



Back to nature: 2009 has been declared the International Year of Natural Fibres by the United Nations General Assembly

Cotton on to natural fibres

The 2009 International Year of Natural Fibres will highlight the value of cotton to the global textile industry and consumers

To raise the profile of natural fibres around the world the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2009 to be the International Year of Natural Fibres (IYNF). The U.S. is the world's largest supplier of high-quality cotton and the leading innovator in enhancing the performance of cotton products. So, naturally, Cotton Council International (CCI), the export promotion arm of the U.S. cotton industry, welcomes the focus that the IYNF will place on natural fibres.

CCI has promoted the benefits of cotton in general, and U.S. cotton in particular, for more than half a century. Its COTTON USA Mark, which features the cotton boll symbol, is applied to pure cotton products which contain at least 50% U.S. cotton and is recognised as a sign of quality throughout the textile supply chain and by consumers.



Cotton – a natural, renewable and biodegradable resource – represents about 80% of all natural fibres consumed, and so is of huge importance to the international textile industry and the global economy. From field to fabric, cotton production employs hundreds of millions of people and accounts for hundreds of billions of dollars of economic activity.

Stephanie Thiers-Ratcliffe, CCI international marketing manager, says: "Natural fibres, including cotton, are key economic contributors worldwide. The IYNF is a prime opportunity to bring attention to natural fibres and further stimulate consumer demand."

In today's difficult trading conditions, any initiative to encourage consumers to buy natural fibres has to be good news for all sectors of the textile and clothing industry. CCI, however, has been working to grow

demand for cotton for years with its COTTON USA Supply Chain Marketing programme which brings together buyers and sellers of U.S. cotton-rich textiles and garments.

Its COTTON USA Buyers' Tours to major cotton textile and clothing producing markets, including China, Turkey, India and Pakistan, generate successful business partnerships across the world. In addition, other CCI activities, such as participation in trade exhibitions and conferences, as well as its retail sales promotions, help attract interest in and increase sales of cotton products.

The IYNF's logo is 'discover natural fibres 2009', and its aims include promoting the efficiency and sustainability of natural fibres. This is a prime objective of the U.S. cotton industry and it uses the latest technology to minimise the environmental impact of production. CCI also works closely with its partners and licensees to ensure that fabrics, garments and home textiles are manufactured as responsibly as possible.

Throughout the IYNF various events and promotions will take place in many countries including: international textile conferences, displays, fashion shows, books, television documentaries and competitions for schools and textile art colleges. As it represents the most economically significant of all natural fibres and the producers of some of the finest quality cotton, Cotton Council International enthusiastically supports the IYNF cotton promotion activities. ●

For more information about COTTON USA, email sthiers@cotton.org or visit the CCI website: www.cottonusa.co.uk

