

C&A and Organic Exchange – A Strong International Network for Greater Environmental Sustainability

Cologne, Germany, 24 October 2007 – Cotton represents nearly 40% of the fibers used in the manufacture of textiles for apparel, sheets, towels and other homewares. During the past five years, **Organic Exchange**, a non-profit organization based in Berkeley, California, has worked to expand the production and use of certified organically grown cotton, or “Bio Cotton” as it is known in Europe. The organization’s mission is to “catalyze market forces to deliver sustained environmental, economic and social benefits through expansion of organic fibre agriculture.” Organic Exchange works with leading brands and retailers such as C&A to make long term commitments to increase the use of organic cotton in their products. C&A has been a sponsor of Organic Exchange since 2004.

C&A has worked with Organic Exchange on the development of its Bio Cotton program. During the past three years, C&A has developed the “C&A Organic Program”, which focuses on offering C&A customers high-quality clothing containing organically grown cotton. As part of this programme, C&A co-operates with suppliers who use organically grown cotton. The cotton is grown by agricultural projects in India with certified organic cotton production.

“C&A’s program has grown from a small initial effort in 2004 to one of the most significant organic cotton programs by a global retailer. During the next five years, C&A and Organic Exchange will work together to help expand the amount of certified organic cotton grown in India, and help improve the lives and livelihoods of the farmers in rural communities in India”, said Andreas G. Seitz, member and spokesperson of C&A’s European Executive Board (EEB).

The Organic Exchange’s Farm Development Program will work with organic farmers in India supplying organic cotton in C&A’s products to:

- increase knowledge of organic farming practices, with a focus on sharing best management practices in areas such as soil fertility, water conservation, and biological pest management
- build the business skills and management capacities of organic farming projects



- increase farmer access to markets for organically grown cotton, food crops and other products grown on their organic farms
- help expand local economic opportunities and developing sustainable models to support investment and continued improvement in social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, water supplies and energy systems

The Organic Exchange Farm Development Program is working with manufacturers and organic farmers in three Indian value chains supplying C&A. The program will be expanded to include up to 20 value chains, involving more than 30,000 Indian organic farmers by the end of 2012.

To ensure the sustainability of these projects, C&A, Organic Exchange and the Shell Foundation are implementing these Farm Developing Programmes. This makes it possible for approximately 30.000 farmers to integrate their organically grown cotton into the value-added chain.

As well as the Farm Development Program, the C&A Initiative for Social Development is sponsoring the construction of a school near Dharampuri in India. The school is intended to provide free, high-quality education to poor children and youths who are disadvantaged due to their background.

The village of Dharampuri is located in Madhya Pradesh – a province in which cotton cultivation is a main source of income for the mostly rural population and in which environmentally friendly cotton cultivation has now begun.

„C&A is making a tremendous investment in the farmers and farming communities supplying the organic cotton they use in their products. They are setting the bar high for retailers and brands interested in helping protect the environment and reduce poverty in communities around the world“ said Rebecca Calahan Klein, Founding President and Director of Program Development for Organic Exchange.



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