

Cotton Inc.
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Summary by Katie Hughes

Cotton is a global fiber that does not compete with other countries, but other fibers. Cotton Incorporated is the only nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the demand for and profitability of cotton through research and promotion. Cotton Inc. is a science-based organization that shares research and knowledge worldwide. Mark Messura, Senior VP of Global Supply Chain Marketing, contacts brands, retailers, and manufacturers from an economics standpoint. Global supply chain marketing is in charge of influencing cotton use in production and cottonworks.com provides resources with ample information.

Out of the 77 countries that grow cotton, just five countries produce 75% of the world's cotton: India, China, the United States, Pakistan, and Brazil. The United States is the third largest producer of cotton and the number one exporter of cotton. The Cotton Belt includes the seventeen states that produce cotton in the lower half of the U.S. Cotton is predominantly found in these southernmost states due to their climate. The Cotton Calendar describes the annual production of cotton starting from planting in the Spring from the months of March to July. Growing takes place in the warmer months of March to October. Harvesting happens from August to December. After the cotton is out of the hands of the farmers, the crop cycle restarts. Every part of cotton is used for something. The cotton boll is the fruit of a cotton plant used to make textiles, feminine hygiene products, diapers, etc. The lint of cotton has seeds that can be used as oil, animal feed, etc. The cotton plant benefits multiple industries.

The supply chain of cotton has an inverse relationship, meaning that the higher the stocks use ratio, the lower the price and the lower the stocks use ratio, the higher the price. Cotton prices use New York nearby prices as an indicator of the U.S. cotton price. The pandemic put pressure on the supply chain in March of 2020. Everyone in the supply chain got caught off guard by the pandemic, and companies needed to change the way they negotiate as well as the way they treated their suppliers. Inflation in the cotton market happened well beyond what the fundamental supply demand should yield. Ninety-five percent of U.S. textiles are imported through cargo ships and containers. Before COVID, the cost of a container was around \$4,000 and this number increased to \$24,000 which is equivalent to gas prices rising from \$2.50 a gallon to \$15 a gallon. As a result of the pandemic, inventory turnover fell by 33%.

Cotton has the possibilities to lead the way for a new model of digital material creation and use as the first fiber to digitize at the source. Digitalization of cotton could energize the industry and carve a path for a new generation of materials. There are now apps that can digitally design clothing to a fine degree incorporating motion, various fabrics, colors, and more. Cotton Inc. has a digital library of cotton “fonts” that designers can utilize to digitally create clothing. The digital fabric library is compatible with CLO3D and Browzwear with free download on the CottonWorks website. The pandemic accelerated the need for these new innovations and digitized work.

The cotton industry is an industry of its own. With resources like Cotton Incorporated, the textile industry as well as other industries that use cotton can now benefit from constantly updated information, technology, and resources. Cotton is the leading fiber in the marketplace, and with the help of Cotton Inc., it will remain so.