

FIBER AND TEXTILES

Fiber is focus of walking tour

Twenty-two participants took part in OTA's Organic Fiber Walking Tour on Saturday, May 6, as part of All Things Organic™. The tour spotlighted retailers in Chicago's Lincoln Park area that offer clothing made with organic fiber. Included were stops at American Apparel, OQOQO, Patagonia, and Whole Foods.

Established in 1997, American Apparel now has 100 retail stores and also sells wholesale. Erika Martinez, representative for the company's Sustainable line, was on hand to greet participants. Currently the company's organic cotton products come only in color-grown color, some with colored topstitching. The company works to use sustainable and fair trade practices at its manufacturing facilities and recently installed solar panels on its California plant, to provide approximately 30 percent of the energy needed.

Libby Vance, product manager at OQOQO, exuded passion and enthusiasm as she greeted the tour group. OQOQO, which had opened one month before the tour, mainly uses organic cotton, soy, bamboo, hemp, and fleece and other materials made from recycled soda bottles. The company often adds a little Lycra to most garments for added wear-ability. Many items are versatile; for example, a skirt can also be a top and is reversible, giving the option of two different colors. The organic cotton used is primarily from India, and the garments are manufactured in Canada.

At Patagonia, store manager Brooks Scott described how Patagonia was established in 1968 as a mail order company, and its retail

stores have room to display only about 50 percent of its clothing line. Current sales channels include online, mail order, retail, and wholesale to distributors. In 1991, Patagonia did an analysis that revealed detrimental environmental effects from growing and processing non-organic cotton.



Erika Martinez of American Apparel (on right), shows fiber tour participants an organic top.

As a result, company officials decided to switch to all organic cotton. It took Patagonia four years to convert all of its cotton line to 100 percent organic. Its cotton clothing has been 100 percent organic for the past ten years.

Whole Foods Market Consumer Education Manager Adrienne Sigeti said the retailer is striving to enable customers to buy anything organic, including food, personal care, clothing, (men's, women's, children's, infant's), and bedding. The group toured the sections of the store that featured organic fiber items, including organic personal care items, kitchen towels and a small clothing section. Sigeti explained that Whole Foods plans for each of its stores to have a clothing section, including shoes. Until then, the stores will offer catalogs for consumers to order those items.

—Lori Wyman and Ally Radcliff prepared this summary.

Cotton sales up

Use of organically grown cotton by leading retailers, fashion designers and small and medium-size companies brought dramatic growth in global retail sales of products containing organic cotton between 2001 and 2005, according to a report released by Organic Exchange.

During the four-year period, global organic cotton product sales increased approximately 35 percent annually, from \$245 million in 2001 to \$583 million in 2005. U.S. sales increased an average of 55 percent per year, from \$86 million in 2001 to \$275 million in 2005.

The report, entitled "The Organic Exchange Spring 2006 Global Organic Cotton Market

Report," authored by Rebecca Calahan Klein projects global organic cotton product sales to reach \$2.6 billion by the end of 2008, reflecting an average annual growth rate of 116 percent.

The five brands using the most organic cotton globally in 2005 were Nike, Coop Switzerland, Patagonia, Otto, and Sam's Club/Wal-Mart. In addition, more than 30 companies had active organic cotton programs in 2005. The report also identified more than 1,200 small and medium-sized brands and retailers offering organic cotton products in North America, Europe and Asia.

The report estimated that 9,066 metric tons (42,552 bales) of organic cotton fiber were used in producing these products during 2005.

A second report, "The Organic Exchange's Spring 2006 Organic Cotton Fiber Report," prepared by Simon Ferrigno provides farmers,

Continued on Page 16

FIBER & TEXTILES

Continued from Page 15

retailers, manufacturers, and others interested in organic cotton with an in-depth look at global organic cotton production, information about current demand for organic cotton and possible market scenarios in 2006 and 2007, an analysis of critical issues affecting growth of the fiber supply, and concrete steps that farmers, companies and other organizations can take to support the sustainable expansion of the global organic cotton supply.

For more information, see www.organicexchange.org.

OTA fiber update

Get involved in the Organic Fiber and Textiles Forum. Contact Tessa Young (tyoung@ota.com) to sign up for this member community.

