



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Report of the Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and Economic Performance of Cotton Production (SEEP)

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Dr. Patricia O'Leary, Vice Chair of SEEP

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Delegates. It is an honor to report on the work of the Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and Economic Performance of Cotton Production (SEEP).

SEEP was formed in 2007 based on a decision made during the 65th Plenary Meeting in Brazil in order to provide factual information to governments about cotton production practices. SEEP is composed of thirteen members representing producers, researchers and government officials from both developed and developing countries. The ICAC is not a regulatory body, but by providing information about current practices and by showcasing best practices, the ICAC can encourage improvements in the performance of the cotton industry worldwide.

Insecticide Use

At the 69th plenary meeting last year in the United States, SEEP presented a report on insecticide use in cotton production based on detailed information from five producing countries. The report included information on insecticide use specific to cotton. During the meeting in Lubbock, Togo agreed to provide additional data on pesticide use, and during 2011, the NSCT (New Society for Cotton in Togo) provided to the SEEP Panel the data series for insecticide use on cotton in Togo. This effort is remarkable because the NSCT has provided a complete data set for 21 years, from 1990 to 2010. In contrast to the previous data analysed by SEEP, which was obtained from commercial providers for a fee, this data has kindly been provided free of charge.

In Togo, but probably also in other countries of French-speaking Africa, the process through which producers are provided with agricultural inputs explains why it was possible to compile such a comprehensive data set. Furthermore, the process has in-built checks that help to assess the accuracy of the data obtained. Provision of agricultural inputs (essentially fertilizers, insecticides and other pesticides) to cotton producers is now managed by NSCT, and previously by SOTOCO (the Togolese Company of Cotton). SOTOCO was a parastatal company created in 1974. In Togo, the process of acquisition and distribution of insecticides has undoubtedly been less affected by the reforms of the cotton sectors in French-speaking Africa, even given the dissolution of SOTOCO in 2009 and its replacement by NSCT.

In Togo, insecticides are distributed on credit to cotton producers in their villages, an essential measure to adapt to the very strong cash constraints of farmers in Africa. Producers pay for the insecticides when their seed cotton is marketed. Repayment gives them *de facto* the right to acquire a new credit to continue producing the following season.

In general, the arrival of imported insecticides is scheduled so that they can be distributed to villages at the same time as the seed cotton is being transported to the gin. Such an approach is fundamental to reduce the transportation costs of insecticides.

Since 1986, producers' associations in villages take delivery of insecticides provided by the cotton company (i.e. SOTOCO / NSCT), and redistribute them to producers. A team is set up within each producers association to manage the stock of insecticides and to provide them to producers throughout the cotton-growing season. The products are provided according to the producers' declarations of acreages to spray, which may vary with those made the previous year (e.g. because of rain or labor shortages). This makes it possible for each village to keep a record of the acreage sprayed by each product distributed. Having stocks of insecticides stored at the village level also enables the producers' association to distribute appropriate

products, based on the nature of the pest infestation. For example, endosulfan is distributed for the first two sprays against bollworms (so as to manage their resistance to pyrethroids), while products combining three distinct active ingredients are distributed at the end of the cropping season, to control sucking pests in addition to late season infestation of bollworms.

Therefore, NSCT is confident that the data do in fact constitute a good estimate of insecticide use on cotton. SEEP is very grateful to Togo for providing this very important information, and SEEP will work during the next year to incorporate this data into the report released last year so as to provide a more comprehensive view of insecticide use in cotton worldwide.

Fact Sheets

SEEP is working to complete "fact sheets" on a number of topics relevant to the performance of cotton production, including fact sheets on energy use, green house gas emissions, insecticide use, water use, soil erosion and other topics. Members of SEEP will be reviewing drafts of each fact sheet in the next few months, with the intention of releasing these documents during the first half of 2012.

Survey of Labor Cost Components

During 2011, SEEP concentrated on a survey of labor use in cotton. On behalf of SEEP, the Secretariat sent surveys to all ICAC members requesting information on components of labor costs, and eleven countries have responded. SEEP is harmonizing the data received into a standardized format for summary, analysis and distribution during 2012. On behalf of SEEP, I want to thank Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Egypt, Greece, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Sudan and the United States for contributing information for the survey. The completed study will provide important insights into labor cost components in cotton production.

Mr. Chairman and delegates, on behalf of all thirteen members of SEEP I wish to thank the ICAC for supporting the work of SEEP.