



Transformers Foundation and ICAC Release Investigative Report on Cotton Data to Help Fashion Professionals Use Data and Claims Responsibly

“COTTON: A CASE STUDY IN MISINFORMATION” aims to equip fashion professionals with the tools they need to build critical data consumption in fashion and eradicate misleading claims.

NEW YORK | October 7, 2021 | Transformers Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides suppliers with a platform to share their expertise and opinion on industry threats and solutions, announced today, World Cotton Day, the publication of "Cotton: A Case Study In Misinformation," an investigative report on building critical data consumption in fashion.

Fashion has a serious and growing misinformation problem. Inaccurate and outdated figures are widely shared, as is data without any context. Fashion misinformation is inseparable from society's broader "information disorder," driven by digital tools and ubiquitous social networks that allow misinformation to spread much faster and to reach more people than ever before. While the industry doesn't need to agree on one-size-fits-all solutions to fashion's problems, we need to agree on the facts or progress will fade from view.

Consider the case of cotton: Virtually every common claim about the sector is false or misleading, including that it requires 20,000 liters of water to make a T-shirt and a pair of jeans or that cotton uses a quarter of all insecticides. Even the notion that cotton is water-thirsty is misleading enough that we discourage its usage.

While there have been many attempts to debunk cotton myths, this report argues that teaching citizens and institutions to become critical consumers of data and information is the missing ingredient in halting the spread of misinformation.

This disruptive and much-needed report, which uses cotton as a case study, also aims to train readers with the tools they need to become skilled combatants against misinformation.

Authored by Elizabeth L. Cline, expert and advocate in fashion sustainability and labor rights, and Marzia Lanfranchi, the Foundation's intelligence director and co-founder of Cotton Diaries, the report draws on current leading research and dozens of interviews with industry experts to form in-depth case studies debunking the most widely used cotton statistics, equipping the industry and consumers with the best and most recent data on cotton and pesticides, as well as providing readers tools and exercises to engrain critical data consumption and use.

Including the support and input from the **International Cotton Advisory Committee**, the report provides tips and best practices on how to evaluate claims and data, debunk and “pre-bunk”

common myths about the cotton industry with an approach that can be applied to all other sectors, add context to the conversation to foster understanding and inform solutions, as well as form a consensus from the largest number of trusted cotton organizations as possible on sound data.

By proposing straightforward short- and long-term actions, the Transformers Foundation hopes to push the denim industry — and inspire the broader fashion industry — to make data transparency the norm.

"Transparency and traceability prove authenticity. We envision a future where farmers tabulate the amount of pesticides they use, the amount of water they use, all of the different inputs to compare this with their yield and continue retrieving the stream of data to a product's end of life," said Andrew Olah, Founder of Transformers Foundation. "We have been eager to launch this report to provide readers with tools to enable data transparency that will ultimately inform best practice and viable solutions for the health of the planet, the people, and our industry."

The report is organised into the following sections:

- Fashion's Misinformation Problem and How It Works
- Cotton's Environmental Impact: The Myths Versus the Reality
- Cotton and Water: The Reality (key figures, statistics and context)
- Cotton and Pesticides: The Reality (key figures, statistics and context)
- Cotton, the Environment, and Cotton Farmers (cotton's social impacts)
- How to use data responsibly
- Six Calls to Action for the Industry
- Best Practice for:
 - Citizens
 - Civil Society and Non-profits
 - Media
 - Brands and industry

On this World Cotton Day, register for Transformers Foundation's two-panel series hosted by the report's co-authors, with special guests Allison Deger, independent fact-checker; Cecilia Parker Aranha, Project Director, Competition and Markets Authority; Hilary Jochmans, Founder of Politically in Fashion; Lavinia Muth, CSR at Armedangels; Mathieu Jahnich, responsible marketing expert; Terry Townsend, former executive director of ICAC and cotton statistician. The panelists will discuss the report's highlights and offer lessons for using data responsibly and what accountable marketing looks like.

October 13th: Debunking myths, fact-checking and how to use data responsibly

[Register Here](#)

October 18th: Anti-greenwashing legislations, responsible marketing and citizenship

[Register Here](#)

About Transformers Foundation

Transformers Foundation is the unified voice representing the denim industry and its ideas for positive change. It was founded to provide a thus-far missing platform to the jeans and denim supply chain and a central point of contact for consumers, brands, NGOs, and media who want to learn more about ethics and sustainable innovation in the industry.

About the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC)

Formed in 1939, the ICAC is an association of cotton producing, consuming and trading countries. It acts as a catalyst for change by helping member countries maintain a healthy world cotton economy; provides transparency to the world cotton market by serving as a clearinghouse for technical information on cotton production; and serves as a forum for discussing cotton issues of international significance. The ICAC does not have a role in setting market prices or in intervening in market mechanisms. For more information, please visit www.icac.org, [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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