

The Worldwide Development of Organic Cotton Cultivation: Progress and future challenges

Ferrigno, S.

Abstract

Organic cotton production has grown tremendously in recent years. In 2001, production reached just over 6 000 tones per year. In 2007, production reached nearly 58,000 tons. This progress has allowed some 100,000 to convert to organic cotton, with significant environmental, social, and economic benefits. Turkey and India are the largest producers, but significant production occurs notably in China, the USA, East and West Africa, and Latin America, as well as in Europe, Pakistan, and most recently Bangladesh. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain to ensure that organic cotton production can continue to grow in a sustainable manner, notably addressing issues of monitoring key performance indicators, transparency, sustainable pricing, and ensuring responsible conduct of organic cotton production and trade.

This paper will discuss recent trends in organic fiber production, and the opportunities and challenges identified to continue to increase production. It will present tools being developed to support the challenges of a sustainable expansion of organic cotton farming.