

FIBER COUNCIL 2015 REPORT

OTA FORMS FIBER COUNCIL

Establishment of OTA's Fiber Council

On April 14, 2015, OTA's Board approved the establishment of an OTA Fiber Council based on OTA Sector Council Operating Guidelines. The application for the new sector council was first reviewed by the OTA Board of Directors' Community Relations Committee, which gave its support. Marci Zaroff, President of Portico Brands and Founder of Under the Canopy, submitted the request along with seven other OTA member companies that have expressed interest in participating. The aim of the council is to create a cohesive voice across fiber categories within OTA, and to grow the organic fiber sector overall. The information provided below serves as a mid-year report as the development of the council is in progress.

Fiber Council Meets for the First Time

OTA hosted a pre-establishment meeting for members during Expo West 2014 to discuss council guidelines. The Council held its first official meeting during OTA's 2015 Policy Conference Member Days in Washington, D.C. The content of the meeting largely focused on providing members with information on council operating guidelines, anti-trust requirements, member outreach and recruitment, and work-plan framework. A brainstorming session during the meeting also brought to fruition a healthy list of potential work plan activities (see Going Forward).

MEMBER OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT

Development of an MOU with Textile Exchange

In an effort to support member outreach and recruitment as well as further the aim of the council, OTA is in the process of evaluating a Memorandum of Common Understanding with Textile Exchange (TE). OTA and TE through this collaborative MOU could jointly receive many joint benefits that would support the work of the Fiber Council and the growth of the organic fiber sector in general.

Current Fiber Council Members

Current Fiber Council members include Portico Brands/Under the Canopy, On the Mark PR, Maggie's Organics, MetaWear, Specialty Sleep Association, Naturepedic, UNFI, Richard Siegel Law Offices, MOM's Organic Market, and Oregon Tilth Certified Organic (OTCO).

Prospective Members

Current prospect members include Texas Organic Cotton Association, One Cert, Control Union, Loomstate, Patagonia, Dhana, Prana, Whole Foods Market, Right Pillow, Green Toys, PACT, Synergy, Satva Apparel, Coyucchi, Eileen Fisher, Indigenous Designs, Wear the Change/SFL, Threads for Thought, Groceries. Amore Vert, Alternative Apparel, American Apparel, Mona Luna, Stephanie Cordes, and Color Zen, among others.

GOING FORWARD

Developing a Work Plan

During the Fiber Council meeting held at OTA's Policy Conference, the group brainstormed several potential work plan activities. In step with the Fiber Council's deliberations to establish a work plan, the following ideas will be discussed at its next meeting at Expo East: Updating organic fiber fact sheets, infographics and other fiber related info on OTA's website; creating educational and marketing/promo materials on organic fiber and textiles for consumers, brands, retailers and media; hosting an organic fashion show; collaboration with The Organic Center and Textile Exchange on fiber-related research topics; building a coalition of companies interested in reigniting a "farm to fashion" USA organic cotton supply chain; OTA media event and outreach for organic fiber; Expo feature on "Organic Home;" GOTS webinars; and building out the organic textile section in OTA's Industry Survey.

Expo East Meeting

The fiber council will meet at **Expo East on Friday, September 18**, for a two-hour meeting. The focus of the meeting will be to prioritize and adopt a work plan aligned with the operating guidelines, discuss the establishment of council leadership, and decide on a date and location for the once-a-year mandatory meeting. The proposed location of choice at this time is OTA's Policy Conference in spring 2016.