Principles and Criteria

The Trust Protocol principles consist of nine categories:

Soil Health and Regenerative Practice Management

Crop Protection

Fiber Quality, Data Management and Traceability

Nutrient Management

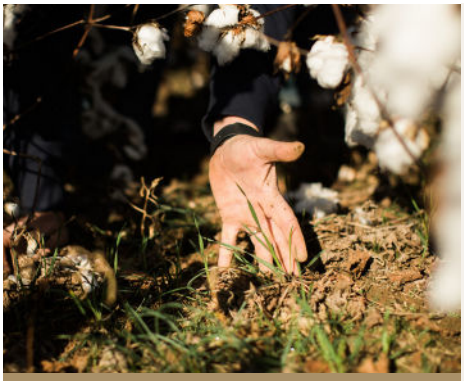
Chemical Management

Farm Management

Water Management

Biodiversity

Worker Well-being



Soil Health and Regenerative Practice Management

Use production practices that conserve and regenerate soil

Criteria

1. **Mitigate soil erosion by considering the landscape, soil composition, precipitation, wind patterns, and implementing both mechanical and conservation practices.**
2. **Identify areas classified as highly erodible and implement an approved Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plan as appropriate.**
3. **In accordance with NRCS guidance, avoid planting on land converted from wetlands after 1985 and avoid conversion of new wetlands.**
4. **Utilize regenerative practices recognized for enhancing soil biodiversity and the microbiome.**
5. **Use soil health-building practices known to increase soil organic content, enhance soil structure, and facilitate water infiltration and soil-water holding capability.**

Nutrient Management

Maintain healthy plants through nutrient management practices that minimize environmental emissions

Criteria

1. **Maintain a nutrient management plan to:**
   a. Enhance soil fertility.
   b. Continuously improve nutrient cycling.
   c. Monitor soil nutrients and pH.
   d. Replace nutrients based on the amount removed by previous crop harvests.
   e. Right Rate - Apply precise nutrient amounts to avoid over application.
   f. Right Source - Apply nutrients from appropriate sources.
   g. Right Time - Time nutrient applications as close to the crop-needs as possible.
   h. Right Place of Application - Place nutrients in appropriate proximity to roots to be readily available for plant uptake.
   i. When using animal manure pay special attention to the ratios of primary nutrients to avoid excess phosphorous or potassium which could be a cause of eutrophication.
2. **Use conservation and application practices that minimize nutrient runoff into water bodies.**

Water Management

Promote water stewardship

Criteria

1. **Maintain a water management plan to:**
   a. Employ practices that maximize efficient use of natural rainfall.
   b. Employ soil health-building principles that increase soil organic content and optimize soil water holding capacity.
   c. Where supplemental irrigation is needed, use efficiently by scheduling, and calibrate corresponding to crop physiological needs.
   d. Utilize scientific models for water quality monitoring to forecast the potential for nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, and chemical runoff losses across a field.
   e. Promote measures to minimize runoff and impacts to water resources from sediment, agricultural chemicals, manure, and other fertilizers.
   f. Measure or estimate the volume of applied irrigation water.
2. **Manage water resources in accordance with local authorities.**
3. **Continuously assess the effectiveness of the water management plan**

Crop Protection

Protect cotton plants from harmful pests

Criteria

1. **Use an integrated pest management (IPM) strategy, a holistic system to managing pests by combining biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks of toxic materials. IPM includes maximizing natural pest control with prevention practices such as:**
   a. Cultural practices and traps
   b. Historic pest information
   c. Life cycle understanding of pest
   d. Monitoring
   e. Natural pesticides where available
   f. Host plant pest resistance

