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Report to:
Membership and Officers
Of the
International Forum for Cotton Promotion (IFCP)

From:
Jeffrey Silberman
Executive Director

Regarding:
The Report of the Executive Director

Presented at:
The International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC)
67th Plenary Meeting
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

November 2008

Mr. Chairman, the International Forum for Cotton Promotion (IFCP) was very active during 2007-2008 in continuing its mission to provide a global informational exchange that encourages generic cotton promotion activity. The IFCP also continues to provide examples of ways to promote cotton on a national and international basis, in ways that can be replicated around the world.

The IFCP continued to carry out the suggestions of the Private Sector Advisory Panel (PSAP) to inspire subnational and private sector sponsored promotion activities and to investigate and catalogue inaccurate negative information communicated by the organic, Fair Trade Cotton and related industries. The IFCP supports organic and Fair Trade Cotton, as it supports all cotton, but the IFCP does not support exaggerated and misleading information by those attempting to secure competitive advantage at the cost of other cottons. The IFCP also explored the relationship between sustainability and organic cotton. In addition, the organization sought to connect different elements of the cotton supply chain, in order to begin to influence product developers of cotton based merchandise categories that are important to cotton. The IFCP hopes that all cotton interests will take an active and positive role in cotton promotion against competing fibers, particularly chemical fibers.

Subnational Programs

The Supima organization developed a pop-up store in the Soho area of New York City that was accessible to high tourist traffic. The organization highlighted 15 brands that use pima cotton, and featured products that would be appealing to the Soho target audience. In addition, Supima placed cotton plants in a New York City parking lot, simulating a cotton farm. This promotion created public relations opportunities for cotton, and became one of the city's most photographed tourist attractions, as this was quite unusual for a metropolitan area. The IFCP supported Supima's efforts by communicating their efforts to the world-wide cotton industry through the Cotton Promotion Website <www.cottonpromotion.org>.

Working with Educational Institutions

Product Development Indoctrination

The IFCP continues to create new potential promotion activities on a subnational basis by working with colleges, universities, and sometimes individual students that have an interest in cotton, textiles or fashion. By working with students that are studying these topics, the IFCP has the ability to expose cotton promotion ideas to future buyers and managers of textile-based products at the retail and wholesale level. By working with professors (implementers) that teach or facilitate these courses-of-study, it is also possible to provide encouragement through IFCP members and friends that are located in those regions. IFCP members have shown a willingness to do that.

The flagship program for this area of activity has been the denim program that began in spring 2005 at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York. This program, moving into its fifth year in spring 2009, represents a collection of jeans and sweaters created by students, that continues to move toward commercialization, and attract publicity. To date, over 200 students have participated in the project since its beginning and have been exposed to cotton research and promotion through a variety of guest speakers from the cotton industry. 2008 was a watershed year for this program, as a significant percentage of the graduates from the first year (2005) have now risen to the product management level with major companies and brands. The graduates are now in professional decision making capacities in textile related product categories, and are in a position to increase cotton consumption, and they appreciate their early exposure to cotton promotion resources.

Farm and Gin Tour

The educational program has been expanded in order that future product developers will have exposure to the cotton community, and a group of 31 students from New York City visited a cotton farm and a cotton gin near Cary, North Carolina on October 13, 2008.

Sustainability Case Study

Cotton Sustainability in the Textile Complex is a case study written by the IFCP executive director, and is intended for publication. The case study research was funded by the U.S. Cotton Board and addresses sustainability issues related to the textile supply chain in cotton-based products. The 40 page case focuses on a vertically integrated home furnishings textile mill in Turkey that makes bed sheets and pillowcases, and how they remain competitive through sustainability. The research was compiled in several geographic regions, including Jakarta, Indonesia, Denizli, Turkey, Lewiston, Maine, USA, and New York City over a period of three months in summer and fall 2008, and demonstrated that organic cotton and sustainability do not necessarily have the implied connection usually put forth by organic cotton advocates. The intention of the program is to insert cotton sustainability into academic curriculum.

Hosting the 492nd ICAC Standing Committee Meeting in New York City

In order to improve communication between different segments of the cotton supply chain, The International Forum for Cotton Promotion in conjunction with the Textile Development and Marketing Department at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) hosted the 492nd ICAC Standing Committee on April 16, 2008. The IFCP executive director hosted and moderated a panel of textile based product development specialists from major companies, including WestPoint Home, Town and Country Living, Panjiva, Club Monaco, Liz Claiborne, and Coach, Inc. The program proved valuable to the Standing Committee and guests to understand the influencers that will determine cotton usage.

Sustainability Conference: Better Cotton Initiative

The Textile Development and Marketing Department at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York City received word that the BCI was seeking a place to hold their Steering Committee meeting in the U.S. An invitation was extended on behalf of FIT and the International Forum for Cotton Promotion (IFCP) to provide a meeting venue at FIT, and the BCI accepted. The workshop was held on September 4, 2008 at FIT

in the President's Board Room, with attendees from Europe, Asia, and North America in attendance, representing conventionally grown and organically grown cotton.

Disinformation from the Organic Industry

At the request of the Private Sector Advisory Panel, the IFCP was asked to look into possible examples of incorrect and negative information and advertising emanating from the organic cotton and related industries. The IFCP has catalogued about 75 examples of potential inflammatory ads. No evaluation of the accuracy of the information published has been undertaken yet, nor has the quality of the science used as the basis for information been evaluated.