OTA is collaborating with the Organic Exchange on an initiative to educate consumers and others on the facts about organic textile fibers, and to inspire them to choose products made with organic as frequently as possible. The project uses the resources of the organic fiber community to create materials that are accessible and available to all. Lori Wyman, forum liaison, is serving on the Web site Advisory Committee for this project.

LOOKING TOWARD MAGIC

OTA and Organic Exchange (OE) will host a presentation at the MAGIC Marketplace Aug. 28-31 in Las Vegas entitled "Taking The Natural Next Step: Why and How to Integrate Organic Fiber into your Apparel Lines."

Speakers will be Beaver Theodosakis of Prana, Marci Zaroff of Under the Canopy, and Robert Flug of Bernard Chau, Inc., with Sandra Marquardt of On the Mark Public Relations as moderator.

OTA and OE will also share an exhibit space in the sourcing section. For more information on the event, see www.sourcingatmagic.com/sourcingatmagic/v42/index.cvn.

COTTON RESEARCH

- An article forwarded to OTA by OTA member company Greenfibres shows the benefits of organic cotton seem to outweigh those from Bt genetically engineered cotton, according to a survey conducted in Andhra Pradesh, India, by the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture. According to study results, cultivating Bt cotton per acre cost 8,366 rupees, compared to 5,008 rupees for organic cotton. Meanwhile, net income per acre for Bt cotton was lower by 37 percent than that for organic cotton.
- A report entitled "The sustainability of cotton: consequences for man and environment" summarizes what is known about the environmental impact of conventional, IPM and organic cotton production systems and suggests starting points for discussing the social aspects of sustainable cotton. Released April 2006, it was prepared by researchers at Wageningen University and issued as Report 223 from Science Shop Wageningen UR, the Netherlands.

COMPANY NEWS

- Canada's *Style Magazine* chose **Hemptown Clothing, Inc.**, as the recipient of its 2006 Industry Innovation Award.
- **Jasco New York LLC** is now manufacturing an organic wool fabric with **Vermont Organic Fiber Company**, including Style 9161-100 percent certified organic O-Wool interlock in natural color. Trials are under way to develop a color range using a new herb-based dyeing technique developed in Italy. Simultaneously, the company is finalizing trials on package dyeing organic wool with eco-approved, non-metal dyes with a range of seven colors (www.jascofabrics.com)
- Golden Gate Capital has acquired **Norm Thompson Outfitters, Inc.** The acquisition was completed by Golden Gate's portfolio company Catalog Holdings Inc., which also owns Spiegel, Newport News, Appleseed's, Draper's & Damon's, and The Tog Shop.
- **Oregon Tilth** has launched its organic fiber and textile handling certification program to certify

operations to OTA's American Organic Standards for Fiber and Textile Handling.

- **Under the Canopy Organic ECOfashion™** founder Marci Zaroff and Yosi Lutwak of OM Organics have formed a marketing partnership and created a Fair Trade™ Program to benefit workers who harvest organic fibers and work in the factories in the United States and India where Under the Canopy and OM Organics products are produced.
- Allan T. Britton has joined the **Vermont Organic Fiber Co.** as chief operating officer. He has over 25 years of professional experience in textile manufacturing, management and operations.
- Wal-Mart in May introduced George Baby Organic cotton clothing, which includes rompers, dresses, t-shirts and shorts for infants ages newborn to 9 months.
- **White Lotus Home**, a New Jersey-based manufacturer of handcrafted fiber mattresses, celebrated its 25th year in business on Earth Day.

NEW PRODUCTS

- **A Natural Home**, a cottage-based collective of Amish and other families in central Ohio, offers a "Simply affordable" line of organic mattresses hand created from certified organic U.S. cotton, certified organic cotton fabric, and certified organic wool from New Zealand (www.anaturalhome.com).
- **Bamboo Textiles** offers t-shirts that are 70 percent bamboo fiber and 30 percent certified organic cotton as well as fabric made with bamboo fiber and organic cotton.
- **Harmony Art Organic Designs** has introduced new prints made from U.S. organic cotton (www.harmonyart.com). Its Let it Grow fabric is the company's first fabric entirely made in the United States.
- **High Desert Naturals, Inc.** has launched environmentally friendly home furnishings and a baby bedding program. Its founders have designed their own line of bed sheets, duvet covers, shams and shower curtains made using 100 percent organic cotton. The company debuted its line at

Atlanta's International Gift and Home Furnishing Market in January, and subsequently took part in the Good Earth Home, Garden and Living Show in Eugene, OR, and All Things Organic™ in Chicago (www.hdndesigns.com).

