



**Organic Cotton
Production and Trade
Promotion Project**



PROJECT UPDATE

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Bio Cotton Project has recruited new staff members Gulzaada Alishova as Assistant/Translator and Akbermet Shakirova as Intern. Later in August Akbermet was promoted to Office Manager position.

In August BCP team has welcomed Mr. Hansjoerg Dietche Senior Adviser for Rural Economy who will support the Bio Cotton Project and newly launched project on Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Alai and Chong Alai districts, Osh oblast.

The organic cotton fiber volume for the upcoming season is estimated to have about 150 MT of organic fiber and 70 MT of in-conversion fiber. From Talas region it is expected to have 100 tons of organic and 100 tons of in-conversion white beans and 30 tons of organic chickpeas. Negotiations for rotation crops are ongoing.

The project continues exploring further processing of organic cotton by introducing Handicraft value chain with the support of ACSC female farmer groups. The pilot product out of cotton and wool has been prepared farmer group in the village Bai- Munduz, Bazar-Korgon region, led by Ms. Kalima. The carpet named Araviy Kilem originates in Batenken region and inherited from generations. The project intends to establish a value chain for handicraft products from organic and fairtrade farmers to access local and export

markets. Additionally it will serve as additional income generating activity for farmers during winter season.

Bio Cotton Project hosted FLO International visit to conduct a training for existing and poten-



Fairtrade certification workshop participants and BCP staff

August/ 2013

tial Fairtrade users in Central Asia. Participants from Tajikistan, SAS organic and Kyrgyzstan, Agrolead and ACSC could upgrade their knowledge about Fairtrade concept and develop future strategies. ACSC members have reached already long years of experience with Fairtrade and could attend the training as resource persons. New applicants for Fairtrade, Agrolead were interested to establish fairtrade walnut value chain in the South of Kyrgyzstan. After the training, BCP assistant/translator Gulzaada Aleshova took over responsibility of being a focal point for



Where to find us?

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DO YOU KNOW THAT..?

- The word 'cotton' is derived from 'qutun' or 'kutun', an Arabic word used to describe any fine textile
- The fibre from one 227k g cotton bale can produce 215 pairs of jeans, 250 single bed sheets, 1,200 t-shirts, 2,100 pairs of boxer shorts, 3,000 nappies, 4,300 pairs of socks or 680,000 cotton balls
- Around 70 countries in the world grow cotton
- Cotton can absorb up to 27 times its own weight in water
- Cotton and its by-products are used in the production of a huge range of products including bank notes, margarine, rubber and medical supplies
- Cotton is a unique crop in that it is both a food and a fiber
- Top 3 cotton producing countries of 2012 are China, India, United States

AGROTOURISM

In 2008 Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation has initiated awareness increase activities in Switzerland with the objective to promote Organic Cotton farming in Kyrgyzstan. In a result, agrotourism idea has been launched which offers Swiss people to visit organic cotton fields and stay with farmers to learn more about rural life in Kyrgyzstan. The visit is coordinated by GLOBOTREK Travel Agency in Europe (<http://www.globotrek.ch/reisen/helvetasreisen>) and local travel agency NoviNomad. Both travel agencies have elaborated in total a package of eco-tourism for 14 days. During this trip tourists have a chance not only to live in a family of the organic cotton farmer, participate in cotton harvesting, learn about the culture of the local people and taste Kyrgyz national cuisine but also visiting magnificent historical places dating back to IX-XI centuries, enjoying snow covered high Kyrgyz mountains and relaxing on the shores of Issyk-Kul Lake.

In 2009 first 48 tourists arrived in Kyrgyzstan. It is obvious that Swiss people are interested and eager to collect cotton from cotton boxes under Kyrgyz sun. This year 4 groups of Swiss tourists visited Arkalyk and Akman villages in Bazar-Korgon rayon and Tash – Alysh and Shaidan villages in Nooken rayon. These activities allow Organic farmers increasing their family

income and establishing new friendly relations between two nations. Most of the host families still continue being in touch with their guests. They exchange pictures, greeting cards and presents during holidays. One could see that language barrier does not disturb Kyrgyz and Swiss people to establish friendly relations with each other. Each tourist is considered to be ambassador back to Switzerland not only to tell their friends and relatives but also link to potential value chain partners.



Swiss agro tourist during the cotton harvesting,
September / 2012

MISSION TO THE PROJECT

At the end of September Bio Cotton Project organized backstopping visited of Dr. Frank Eyhorn, Co-Team Leader Rural Economy/Head Organic & Fairtrade Competence Centre, HSI Switzerland. The mission objective has covered project issues in the field of organic sector development, project monitoring strategy and comparative study of organic and conventional farming. At the same time Mr. Eyhorn could support both partner organizations in revision of their internal business strategies. Additionally during the mission the project identified potential business relation with Association of Fruits and Vegetables processors who expressed their willingness to launch subsector for organic processing.

Project expects a Strategic Control visit by Mr. Rudolf Dannecker, Board Member, Mrs. Teresa Froesch, Vice president of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and Ms. Lydia Pluess, Programme Coordinator Central Asia and visit of Dr. Barbara Jaegglin, Program Manager from SECO, Division Trade Promotion together with representatives of Embassy of Switzerland in Bishkek,

