



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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May 14, 2008

Report of a Conference Call Between Members of the Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and Economic Performance (SEEP) of Cotton Production May 9, 2008

The conference call between members of the Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and Economic Performance (SEEP) of Cotton Production was held May 9, 2008.

Mr. Allan Williams, Technical Coordinator of the Better Cotton Initiative, and Dr. Francesca Mancini, Specialist, Sustainable Agriculture & Farmer Education, FAO, serve as Chair and Vice Chair of SEEP.

Members on the call:

(Instructions sent by the Secretariat for the time of the call were not correct. Accordingly, several members of SEEP did not participate. The Secretariat regrets the error.)

Mr. Fatih Dogan, Chairman of the Board, Mediterranean Textile and Raw Materials Exporters Union, Turkey
Dr. Michel Fok, Project Coordinator, Cotton & Societies Research, CIRAD, France
Dr. Bill Norman, Vice President, Technical Services, National Cotton Council of America, Executive Director of the Cotton Foundation
Dr. Patricia O'Leary, Senior Director, Agricultural Research, Cotton Incorporated, USA
Mr. Christopher Ward, Agri-Consultant, Brazil
Mr. Allan Williams, Technical Coordinator of the Better Cotton Initiative

Members Absent:

Dr. Sheng-Fu Chiu, Director, Center of Industrial Economics, Intelligence and Training, China (Taiwan)
Mr. Subhash Chander Grover, Manager Director, The Cotton Corporation of India
Ms. Elke Hortmeyer, Manager, Economic Research and Publications, Bremen Cotton Exchange, Germany
Dr. Francesca Mancini, former Specialist, Sustainable Agriculture & Farmer Education, FAO
Mr. Jens Soth, Coordinator for Research & Implementation Activities, Organic Cotton Value Chains, Helvetas Organic Cotton Centre, Switzerland
Mr. Wilfried Yameogo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Business Promotion and Artisan Enterprises.

Terry Townsend, executive director, and Rafiq Chaudhry, Head of Technical Information, ICAC, served as Secretariat.

Next Conference Call:

The next conference call will be conducted on Friday, May 30, 2008 at 14:00 in Rome, Italy. The Secretariat will ensure that accurate instructions are sent.

Report of the Conference Call

I. Progress to date in gathering data

Patricia reported that she has been able to gather most of the data she is seeking and will upload it to the FTP site during the next week. She is putting together a database of literature on the environmental themes identified by the Panel for the United States, with some coverage of additional countries. She said that Cotton Incorporated has completed both a life-cycle analysis of cotton and an analysis of carbon emissions in cotton production and asked if those studies should also be provided to SEEP. She said that she will be in Ouagadougou for the ICAC plenary meeting.

Bill said that he has most of the information he is seeking and will post it to the FTP site next week. He has not finalized plans to travel to Ouagadougou yet.

Michel said that he had acquired data from Mali, but that it could not be made public unless data for other countries were also posted. Therefore, he is seeking similar data from Burkina Faso. The data for Mali has been posted to the FTP site. He will be in Ouagadougou.

Allan said that he possesses detailed data on chemical use in the cotton sector of Australia. The data are not public, but he can use the data as a benchmark to evaluate the accuracy of other data purchased by the Secretariat. He reported that he is collecting data on water use and soil management in Australia, mostly case studies. He said that BCI has commissioned CABI to develop a database on cotton field projects during the last five years and to develop a database on best or better management practices in cotton for 10 – 15 countries. Allan will be in Ouagadougou.

Fatih said that he has asked researchers in Turkey for data on labor costs and will remind them to provide as soon as possible. He will try to be in Ouagadougou.

Chris noted that he had not been able to attend the first meeting in Lubbock. He said that he has just started to gather data on chemical use and labor costs in cotton in Brazil. He is planning to be in Ouagadougou.

[Following the conference call, Terry was able to contact Elke, Francesca and Jens, who had missed the call because of confusion over the time.]

Elke reports that she has contacted the Ministry of Agriculture and the Cotton and Industrial Plants Institute in Greece for data on European cotton production, but she has not been successful yet.

Jens said he will post the data he is collecting to the FTP site within a week.

II. Discussion of the literature review completed by Alastair Usher

(An executive summary of the literature review is posted on the FTP site. Allan asked if there were any reactions.)

Bill said that some of the studies cited in the list of documents that were read for the Review represented sensational and distorted reports without scientific merit. Michel agreed that distinctions needed to be made clearly between reports of differing levels of scientific rigor. He suggested that the Review should focus on peer-reviewed research.

Allan noted that the full report differentiated between peer-reviewed research and popular reports. He noted that the list of documents detailed all documents read as part of the review and that not all the perspectives held by the documents considered were referenced in the Review itself. It was decided that Allan should post the full report (approximately 80 pages) to the FTP site and send by e-mail to those members of SEEP who requested copies, and the full report would be discussed on the conference call May 30. SEEP will discuss whether or not to invite Alastair to make a presentation to SEEP via conference call in the future.

III. Discussion and decisions

SEEP determined that data posted to the FTP site should not be made public until SEEP has had an opportunity to ensure suitability and uniformity of format.

SEEP determined that data on chemical use should be reported in kilograms of active ingredient (A.I.) per hectare of application.

SEEP determined that pesticide use on cotton should be put in context with use on other crops, and Patricia volunteered to post data from Cropnosis for several crops.

Rafiq noted that the Secretariat has data on numbers of applications per country, and this will be put on the FTP site.

It was agreed that the DEADLINE for collection of data as agreed in Lubbock will be June 30, 2008. Members are encouraged to post data during the next several weeks if possible.