

OTA Fiber Council Meeting at Expo West – Minutes March 9, 2016

Attending: Karlin Warner, OneCert; Shamini Dhana, Dhana; Jeff Wilson, Textile Exchange; Eileen Mockus, Coyuchi; Jimmy and Susan Wedel, TOCMC; Sandra Marquardt, On the Mark PR/GOTS; Marci Zaroff, MetaWear/Under the Canopy; Brian ___ and Darin Jones, Oregon Tilth

OTA: Laura Batcha, Gwendolyn Wyard, Maggie McNeil

Minutes by Sandra Marquardt

1. Relationship of OTA and TE: Agreement

Fiber Council: Not a policy setting group, but focuses on education and awareness. A Task Force would have to be formed to address policy. Will help inform OTA's policy actions.

OTA plans to increase resources to consumers about organic textiles. Will look quarterly/annually at the website to update existing fact sheets.

Done: 2014/5 Organic Cotton Report, Organic Cotton Fact Sheet, What is an Organic Mattress, What are Organic Cotton Mattress.

Underway: Cotton and the Environment.

Action: GW will send it out to the Council for Review

USDA status and FTC: Fastest growing organic sector.

Funding for Fiber Council = OTA dedicates a \$2500 stipend per fiscal (CONFIRM WHAT THE DATES ARE) year – use or lose (BY WHEN?). Beyond that, sector councils need to bring in the money for the work. In addition, 25% of new OTA fiber members' dues are dedicated to the Fiber Council. From four new TE and other members joining OTA and the Fiber Council, an additional \$2500 came in (of which the meeting cost \$771, so have 1739 plus 2500 stipend= \$4239 is current budget.

2. Plans for Fall 2016 Event

We discussed two options, an event at the Texas Organic Cotton Marketing Cooperative Fall Field Day (date TBD) or in New York City. We decided to focus on NYC given that the vast majority of media is based in NYC and that the Texas High Plains event is designed more as a networking opportunity for their clients. The logistics of getting the media to the Lubbock area was also a concern.

Timeline:

September. This will give us time to prepare and will also coincide with OTA's Organic Harvest Month 30-day social media festival.

- Focus on roots of organic cotton production in the US – 26 years, starting in Texas.
- NOP interest in organic textiles, including its 2011 organic textiles labeling policy

The message:

- Food to fiber – Make the Connection. Growing the organic cotton, how it's used for both food and fiber, and the processing stages. Connect the dots of cotton/wool and food/textiles. Style and Substance. (Note: Organic cotton seed goes to organic dairies for feed, not oil.)
- Organic Fiber is the next frontier in organics.
- Business Opportunity. Bankers and financiers are waking up to the opportunity. Where is the profit? Know about the booming market. Farmers to get on the bandwagon.
- Interaction of food and fiber – dairy, oil
- Call to Action: Organic fiber is coming. Unstoppable Train
- Address costs - prepackage something like the organic food on \$25/day for a family, but keep the focus on quality.

Media focus:

- Agriculture reporters including Modern Farmer
- Womens/Lifestyle - Oprah, Martha Stewart, lifestyle.
- Fashion publications – support organic food already, now look at organic fiber.
- New York Times, USA Today, Associated Press, Washington Post
- Consumer and Eco bloggers
- Possible hashtag to work on: #loveyourfoodloveyourfiber

Event Overview Options:

- Do a bus tour going place to place such as to Patagonia, West Elm, Coyuchi/ABC Home- have walk-through bus showing breadth of organic textiles from apparel to kitchen to bedroom. (But then lose the ability to do an award. Do with an organic food truck?)
- Do desk-sides with reporters, then invite all together to the celebration. Show products and get gift bag. Show Thread video clips, have celebrity present, serve organic food, and showcase organic apparel and home textiles.
- Do Pop-Up Store tour to TV with organic food truck to make link between food and fiber. Furnished with video player.
- Data – report release? Example, what does it mean to me in terms of health impact vs. like with organic food. Stone Barns-type dialogue with panel of high level speakers, award, plus table top media tabletops. Celebrity would be the main attraction. Amber Valetta, Eileen Fisher, Gwyneth Paltrow? Have farmers, too?

What is the message, then determine speakers based on that.

Video: history – today. Story Board of Why

To Do:

Calendar check: Eileen/Coyuchi, Karlin – Expo East in Baltimore 9/21-24, Fashion Week Sept 8-16. Check NYC calendar for overshadowing/conflicting/ or supporting textile events

Check list for planning an event? Laura: Amy's Tea – Tracy has check lists for everything

OTA: media outreach, event - logistics

Council: drives the topic/creative content, build the programming, budgeting – dues sharing and sponsorship. Message.

Jeff Wilson: provides concept and possible budget given his contacts within action sports. Marci partner with him to help figure that out. Can ask Michael Stars which did something like that.

Message: Dhana, Maggie, Eileen, Marci, Sandra by Mid-April. Then meet up at Policy Conference in May.

Develop plans and budget

Solicit sponsorships

Determine location that is affordable - Fancy Foods Association?

Marci, Gary Hirshberg – help with celebrity like Gwyneth Paltrow

Timeline:

April –meeting and Gwendolyn does Doodle poll April 11 week

May – Conference

September

3. Still to Discuss:

Resource Guide – Discuss on a quarterly call

Other Opportunities:

OTA Expo West Awards – apply for Farmer of the Year, Organic Leadership, Rising Star with organic fiber focus. NOTE <http://ota.com/about-ota/organic-leadership-awards/nomination-form> April 22 deadline.

Organicology – Gwendolyn has submitted a GOTS-related proposal. Just gave a GOTS-focused presentation at EcoFarm.

Get footage with Jimmy and LaRhea talking about the days. Organic Cotton Fashion Show

Swag bags