

Can Textile Processing be Organic?



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- A brief history of GOTS
- What does GOTS require ?
- Exploring GOTS principles
- What are the alternatives to GOTS?

A brief history of GOTS



Where did GOTS come from ?



August 2002
Intercot,
Düsseldorf

Formation of the International Working Group (IWG) on Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)

May 2005
Intercot, Chicago

Four parties agree on the 1st Version of the GOTS

October 2006

Start of certification system

June 2008
IFOAM
Conference,
Carpi

Release of Version 2.0 of GOTS

Introduction of the logo & release of the Labelling Guide

Who are GOTS ?



**International Association Natural Textile Industry (IVN),
Germany**



Soil Association (SA), England



Organic Trade Association (OTA), USA



Japan Organic Cotton Association (JOCA), Japan

The structure of GOTS



- **International Working Group (IWG):**
 - Decisive committee for all relevant organizational, structural and political issues
 - Members are one board representative of each party and the Director
- **Technical Committee (TC):**
 - Generating revisions of the standard, issuing interpretation documents, development of quality assurance system
 - Members are one expert appointed by each party of the IWG and the Technical Director
- **Certifiers Council (CC):**
 - Advisory function with regard to all issues related to the GOTS quality assurance system; reporting its proposals to the TC
 - Members are one representative of each GOTS approved certifier and the Technical Director

What does GOTS require?



What does GOTS Require ?



Use of certified organic fibres to recognised *international or national standards*



Environmental friendly processing and manufacturing system



Compliance with minimum social criteria



FIBRE CERTIFICATION

Required for GOTS certification



PROCESSING CERTIFICATION

Covered under GOTS standards/certification

GOTS Requirements - Overview



1. Fibre content requirements*
2. Accessories and additional materials permitted
3. Labelling requirements*
4. Restrictions and requirements for chemical inputs*
5. Meeting minimum social criteria*
6. Separation and identification of organic products
7. Environmental policy and management tools
8. Requirements for subcontractors & homeworkers
9. Quality requirements
10. Risk assessment and testing for residues

GOTS Requirements – Fibre Content



- Certified organic natural fibres
- Minimum 70% certified organic fibres for 'made with x% organic'
- Minimum 95% certified organic fibres for 'Organic'
- Use of 'organic – in conversion' fibres possible
- Not more than 10% synthetic fibres (respective max. 25% for socks, leggings and sportswear)
- No blending

GOTS Requirements – Labeling



- 'Global Organic Textile Standard'
- Breakdown of fibres stated
- Country of origin
- GOTS Symbol - optional



GOTS Requirements – Labeling



**Using 95 – 100%
organic fibres:**



Organic
certified by *[certifier's ref.]*

**Using 70 – 94%
organic fibres:**



**Made with (x %)
organic materials**
certified by *[certifier's ref.]*

GOTS Requirements - Chemical inputs



- All chemical inputs must meet basic requirements on aquatic toxicity & biodegradability
- Ban on inputs designated as toxic or harmful formaldehyde, GMOs and their enzymes, many heavy metals, halogenated solvents etc
- Restricted inputs/groups inputs that contribute >1% to AOX value of effluent, copper restricted to blue, green and turquoise dyestuffs (< 5%) etc
- Waste water treatment plant and related environmental policies where wet processing
- *Licensees receive lists of over 6500 already approved chemical inputs from all CBs certifying to GOTS*

GOTS Requirements – Social requirements



GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD
ECOLOGY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Employment is freely chosen
- Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining
- Working conditions are safe and hygienic
- Child labour must not be used
- Living wages are paid
- Working hours are not excessive
- No discrimination is practiced
- Regular employment is provided
- Harsh or inhumane treatment is prohibited
- Controlled by audit with interviews and document controls

GOTS Requirements – Control System



- Certifiers must be accredited by GOTS (IOAS)
- Certification is for operators and individual products.
- Every step of the supply chain is certified to GOTS
- Products are full traceable - documented transactions

GOTS Successes



- Over 2700 businesses GOTS certified in 55 countries
- Over 6500 inputs approved for use according to GOTS
- SACL organic textiles income up 635% since 2005
- GOTS now recognised as the '**gold standard**' for organic textiles: covering entire supply chain and social & environmental responsibility



Exploring GOTS principles



A consensus approach



GOTS is the creation of four organisations with some common beliefs:

- Organic textiles need a common international definition regulation
- Organic textiles must be as 'pure' as possible
- Organic textiles must be as 'natural' as possible
- Organic textiles must be fully traceable
- Organic textile should be of good quality and be marketable

A comparison of principles



IFOAM Key principles

The principle of health - sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human, planet

The principle of ecology work with, emulate and sustain living ecological systems and cycles

The principle of fairness build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities

The principle of care precautionary and responsible management to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

Does GOTS compare ?

GOTS considers the environmental impact of each process and raw material permitted

This principle relates primarily to production, GOTS insists that 90% of products labelled as organic use organically produced fibres.

GOTS requires that processors meet ILO standards, but not on farm. More scope within manufacturing for improved trading relationships

GOTS embraces the precautionary principle, best demonstrated by the standards stance on GMO and previously optical brighteners Nanotech standards currently under consideration.

The alternatives to GOTS



Difficult choices....