- **Jessica Scott Ltd.**'s new spring/summer 2006 maternity line features hidden stretch belly panels and stretchable fabrics that will enable wear well after giving birth. In addition, the company has designed crib bedding sets using bright colors and non-traditional themes (www.jessicascottltd.com).

- **Maggie's Organics** has launched Maggie's Organic Baby, a line of bodysuits and caps from 100 percent certified organic cotton. Bodysuits, which each feature a whimsical illustration, are available in two sizes, 0-6 months and 6-12 months (www.organicclothes.com).
- **Mod Green Pod** has released its Jubilee Collection line of upholstery fabrics made from organic cotton (www.modgreenpod.com).
- **Sportif USA** released its 2006 Spring Aventura women's clothing line integrating vibrant colors, stretch materials, comfortable fitting

and affordability. The line in features a tank top made with 95 percent organic cotton and five percent spandex jersey, a three-quarter sleeve shirt with 97 percent organic cotton and three percent Lycra, and skirt and tank top made from 97 percent organic cotton and three percent Lycra (www.sportif.com).

- **Woolly Lamb Organics** has unveiled a line of organic baby clothing for ages newborn to 24 months. The apparel line made from organic cotton woven in the United States includes 10 collections (www.woollylamborganics.com).

Coffee News



In early April, Tessa Young of OTA staff attended the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) conference and exhibition in Charlotte, NC, on behalf of OTA and its Coffee Council. At the conference, the Coffee Council presented a session entitled "Organic Coffee: The Benefits and Current Trends, and the Potential Effects of Genetic Modification." This session was well attended, with over 75 persons in the audience.

Two additional companies—F. Gavina & Sons and Elan Organic Coffees—have joined the Organic Coffee Collaboration—A Project of

the Organic Trade Association.

A session on "The Success Story of Organic Coffee and Tea" at All Things Organic™ in May was well attended, with speakers including representatives from OTA member companies Equal Exchange, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Honest Tea, and the Organic Products Trading Company.

In addition, coffee recipes were among the features of the May and June *O'Mama Report* e-newsletters.

To keep posted about the Organic Coffee Collaboration efforts, go to www.ota.com/organic_and_you/coffee_collaboration.html.

Farm Supplies Update

This spring, OTA's National Organic Fertilizer Task Force, an outgrowth of OTA's Suppliers Advisory Council, worked diligently to improve the regulatory climate for organic fertilizer products.

Fertilizer labeling is regulated by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO). Currently, products labeled as "organic" according to AAPFCO are not necessarily allowed for use in organic production. As a result, OTA has been concerned that there has been confusion over these labels. A recent OTA Internet poll of home gardeners confirms this.

Over 1,200 people took the poll, and 97 percent of respondents misunderstood the intended AAPFCO definition of "organic," a

definition based on chemistry rather than National Organic Program standards. Ninety-six percent of responding home gardeners indicated that they would like to garden with products that are approved for use by USDA in certified organic farming. With the current broad use of the term "organic," these gardeners are unable to accurately identify gardening products allowed in organic production. The results of the poll were distributed to all AAPFCO officials and all organizations and companies that distributed the poll. The full report is available at http://www.ota.com/pics/documents/OTA_HomeGardenersPoll.pdf.

On behalf of the fertilizer task

force, OTA submitted a letter to the Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture addressing enforcement policies that Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) has implemented. DATCP's enforcement of its new fertilizer law has created barriers to the marketing and use of fertilizer and soil amendment products allowed in organic production. OTA suggested a change in the enforcement of the new policies more in keeping with Wisconsin's commitment to becoming a leader in the organic industry.

For more information, contact Sally Pick at sjp@crocker.com, or visit www.ota.com/m/sc/osac/index.html. ■