



## C&A's approach to enhance biodiversity as an outcome of organic cotton production

Our policy is that all of the fiber must comply with National production standards in the country of origin and certified against the Organic Content Standard (OCS) or Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). Because 90% of our certified organic cotton is sourced from India the Indian National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) standard is followed as well as the USDA National Organic Programme (NOP) and the EU Organic Directive 834/2007, when applicable for farm-based production

By sourcing organically produced cotton that is certified, we support a high integrity agricultural production system that has biodiversity embedded into the principles of organic cotton production:

By definition, the relevant National Production standards define organic production as a system that conserves and contributes to biodiversity, for example:

- Section 205.2 of NOP defines organic production as a “production system that is managed to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and **conserve biodiversity**”
- Article 3 of the EU standard states that organic production should establish a sustainable management system for agriculture that: “(a) respects nature's systems and cycles and sustains and enhances the health of soil, water, plants and animals and the balance between them and (ii) contributes to a high level of biological diversity.”

Most of the farm-based practices defined in the National production standards, directly or indirectly support and increase biodiversity at the farm level, including the following practices

### Soil Practices – Maintaining soil health fauna through effective soil management:

**Indian NPOP** – Section 6-ii of Appendix 1 of NPOP states that “where appropriate, the organic farms shall be required to maintain sufficient **diversity** in a manner that takes into account pressure from insects, weeds, diseases and other pests, while maintaining or increasing soil, organic matter, fertility, microbial activity and general soil health.”

**EU Standard** – Article 12 (a) of 834/2007 states that: “organic plant production shall use tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or increase soil organic matter, enhance soil stability and **soil biodiversity**, and prevent soil compaction and soil erosion.”

**USDA NOP** – Section §205.203 (a) on Soil fertility and crop nutrient management practice standard states that “the producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and **biological condition of soil** (...).”

### Genetic Diversity Promotion – Growing genetically diverse plant varieties at the crop level and diverse crops with organic cotton – for instance: crop rotation, nitrogen fixing plants, green manure crops and intercropping

**Indian NPOP** – Section 5-i of the Appendix 1 of the NPOP states that “in the choice of varieties, **genetic diversity** shall be taken into consideration.” Also section 6-ii of the Appendix 1 of the NPOP states that “Where appropriate, the organic farms shall be required to maintain sufficient diversity. For non-perennial crops, this is normal, but not exclusive, achieved by means of crop rotation preferably by leguminous crops.”

**EU standard** – According to the EU regulation 2018/848 of 30 May 2018 (that will come into force in 2021), “the choice of plant varieties should focus on agronomic performance, **genetic diversity**, disease resistance, longevity, and adaptation to diverse local soil and climate conditions, and should respect the natural crossing barriers” (which restates the interdiction of GM crop cultivation in organic production like previously done in the EU regulation 834/2007). *The point (19-a) of Article*



3 of the EU regulation 2018/848 defines 'organic variety suitable for organic production' as a "variety which is characterized by a high level of **genetic and phenotypical diversity** between individual reproductive units". Article 12 (a) on Plant Production rules of EU regulation 834/2007 states that "the fertility and biological activity of the soil shall be maintained and increased by multiannual crop rotation including legumes and other green manure crops (...)". Section §205.203 (b) on Soil fertility and crop nutrient management practice standard states that "the producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal material

Co-existing with wildlife, for example, by facilitating wildlife habitats where possible and by choosing plant protection practices based on the establishment of natural equilibriums within the cropping system

**Indian NPOP** – Section 4-(i and ii) of Appendix 1 of the NPOP states that "organic farming shall contribute beneficially to the ecosystem. The certification programme shall set standards/procedures for a minimum percentage of the farm area to **facilitate biodiversity** and nature conservation", for example through "ecologically rich fallow land or arable land" and "ecologically diversified (extensive) field margins".

**EU Standard** – Article 12 (g) on Plant Production rules of 834/2007 states that: "the prevention of damage caused by pests, diseases and weeds shall rely primarily on the protection by natural enemies, the choice of species and varieties, crop rotation, cultivation techniques (...)."

**USDA NOP** – Section §205.206 on Crop pests, weed, and disease management practice standard states amongst other techniques that "Pest problems may be controlled through mechanical or physical methods including but not limited to: (1) Augmentation or introduction of predators or parasites of the pest species; (2) Development of habitat for natural enemies of pests; (3) Nonsynthetic controls such as lures, traps, and repellents."