1. Purist natural approach – Completely natural , only organically farmed fibres and `natural` inputs and accessories. Strong social compliance elements, progressive development.
2. Tough Organic approach - Tight control of synthetics inputs and accessories, minimal scope for blending with non-organic. Social criteria to international recognised norms (e.g ILO)
3. Relaxed organic approach – Must be some organic fibre content, no control over accessories , inputs meet regional , national or federal requirement. No social criteria



Which approach ?



Consider:

Global marketability of the 'natural only' organic approach.

Flexibility for fashion designers

Quality impacts of avoiding synthetics and the reputation of organic

Energy and waste – key in textile industry. Some natural approaches are wasteful

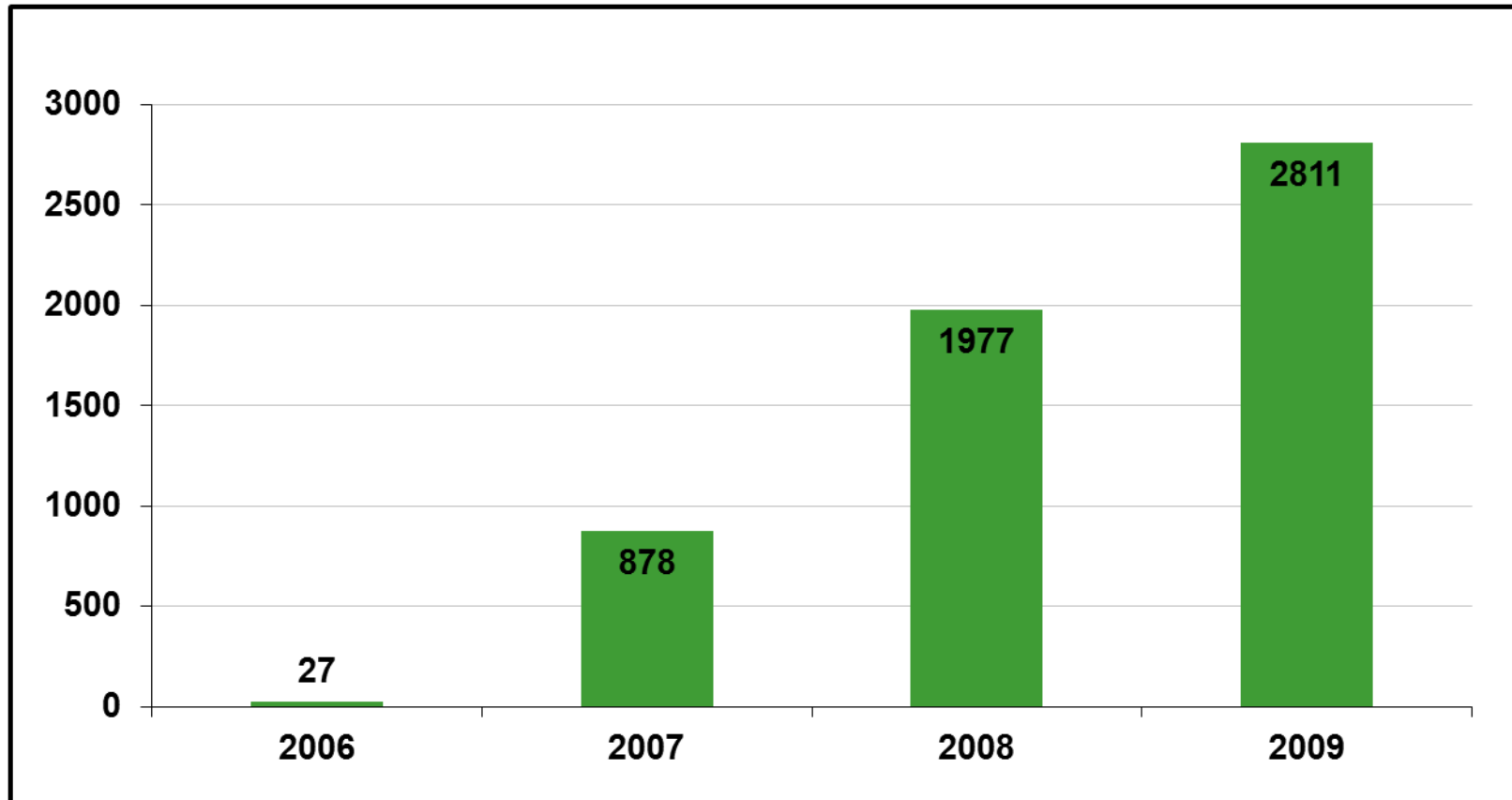
Integrity and consumer expectation – what is level of understanding?

Final comments...



- Any organic labelling without holistic standards approach risks failing to meet consumer expectation. GOTS is holistic.
- Has the organic movement already decided? IFOAM draft standards influenced GOTS, but have not progressed after 9 yr
- GOTS created by 'NGO's and is modelled strongly on IFOAM draft standards.
- GOTS necessary to address an unregulated marketplace and bring harmony – is now well underway. IFOAM standards remain in draft form after 9 years
- Reasonable of IFOAM to re-evaluate existing standards against own principles, but is it too late ? Should IFOAM use valuable resources reinventing the wheel?

A final thought ...making a difference



2811 certified facilities in 55 countries