

What's the GMO Free Turkish Cotton?

There is an uncertainty in the world in terms of genetically modified cotton, as it has not clarified yet whether the products made of it are harmful or not and if they are harmful, what exactly their effects will be. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that a large mass of consumers still prefer genetically modified organism (GMO) free products.

On the other hand, concept of safe, healthy and GMO-free consumption is emphasized more, and market of safe products are enlarging each day. 70% of the cotton is produced from genetically modified seeds in the world where this percentage increases every year. Whereas, in Turkey, producing even 1 kg genetically modified cotton is forbidden in accordance with related legislation.

National Cotton Council of Turkey and İzmir Commodity Exchange has launched a project titled "GMO-Free Turkish Cotton", in order to announce this feature of Turkish cotton to the world as well as to enhance brand value of textile and apparel products produced from Turkish cotton. In the framework of this project, starting with the cotton bales, all cotton, textile and apparel products will be labelled as "GMOFree" and will be certified by international certification organizations.

This project is "A New Step in the Journey of Quality and Identification of Turkish Cotton, Textile and Apparel". Labelling Turkish cotton as "100% GMOFREE" and the products made from this cotton as "This product is made from 100% GMO-Free Turkish cotton" will enable Turkey to present a different product to the international markets in this sector in which it has been already active as well as positively influence the preferences of conscious consumers.

In a world where competition continuously increases, being noticeable in the international arena has become so important, yet so difficult. The products which fail to create brand value cannot hold long-running positions in the market. Although it is not explicitly perceivable, production that is sensitive to health, environment and ethical rules will be one of the basic determinants in consumer preferences and branding.

In this regard, the Turkish textile producers present their international partners with this advantage which Turkey possesses. Thanks to this project, demands of the consumers who prefer GMO-free products will be fulfilled.

The project was released to the public for the first time with a press briefing, after GMO-Free label which had been used merely on cotton bales started to be used on jeans trousers produced by a Turkish company. Barış Kocagöz, the President of National Cotton Council of Turkey and Vice Chairman of İzmir Commodity Exchange said "More than half of the world cotton is produced from genetically modified seeds, whereas due to the legal restrictions, genetically modified cotton cannot be produced

in Turkey which is the biggest GMO-free cotton producer in the world”, in the press briefing held in İzmir Commodity Exchange on November 24th, 2011.

“Today, we take a significant step with the first product that has completed the GMO-free production chain from field to the end-product. The jeans trousers produced by a leader textile company Bossa Inc. have been certified by Control Union after a control process. The products which are bound for export markets have been labelled as GMO-free. We hope that this will be a model for other textile companies. The recognition and enlargement of the project highly depends on to what extent the textile and apparel sector embraces it.” Mr. Kocagöz said. Drawing attention to Turkey’s potential for producing 1.5 million tonnes of GMO-free cotton, he mentioned that GMO-free label would, in the long term, be reason for preference for the consumers, and it would be beneficial for both Turkish brands and farmers.

Gülperi Erkanlı, Marketing Manager of the Turkish company which produced the first GMO-free product, said that the company that celebrated the 60th year anniversary previously involved in apparel manufacturing from organic and recycled cotton, and then decided to concentrate on production with GMO-free cotton. Having mentioned that they adopted environmental-friendly approaches in the textile industry and were on pursuit of protecting national values, she said:

“We do not expect that GMO-free label will provide us with price advantage but rather that it will encourage ecological approach in textile. Demand for eco-friendly products is increasing in the European countries and the United States. Organic and recycled cotton are two of these products. Since it is an advantage peculiar to Turkey and is certified by an international company, GMO-free label will render Turkish companies and their partner companies abroad advantageous in the world market.”

“We are very pleased to present you with this project which, we believe, aims at making a difference for textile and apparel products made from Turkish cotton in the world arena, and will take the Turkish cotton, textile and apparel sector a step forward.” Ms. Erkanlı told.