

Atul S. Ganatra
President

11th July 2024

Shri Giriraj Singh
Hon'ble Union Minister of Textiles,
Government of India,
Udyog Bhawan,
New Delhi – 110 011.

Respected Sir,

Cotton Association of India (CAI) greets and heartily welcomes you to be visiting our city of Mumbai. We are keen to meet you and seek guidance from you for greater and sustained development journey of Cotton. CAI has been serving the cotton value chain since last 103 years.

The city of Mumbai, as a major port city, has always been BEDROCK of Cotton Textile Value Chain and has served the cotton ecosystem which pervades the whole cotton value chain of India.

The port was build up to serve the large raw cotton exports in particular and Cotton Association of India was given birth statutorily in 1921, to serve the cotton value chain more effectively and efficiently. CAI was tasked to pervasively serve all the functionaries of the cotton textile value chain.

CAI is composed of representatives of Farmers, Ginners, Traders, Exporters, Textile Mills and Brokers, etc. CAI has been steadily carrying out cotton developmental and welfare activities in total cooperation with Government policy directions.

We have been working cohesively and connectively with various cotton textile value chain units, such as Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI), The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) as well. We are also part of the Textile Commissioner's Committees like COCPC and others.

As a Textile Advisory Group (TAG) member, CAI is working with all cotton value chain functionaries and institutions with the above objective, to strengthen the value chain in a unified way.

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Cotton Association of India

Atul S. Ganatra
President

: 2 :

Further, Cotton Association of India works for Cotton Price Risk Management with MCX and other exchanges. Representationally our constituents are 17 regional cotton associations, ginning associations, farmer's organisation and 3 cooperative cotton marketing societies and thus we have a country wide reach out.

Respected Sir, today BEGGING PROBLEM of our cotton is low productivity with which we all are concerned.

In a separately enclosed note, we have highlighted for your kind consideration our "DIRE NEED" to improve our productivity with two focal points exhaustively dealing with (1) Lack of Irrigation Facility and (2) Need for New Seed Technology and Seed distribution system.

We believe this would augment the Government's commendable move towards "Technology Transformation" by emphasising High Density Planting.

Thanking you and with respectful regards,

Sincerely yours,



Atul S. Ganatra

Encl: Note on Indian Cotton

Atul S. Ganatra
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NOTE ON INDIAN COTTON FOR CONSIDERATION OF HON'BLE UNION MINISTER OF TEXTILES, SHRI GIRIRAJ SINGH JI

Cotton is an important cash crop in our country. Cotton cultivation in India plays an important role in sustaining livelihood and increasing income to an estimated 6 million farmers and several million other people engaged in related activities. Cotton thus has a vast potential to alleviate poverty in all 11 cotton growing states of our country.

Over the period of time, Indian cotton has made an envious growth. India has the largest acreage under cotton in the world. Our country is the second largest producer and the fourth largest exporter of cotton in the world. The per hectare cotton yield in our country has also increased from 156 kgs./ha. in 1999-2000 to 572 kgs./ha. in 2013-14. However, thereafter, cotton yield could not sustain its upward momentum and it is significantly lower at 422 kgs./ha. in 2023-24 crop year compared to the world average cotton yield of 764 kgs./ha. The following are the two main reasons for our low cotton yield:-

1. LACK OF IRRIGATION FACILITY

Approximately 67% of India's cotton is produced in rain-fed areas. Since in rain-fed areas, cotton is totally dependent on rains, it does not get adequate water during critical flowering and fruiting stages, when the requirement of water is more than 80% of total water requirement of cotton crop.

Due to this, cotton yield in rain-fed areas is substantially lower compared to the irrigated belts especially in rain-fed state like Maharashtra, where about 95% area is rain-fed, and in scanty water availability states like Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat.

In order to overcome this, it is recommended that we implement precision-irrigation technology in rain-fed areas by introducing drip irrigation. This will not only ensure efficient water resource management but also boost our cotton yields manifold. Apart from substantially increasing cotton yield, drip irrigation will also prove to be an effective tool to save 40-60% of total water required for irrigation through flood.

We therefore request you Sir, to support carrying out demonstrations to create awareness amongst cotton farmers across all our rain-fed / scanty water availability areas about benefits of using drip irrigation technology through Public Private Partnership.

Atul S. Ganatra
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: 2 :

Further, since the cost of installing drip irrigation system in India is very high at about Rs.60,000/- per acre, we have made a representation to the Government to extend a budgetary support to farmers in setting up drip irrigation system in their fields.

2. NEED FOR NEW SEED TECHNOLOGY IN INDIA

Another burning problem is obsolete Bt. seed technology prevailing in our country. Bt. seed technology was introduced in India way back in 2003. Over the years, Pink Boll Worm (PBW) has developed resistance to this Bt. technology.

The crop cycle of Hybrid chosen for Bt. technology in India is 160-240 days. This long duration crop cycle with long flowering and fruiting window of 80-160 days compared to 60-100 days in advanced countries is unsuitable for our rain-fed areas and also makes it susceptible to PBW infestation over a period of time. Therefore, Indian researchers have suggested to cultivate good quality seed of high yielding varieties with good fibre quality which are best suited to local conditions with tolerance to locally prevalent biotic (insects & pathogens) and abiotic (specific window of temperature, drought etc.) factors.

If we fail to provide new seed technology to our farmers, they will eventually stop growing cotton due to the crop loss caused by frequent PBW infestations. Such crop loss eventually translates into lower yield drastically reducing the income of our farmers, who due to lower yields, high inputs and labour cost and lower market rate of their produce, find cotton agriculture less favourable and at times unsustainable. It is thus imperative that a new and better seed technology is provided to our farmers in right earnest to keep their interests in cotton alive.

We also came across reports of delay in supply of good quality adequate cotton seeds to farmers in some states where good quality cotton seeds are reported to be in short supply. It is necessary that adequate quantity of good quality seeds are provided to farmers on timely basis to arrest their migration to other competing crops. We earnestly request you that this issue may also be kindly addressed in dialogue with seed companies and others concerned therewith.

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