However, we applaud the judgement of January 29, 2008, where the district court of Giessen confirmed a prohibitory injunction that had been ordered nearly a year ago against the mail order company Hess Natur-Textilien, Butzbach, Germany, based on a lawsuit brought by Bremer Baumwollbörse. Thus the enterprise is not allowed to promote its so called bio products to the debit of conventional cotton.

International Year of Natural Fibres (IYNF)

The IFCP participated in steering committee meetings of the International Year for Natural Fibres, primarily electronically due to schedule conflicts. The IFCP provided electronic features from the Cotton Promotion Website on basic cotton promotion techniques, and hopes this information will be incorporated into the upcoming video to be produced by the organizations involved.

In support of the International Year activities, The IFCP provided a venue to other natural fiber groups that wished to be included in the Ninth Edition of "Fabric Science", the most widely distributed basic textile textbook in the world. "Fabric Science" is written by Arthur Price, Allen Cohen, and Ingrid Johnson, and is published by Fairchild Books. In addition to information about the properties of other natural fibers, and offer was made to display swatches along with more common fiber and fabric constructions. Seven different natural fibers (in addition to cotton) took advantage of the opportunity for increased

exposure.

An offer has also been extended to the IYNF to hold an event in New York City at FIT in celebration of the Year, but so far there has been no activity.

67th ICAC Plenary Meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Business Meeting

The IFCP prepared the program of activities and will manage cotton demand enhancement activities during the plenary meeting week. The IFCP will also conduct its annual business luncheon meeting, and the documents and coordination of that event are the responsibility of the executive director, as is the *Statement of International Organizations* at the Plenary Session.

Demand Enhancement Activity

Cotton Promotion: A Call to Action

The International Forum for Cotton Promotion (IFCP) will conduct a discussion about the importance of cotton demand enhancement at the 67th ICAC Plenary Meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on Wednesday, November 19, 2008 at 11.00.

Rising energy prices affecting shipping and production costs, along with accelerated competition for cropland, will put upward pressure on cotton prices, making it more difficult to compete with chemical fibers. While the price of oil cannot be controlled, nor can the return per hectare of competing crops, we can have an impact on consumer awareness through promotion and new product development to increase cotton's availability at the retail level. This is critical, and will become more so in the coming years.

Dr. Alejandro Plastina of the ICAC Secretariat will begin the meeting with a brief presentation showing the trend in cotton's share of world fiber use and future projections. An interactive discussion will follow that will focus on strategies for future action, as

well as the progress of current activities. All who have an interest in cotton's future are invited to attend, and encouraged to participate.

Website

The Journal of the International Forum for Cotton Promotion www.cottonpromotion.org has been redesigned with easier navigation and access to features and information. Members are once again encouraged to visit the site as we continue to add features that give step-by-step information on how to implement cotton promotion programs that are inexpensive and can be replicated in different countries. The site is not just a repository for information. Most of the inquiries we receive related to demand enhancement come through the site, and we encourage you to visit and to pass along the URL to others that may be interested in implementing demand enhancement efforts.

New features include "2009 International Year of Natural Fibers", by the ICAC Secretariat, "Keeping Cotton in High Demand", by Anna Mullins of Cotton International, "How About Organic Polyester?" by Robert Antoshak of Globecot, "Can Green Retailers Make Green?" by Lauren Sherman of Forbes.com, and "Supima Opens a Pop-up Store in NYC", by the Supima organization, "Court Says Hess Natur-Textilien Ads in Violation of Fair Competition Code", Bremer Baumwollbörse staff.

Speaking Engagements

The IFCP executive Director hosted and moderated a panel entitled "Global Sourcing" at the Bayer Crop Science Fibermax© in Jakarta, Indonesia during July 2008, and in addition, presented an update on the IFCP CottonMentor denim program.

The IFCP executive director was the keynote speaker in April 2008 at Farmingdale University, SUNY, on a related topic, "Coke Denim: Experiential Teaching".

The executive director was offered several other speaking engagement invitations to discuss cotton demand enhancement and to moderate fashion business panels, including the University of Seoul and at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in

India. Unfortunately, due to the academic calendar and the ICAC Plenary Meeting timing, scheduling made it impossible to accept those invitations.

Membership

The Supima organization joined the International Forum for Cotton Promotion, and we welcome them into the organization that supports all cotton demand enhancement. The IFCP was able to manage activities for nearly seven years based on the initial investment of 17 members from 14 countries. Unfortunately, Cotton South Africa, Cotton Australia, and AEDA (Spain) were not able to renew their membership based on financial hardship. There was no dissatisfaction displayed with the concept, activities, or effectiveness of the IFCP, and the past members have been encouraged to continue as observers, with the intention of rejoining at a later date when that is possible.

I thank the International Forum for Cotton Promotion officers and members for allowing me the privilege to serve as executive director, and for their participation in making the 2007-2008 year a successful one. Special thanks to Chairman Roskwitalski who always finds time for the IFCP in his busy schedule. I would also like to thank the ICAC Secretariat, and especially Terry Townsend for the constant support which makes it possible to run an organization like the IFCP efficiently.