



# Transparency matters

when it comes to sustainable cotton

The textile industry is facing a profound regulatory shift, spurred by the need to meet sustainability targets over the next decade.

**At the center of this regulatory overhaul is the European Union's ambitious Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles**, which is aiming to revolutionize the textile sector by ensuring that all products sold on its market are durable, repairable, reusable and recyclable. Brands and retailers who are seeking to operate within the EU must soon comply within stricter design parameters, ensure that their products carry more information about their origin and composition than ever, and that environmental claims are fully substantiated.

While the EU is spearheading this regulatory shift, other major markets are following suit:



**U.S. Federal  
Fabric Act**

**New York's  
Fashion  
Sustainability  
and Social  
Accountability  
Act**

**UK's  
Competitions  
and Markets  
Authority**

These crackdowns on greenwashing all signal a sea of change perceptions of the textile industry, emphasizing the need for greater accountability, traceability, and data to back up claims.



U.S. COTTON  
**TRUST PROTOCOL**  
Trust in a smarter cotton future

With the increased scrutiny on sustainability, brands and retailers want to ensure what they buy is what they get, with raw material sourcing more important today than ever before.

The U.S. cotton industry's existing commitment to leadership in more sustainable cotton growing practices has been clear over the past 35 years.

It has made significant strides in reducing its environmental impact, decreasing water use, soil loss, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use while increasing soil carbon and land use. But the U.S. cotton industry knew there was still work to be done to ensure that it contributed to the protection and preservation of the planet.

The U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol is the voluntary sustainability program for U.S. cotton growers, and traceability platform for all U.S. Cotton.

The Trust Protocol allows U.S. producers to showcase their sustainable practices and how they have been, and will continue to be, leaders in sustainability on a global scale

At the same time, the program was designed to meet the needs of brands and retailers in the fashion and textile industries, which are increasingly expected to show the sourcing data for their products.

This data-based approach, backed up by independent, third-party verification, gives brands and retailers the critical assurances that the cotton fiber element of their supply chain is more sustainably grown.

However, the program does not stop there. Recognizing the growing importance of increased supply chain visibility to brand and retailer members, the Trust Protocol is the world's first sustainable cotton fiber program to offer its members article level transparency across the supply chain.



"The Trust Protocol measures, evidences and verifies sustainability outcomes. With the Trust Protocol we are providing access to more sustainably grown cotton for brands and retailers, and science-based, data led assurances that their consumers can have confidence in—something that has been lacking in the industry to date."



**Daren Abney**  
Executive Director, U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol

To learn more about the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol visit [TrustUSCotton.org](https://TrustUSCotton.org)



When U.S. Cotton or Protocol Cotton is tracked through the Protocol Consumption Management Solution (PCMS), brands and retailers should receive a transparency map that verifies the origin of the cotton starting from the initial fiber shipment to a textile mill, providing the names and locations of the Trust Protocol mill and manufacturer members involved at every stage of the production process, until the delivery of finished products.

Mills and manufacturers who join the Trust Protocol can also be identified as part of a fully transparent supply chain and selected by brands and retailers as they look to source U.S. cotton fiber.

“For sustainability to be meaningful, we understand that the textile supply chain must demonstrate continuous improvement and transparency throughout the entire process—building trust from farms to fabric,” said Abney.

Since its launch the Trust Protocol has welcomed over 40 companies and their brands such as Ralph Lauren, Gap Inc. and Next – as well as over 2,800 mill and manufacturer members

45+ companies and their brands

2,800 mill and manufacturer members

welcomed into the Trust Protocol since its launch

## Continued Progress at the Field

Compared to the 2015 baseline

