



## U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol 2023/24 Annual Report Key Findings

**Record Grower Adoption:** Planted acreage enrolled in the Trust Protocol surged to 2.1 million acres, a 31% increase from the previous year. This growth underscores the U.S. cotton industry's commitment to responsible production.

**Measurable Environmental Improvements:** Trust Protocol growers continued to outperform national averages, achieving a 14% improvement in yield and notable reductions in six key environmental impact areas compared to a 2015 baseline:

- Water Use: 14% reduction
- Energy Use: 27% reduction
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions: 21% reduction
- Soil Loss: 79% reduction
- Land Use Efficiency: 15% improvement
- Soil Health: 74% of growers achieved a positive Soil Conditioning Index, indicating improvements in soil organic matter.

### **Regenerative Agriculture Practices:**

- 56% of growers adopted no-till or conservation tillage methods, leaving over 30% crop residue on fields, reducing soil erosion, improving water retention, and supporting soil carbon sequestration.
- 62% of growers integrated cover crops into their farming operations, preventing soil erosion, improving water infiltration, and contributing to carbon sequestration.
- 78% of reported Fieldprint acres employed conventional crop rotation, disrupting pest cycles, preventing disease buildup, and enhancing soil biodiversity.
- 87% of growers implement 4 R (right source, time, place, and rate) that helps ensure crops get the nutrients they need to grow while minimizing runoff.
- 75% of growers implemented IPM strategies, including practices such as reducing reliance on chemical pesticides and promoting crop rotation/beneficial insects.
- 87% of growers implement conservation practices that help prevent leaching off nutrients into water sources.

**Climate Action:** The [Climate Smart Cotton Program](#), designed to help growers adopt climate-smart practices and participate in carbon markets, expanded its reach:

- 1,427 U.S. farming entities enrolled, including 282 from historically underserved communities.
- 16,500 acres adopted new Climate Smart Agriculture practices, contributing to 15,000 metric tons of GHG emission reductions.

**Traceability at Scale:** The Trust Protocol's Protocol Consumption Management Solution (PCMS) saw increased utilization, tracking increased volumes of sustainably sourced cotton:

- 1,200 shipments of cotton fiber recorded, equivalent to 3.4 million bales of U.S. Cotton and 636,000 bales of Protocol Cotton.
- Nearly 110 million shipped units tracked by brands and retailers.

**Enhanced Governance and Global Collaboration:** The Trust Protocol expanded its Board of Directors to include greater international representation and joined the United Nations Fashion and Lifestyle Network, strengthening its commitment to global collaboration and driving positive change within the fashion and textile industries.

#### **Why This Matters for the Fashion Industry**

- **Meeting Sustainability Goals:** The Trust Protocol provides brands and retailers with a credible and transparent way to source sustainably grown U.S. Cotton, supporting their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments.
- **Meeting Regulatory Requirements:** The program's data aligns with key industry standards and emerging regulations, such as the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), helping brands meet reporting requirements and demonstrate due diligence.
- **Traceability and Transparency:** The PCMS offers article-level traceability, enabling brands to track their cotton from farm to finished product and communicate their sustainability efforts to consumers with confidence.