

### **April 26<sup>th</sup>, Regional Strategy Workshop Notes**

The discussion ranged around key strengths in Peru and Paraguay, such as quality, the consistency of fiber length due to handpicking, etc. Cotton in Peru can also be promoted as an alternative to coca as was done in Bolivia, although this was only partially successful.

The poverty reduction benefits of organic cotton were talked about, although some doubted they can be used to sell organic cotton to consumers in all markets.

Tracing organic cotton and linking products to their origins could be a strong selling point and a component of the regional strategy.

The meeting agreed that there are different types of consumers and marketing needs to be targeted and adapted to each, rather than one over-arching 'organic is good'...

Consumers also need to be empowered and to understand their responsibility...that consuming is like voting in democracy...

Farmers in organic are sustained in their jobs and sector, whereas in conventional the situation gets worse every year with chemicals and pressure from multi-nationals, farmers are leaving land...organic helps with poverty reduction. Profits are 20% higher, and better health means more productivity...

#### **3 points for OE in region**

- Develop a network of groups in the region for communication and information.
- OE should focus on looking for markets that will pay the price and connect to the region...
- Develop markets through brands and consumer outreach...
- Training and extension and capacity building including market information and contacts...

OE/companies should do a better job of explaining what is 100% and what is 5% and why...

#### **More thoughts...**

- Need more incentives to farmers and good explanations of why they should grow organic...
- Need more capacity building on how to grow organic cotton and technology package and training: extension...
- Need seed varieties for organic
- How farmers are treated - need to make sure intermediaries are not taking away profits, farmers need to receive most of the price.
- Buying and marketing: need more training for farmers in managing their sales and marketing directly without intermediaries...
- Certification and internal control systems: explore different models...teach end consumers too.

#### **Benefits:**

- Peru: long staple cotton, coloured cotton, and jungle cotton (very white. Short medium staples).
- Aspiro: tablecloths, furniture fabrics, home textiles
- Hand picked cotton: Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia..
- Opportunity to support small farmers in Peru and Paraguay
- Better absorption for dyes: fewer chemicals, better for sportswear and babywear...
- Less dyeing time = more long lasting

#### **Social, environmental and economic benefits**

- Non-allergenic, no chemical contact
- Emotional benefits to customers
- Better producer and family health, and healthier water, air and environment
- In Paraguay and elsewhere it is cheaper to buy fertilizers.
- Factories can differentiate by showing their values
- Healthier soils to sustain farming
- Transparency shows social benefits