Chemical Management

Minimize worker and environmental exposure to pesticides

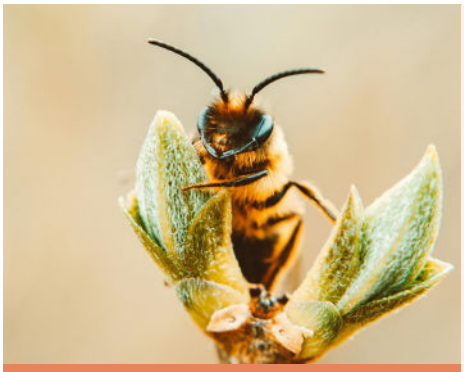
Criteria

1. **Use appropriate storage of fertilizers including manure to prevent leaching and runoff.**
2. **Reduce the quantity of synthetic fertilizers and enhance the efficacy by embracing their synergistic potential when integrated with organic soil amendments like compost and animal manure.**
3. **Use only pesticides that have been fully evaluated and approved in accordance with science-based assessment and risk-based approvals of the**
    a. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for environmental protection (All of the pesticides currently listed under the Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions are regulated by EPA)
    b. National Marine Fisheries Services for aquatic species and avian species
    c. National Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve and protect for exotic and endangered species.
    d. U.S. Food and Drug Administration for protecting public health by ensuring the safety, efficacy and security of food and drug products.
    e. Consumer Product Safety Commission for regulations on safe use of textile products and other consumer products
4. **Observe use restrictions and risk mitigation measures as required by law on labels of each active ingredient.**
5. **Protect all workers on the farm by ensuring workers annually attend, complete, and obtain verification documents of compliance to EPA Worker Protection Standards for pesticide safety training.**
6. **Ensure Pesticide Handlers and Applicators complete additional required training and certification, including product specific training as required by local, state, or federal laws.**
7. **Protect people and animals from coming in contact with Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHP) through engineering controls for handling, loading and application.**
8. **Ensure persons who prepare and apply pesticides are healthy, skilled, and trained in pesticide application safety, 18 years or older and not pregnant or nursing.**
9. **Ensure persons who prepare and apply pesticides employ appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as specified on the EPA Approved label.**

Chemical Management (cont'd)

10. Apply pesticides in accordance with all label requirements, including rate restriction (both per application and seasonal), application weather restrictions, water body buffer restrictions, and sensitive area restrictions as published on labels for each individual chemical.
11. Store pesticides and other agrochemicals in a secure and approved location.
12. Appropriate use and disposition of containers.
13. Use appropriate disposal methods of unused products/mixes and rinsate.
14. Use only U.S. EPA approved harvest aids to prepare the crop for machine harvesting.
15. Ensure compliance with product specific labels and pre-harvest intervals (days required between application and harvest).
16. While applying harvest aids maintain buffer zones from other crops, buildings, water bodies, and non-cotton areas.

**** Pesticides refers to all materials used for plant protection products including insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc.



Biodiversity

Promote plant, animal and microorganism biodiversity and efficient use of land

Criteria

1. Employ practices that maximize agricultural ecosystems services through enhancing natural habitats and increasing biodiversity in and around agricultural landscapes.
2. Use tools for assessing habitat potential to guide ecosystem enhancement of cotton fields and surrounding areas.
3. Promote agronomic and cultural practices that enhance soil health and biodiversity.
4. Retire unproductive land and convert to a use including rainwater storage, wetlands, pollinator habitat, wildlife corridors suitable for promoting biodiversity.

Fiber Quality, Data Management and Traceability

Preserve fiber quality, and assure identity preservation through the supply chain

Criteria

1. **Manage harvest and store seed cotton to preserve fiber quality.**
2. **Monitor fields and equipment to minimize lint contamination from plastic and other non-cotton fiber contaminants.**
3. **Use locally adapted varieties to match productivity and market needs.**
4. **Maintain identity preservation of bales through national Permanent Bale Identification systems.**
5. **Provide transparency of quality measurements for supply chain participants.**
6. **Ensure data integrity in capturing, validating, and reporting against environmental goals and metrics through robust system design and independent verification.**
7. **Quantify field environmental impacts annually using the Field to Market FieldPrint Platform to monitor and quantify the following:**
    a. Land use
    b. Soil loss
    c. Energy use
    d. Water use efficiency
    e. Greenhouse gas
    f. Biodiversity (habitat potential index)
    g. Water quality index
    h. Soil carbon index
8. **Ensure security and data integrity of environmental metrics to meet Science Based Target Initiatives and Sustainable Development Goals of global textile partners.**

Farm Management

Manage farm to assure safe and productive living and working environment

Criteria

1. **Assure an effective farm management system.**
2. **Keep farm infrastructure safe and healthy for workers, farm animals, and the environment.**
3. **Provide training to promote safe working habits and practices.**
4. **Develop continuous improvement plans using insights from FieldPrint metrics and the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol annual report.**

Worker Well-being

Promote decent work

Worker Well-being

1. Workers are treated fairly.
2. Wages are equal to or higher than required by law are provided.
3. Working hours comply with national and state law.
4. Children are not exploited in any form.
5. There is no forced, compulsory, bonded or trafficked labor.
6. Workplace is kept safe by minimizing hazards.
7. Discrimination of all forms is forbidden.
8. Equal wages are paid to workers who perform the same job, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity.
9. Safe and hygienic sanitation is accessible.
10. Potable drinking water and wash-water are provided.
11. Workers have freedom of associations.
12. Abuse or harassment of any kind is not tolerated.
13. Workers have clear work-related agreements and expectations, with access to a grievance mechanism.