

# Organic Cotton Production in Syria

AL-SALTI Muhammad Nayef

(Cotton Research Administration (GCSAR) Chairman, Cotton Marketing Organization Aleppo, Syria)

The process of organic cotton production went through:

- Introducing biological control against cotton bollworms in Syria for more than 10 years ago.
- Developing pest monitoring system (sampling – survey weekly intervals – pheromone traps).
- Lowering the use of insecticides, namely less than 0.5% of the areas planted to cotton in Syria.
- Adopting need -based application of insecticides taking into consideration economic threshold level (ETL).
- Selecting cotton varieties and the most suitable time of planting.

## 2006/2007 Season

We started organic cotton production in Syria by introducing the performance of organic cotton cultivation with expanded experiments in farmers' fields on 372 hectares, and converting about 10 thousand hectares gradually to organic cultivation using corrigible lands (uncultivated previously) or land not using chemical fertilizers or insecticides for more than two agricultural seasons.

We have chosen an elite of educated technical farmers and we have also chosen suitable fields in different locations in Syria to be put under careful monitoring, especially before and during the stage of cotton flowerage. In 2006/2007 season 5,270.5 hectares were biologically protected against pests using egg parasiteoids: *Trichogramma principium*, and larval parasiteoids *Bracon brevicornis*.

-Supervising technical and administration facilities for international certifying organic cotton and ginning it in a special gin under organic cultivation terms and sending samples to be tested internationally.

By the season 2006/07 many meetings were held between the Cotton Marketing Organization of Syria and the Cotton Research Administration for organising cultivation, ginning and marketing organic cotton.

## 2007/2008 Season

3,822.6 hectares were biologically controlled using egg parasiteoids: *Trichogramma principium*, and larval parasiteoids *Bracon brevicornis*.

**Areas Planted with Organic Cotton in Syria**

Season 2006		Season 2007	
Area (Ha.)	Provincial	Area (Ha.)	Provincial
4398.8	Alhasakeh	10344.9	Alhasakeh
2551.4	Aleppo	2551.4	Aleppo
2436	Alrakka	14066.7	Alrakka
156.6	Hama	194.80	Hama
94.1	Deir-zor	1692.78	Deir-zor
9636.9	Total	28850.58	Total

Quantity of organic cotton (ginned cotton) produced in Syria in the last two years is as below: 2006/2007 = 8,185 tons; 2007/2008 = 26,000 tons (Approximate)