



*Bruce Atherley, Executive Director,
Cotton Council International*

COTTON USA™ and Oritain™ Ink New Partnership for Traceability

COTTON USA™ and Oritain™ have signed a partnership to provide industry with forensic verification of origin for all U.S. cotton. A global first for the cotton industry, this collaboration will give brands and retailers the assurance they need to make responsible sourcing and purchasing decisions.

“We’re thrilled that COTTON USA is taking the lead when it comes to traceability,” said Rupert Hodges, Executive Director, Oritain. “We want to support COTTON USA who are making a conscious effort to find real, workable ways of farming more sustainably. The result is an incredibly high-quality crop that not only performs well but supports the environment. Now through Oritain, customers who choose U.S. cotton can have total confidence that they are getting the product that they sourced.”

While this level of traceability is new, the U.S. cotton industry has always strived to produce and deliver high quality cotton that is the most sustainable cotton in the world. This ambition is already being realized through improved

fiber properties, increased productivity and a shrinking environmental footprint. All cotton-producing regions in the U.S. are aiming to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions, soil loss, water, energy and land usage.

“This partnership with Oritain will provide COTTON USA with a unique selling point in both domestic and export markets,” said Bruce Atherley, Executive Director, Cotton Council International. “Now U.S. cotton will offer the highest level of end-to-end traceability in the industry, combined with a raw material that is leading the way in terms of sustainable practices – two things that global clothing brands now demand from their suppliers.”

To achieve the level of traceability that the industry is demanding, Oritain’s unique method applies forensic science to detect trace elements in the cotton itself. Soil composition and other environmental factors give the cotton an inherent “fingerprint” specific to each location – what Oritain calls the Origin Fingerprint. This is the only way to be absolutely sure

of where particular cotton was grown. Cotton can be tested at any stage on its journey from farm to shop floor, giving buyers complete assurance that the product has not been substituted along the way.

Guaranteeing origin will address traceability challenges faced by the global cotton industry, including minimizing the risk of supply chain partners blending the product with lower quality fibers. “Global supply chains are incredibly complex and the potential for blending and other illegal activity in the production of cotton textile products is large. However, given that Oritain’s Origin Fingerprint cannot be altered or faked, COTTON USA and their customers can be safe in the knowledge that their product is exactly what it says it is,” said Hodges.

This new partnership follows a successful pilot program and rigorous blind test for Oritain, during which samples were collected across Arkansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Tennessee, and subsequently identified with 100% accuracy.