

SCP History

The Sustainable Cotton Project (SCP) was founded in 1996 to expand and disseminate knowledge about alternatives to chemical farming systems in cotton, and to promote their use in the textile and apparel industry. As a private, non-profit group (501) (c) (3) working under the direction of the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, SCP is dedicated to helping build bridges among cotton farmers, manufacturers and consumers.

The project has two major focuses: a BASIC (Biological Agricultural Systems in Cotton) Program that works directly with growers; and a Developing Demand Program that encourages major apparel companies to use U.S. organic or our own BASIC cotton.

Highlights of the BASIC Program

The BASIC Program walks farmers step-by-step through the transition from conventional to more biological techniques. It also offers farmers tested methods for reducing or eliminating certain farm chemicals, increasing sustainability and protecting water quality. Using regular field day events and farmer mentor programs, BASIC outreach activities guide and educate growers through a program designed to save them money and help them stay economically viable while protecting local ecosystems and human health.

- In 2002, BASIC had 23 growers who enrolled about 1,900 acres in the program, and together they farmed more than 15,000 total acres of cotton. These growers reduced “targeted pesticide” application rates by 73% on enrolled acreage, compared to the county average.
- In 2003, BASIC had 30 program growers who reduced “targeted pesticide” application rates by 65% on enrolled acreage, compared to the county average.
- In 2004, BASIC had 40 enrolled fields, which totalled 2,500 acres. BASIC influence is increasing since together these growers farmed more than 17,000 acres in three cotton growing regions of Fresno, Madera and Merced counties.

Highlights of the Developing Demand Program

- SCP hosts yearly farm tours, which provide information for companies conducting internal education and educating their supply chains about the reason for incorporating BASIC or organic cotton into their products.
- We continue to have influence over the next generation of fashion designers through work with top design schools. The Academy of Art College, for example, has just created a major in Sustainable Design after showcasing SCP and BASIC as their “school focus” for 2002. The Royal College of Art, and several others, now include information on organic cotton in their curricula and encourage students to use organic cotton fabric in their graduating shows.
- In 2006, with a grant from the USDA, SCP is actively seeking markets for the BASIC cotton grown in our program.

This project has received support through a grant from the California State Water Resources Control Board with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Non-point Source Pollution Control Program (Clean Water Act Section 319).

ESTABLISHED 1996

Mission Statement

Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is building a movement of rural and urban people to foster family-scale agriculture that cares for the land, sustains local economies and promotes social justice.

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