value. Annual retail revenue stimulated by cotton in the U.S. economy exceeds \$120 billion — making cotton America's No. 1 value-added crop.

Employment Opportunities

Production and processing of U.S.-grown cotton employs more than 440,000 Americans.

After leaving the farm, cotton is processed and handled by nearly 3,500 gins, cottonseed mills, warehouses, merchandisers, shipping companies and textile manufacturers.

Efficient Suppliers

In 2001, U.S. cotton growers produced 20 million (480-lb.) bales on 14 million acres. An additional 20 million acres would have been required to produce a comparable crop in the 1930s.

U.S. textile manufacturers are using 8 to 9 million bales of cotton annually. That's enough cotton to make nearly 2 billion pairs of men's jeans or more than 6 billion men's dress shirts.



Export Value

The U.S. cotton industry is exporting 6 to 9 million bales of raw cotton annually. The annual value of that cotton exceeds \$3 billion.

Exports of yarn, denim and other U.S.-manufactured cotton products have increased dramatically over the past decade — from 1.4 million bale equivalents in 1990 to more than 5 million bale equivalents today.

Environmental Enhancement

The National Boll Weevil Eradication Program and other integrated pest management (IPM) efforts in the Cotton Belt are an environmental plus. IPM is a sensitive insect control strategy that evaluates and consolidates all available control techniques, including natural, genetic, cultural and chemical to minimize environmental disturbances. Foliar cotton insecticide use is down significantly because more than two-thirds of U.S. cotton acreage is now planted in transgenic varieties that are resistant to key insect pests.

Reduced insecticide use on U.S. cotton is a direct environmental benefit of the National Boll Weevil Eradication Program, which has eliminated the weevil from more than 5 million acres and is nearing that goal on the Cotton Belt's other 10 million acres. That program fits with cotton producers' use of IPM. Also, nearly 75 percent of today's U.S. cotton acreage is now planted in transgenic varieties that are resistant to key worm pests and/or resistant to herbicides. Environment benefits are reduced insecticide use and increased use of fuel-saving conservation tillage practices.

End-user Satisfaction

Cotton's retail market share in apparel and home products is now at an all-time high of 64 percent. From blue jeans to bedsheets, from khakis to couch covers, American consumers depend on cotton for the way they look, the way they sleep, the way they LIVE.

Consumers also benefit from not — so — obvious uses of cotton fiber, cotton seed and even the short fuzz on the seed, cotton linters. Among the hundreds of products enhanced by cotton and its byproducts are: plastics, high quality paper, ice cream, cosmetics, futon and mattress padding, fertilizer and livestock feed.

