



Israel joins the Better Cotton Initiative

Announcements *Tuesday, April 12th, 2016*

BCI is delighted to announce a new partnership agreement with the Israel Cotton Production & Marketing Board (ICB). As a result of this partnership, 100 percent of Israeli farmers have signed-up to BCI, and Better Cotton from their first harvest is already available. With the addition of Israel, BCI now operates in 21 countries worldwide.

“We’re delighted to welcome Israel to the BCI programme,” said Corin Wood-Jones, BCI’s Senior Programme Manager. “This addition represents an important step in our continued efforts to engage globally across a diverse range of farming systems. We look forward to working with the ICB so that other Better Cotton farmers can potentially benefit from their extensive agronomic knowledge, and specialised experience in such areas as water management.”

While Israel is a relatively small cotton producer, it demonstrates highly advanced practices at field level. Examples include country-wide implementation of integrated pest management (IPM) methodology based on plot specific scouting of pests and beneficial organisms, regular area-wide infestation assessment, cultural control methods, a pest resistance monitoring routine and regulated usage of pesticides. In the realm of water and nutrition management, highly controlled and cost beneficial application of these inputs are based on direct plant and soil monitoring. The hallmark of the Israeli cotton sector and its proven success in producing high yields of excellent quality cotton is the result of ongoing collaboration between growers and their cooperatives, ginners, extension services and research and development activities and institutions. This cooperation is coordinated under the leadership of ICB.

Israel produces predominantly Extra Long Staple, feeding the Better Cotton supply chain with the highest quality cotton fibre. Many BCI members use Extra Long Staple to produce high-quality textiles.

“ICB is proud to become a member of the BCI community. We view this membership as a mutual opportunity whereby we envisage both sides benefiting from each other’s strengths in the cotton sector. As an Implementing Partner, ICB is excited to contribute its experience as a producer organisation while learning from BCI’s culture and global accomplishments,” said Mr. Uri Gilad, Managing Director, Israel Cotton Production & Marketing Board (ICB).

ICB is starting off their engagement with BCI as an Implementing Partner, providing Israeli producers with capacity building and training on the Better Cotton Standard System. Over the course of the next one to two years, ICB intends to develop an Israeli Better Cotton Standard, which they will own themselves and benchmark against the BCI Standard.

Embedding the BCI Standard into national and sub-national agricultural practices allows BCI to share the responsibility for Better Cotton worldwide with local organisations well-placed to oversee implementation in the field. Maximising results through strategic partnerships with organisations like ICB is a key element of establishing Better Cotton as a more sustainable mainstream commodity.

<http://bettercotton.org/israel-joins-the-better-cotton-initiative/>