

The background of the page is a vertical strip of various colored fabric swatches, including shades of green, yellow, blue, red, and orange. A dark red border surrounds the entire image.

What's Going On In Textiles around the World?

Source: Textile Review

Image Courtesy: swicofil.com

What's Going On In Textiles around the World?

By: Seshadri Ramkumar

Source: Textile Review

Cotton is dominating the textile scene around the world this summer. With severe drought in West Texas, the largest cotton growing zone in the United States, 2011 crop will be severely affected, which will lead to supply squeeze. This may cause a tail-spin for the international textiles sector.

Indian Cotton Merchants Demand Free Export

Cotton Association of India has urged the Indian Prime Minister to allow free cotton exports from India immediately.

On May 19th, Mr. Dhiren Sheth, President of Cotton Association of India (CAI) has sent a four page letter to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India urging him to take immediate steps to allow free cotton exports from India under Open General License without any quantitative restrictions.

In his letter, Mr. Sheth has made it clear that the curbing of cotton exports since February end has resulted in the cotton price crash up to 30%. The plight of the farmers has been highlighted mentioning that Indian cotton farmers are not realizing global prices. The letter has criticized the Indian export policy to be vacillating since last April, which has led to the erosion of confidence in Indian cotton in the international market.

Mr. Sheth has pointed out that the restriction of cotton exports is disastrous to Indian farmers as they are left to the mercy of Indian mills. CAI has pointed out to the Indian Prime Minister that the current export policy is detrimental to the Indian cotton sector and has urged immediate free export trade without any quantitative restrictions.

In a separate communication on May 23rd from India, Mr. Kishore Tiwari, President of Vidarbha Jan Andolan Samiti, a farmer support group has strongly backed the CAI's plea for free cotton trade and has criticized the Indian textile lobby for blocking free exports from India.

Indian Spinning Industry Set to Huge Losses

Indian Spinning sector is set to incur huge losses of about 164 million US dollars.

The one day closure on May 23rd by the Indian spinning sector has resulted in a loss of Rupees 200 crores (~45 million US dollars). In addition, the planned production reduction for the next 7 days is expected result in a loss of Rupees 75 crores per day (~17 million US dollars/day).

In speaking to this scribe from India at 11.30PM CST on May 24th, Mr. D. K. Nair, Secretary General of the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) provided the economic loss figures and briefed that the CITI will appraise the situation during the first week in June for any further action.

Indian Prime Minister Responds on Current Textile Situation

Cotton and cotton yarn sectors have received highest level of attention in India.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Government of India has reacted to the current textile situation in India. PMO has defended India's cotton and cotton yarn policies for maintaining cotton and cotton yarn price stability.

The capping of cotton exports at 5.5 million bales (170 kg each) and cotton yarns at 720 million kgs are required to protect the interest of all stakeholders, said the statement released on May 24th, late afternoon.

PMO's has denied reports on the ban of cotton yarn exports and states that the policies in place have resulted in price stability.

In a statement, Mr. Shirshir Jaipuria, Chairman of CITI has informed that the one-day strike on Monday, May 23rd has been observed throughout India. The strike was led by CITI and all major spinning associations in India participated to highlight the current crisis situation in the spinning sector due to the restrictions imposed on cotton yarn exports by the Government of India. The restrictions were withdrawn effective April 1st, 2011.

Pollution Control is a Necessity for Textile Sustainability and Profitability

Pollution control is a major issue in the textile industry. Among the many factors contributing to the recent woes in the Indian textile sector, dye and processing house closures due to environmental problems in Tirupur area has been a major influencing factor.

Dr. Gilbert O' Neal, President and CEO of USA based Institute of Textile Technology in addressing the Concept-2-Consumer group at the Spring 2011 of the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists in Research Triangle Park, USA on May 25th emphasized the use of waste water treatment and waste reduction methods towards the economic and green sustainability of the textile industry. According to Dr. O' Neal important drivers for effective sustainability cost reductions, regulatory compliance, consumer demand and corporate motivation. A few cents per yard in added costs can be a make or break for a company said O' Neal. Therefore, cost is the bottom line for companies when they think about sustainability.

Typically, waste water treatment adds 2-4 cents/yard. Simple measures in processing houses such as water metering in washing, low salt dyeing, salt recovery are the low hanging fruits, which the industry should adopt to reduce the cost and minimize waste, emphasized O'Neal.

In a competitive economy, sourcing requirements by world's leading retailers will push companies towards sustainability and lowering the costs. This is the reason textile industry has moved away from the U.S. to China and India, said O'Neal.

Costs of sustainable practices and labor have pushed the textile industry to China and India Nowadays, with the high cost pressures, the industry is moving away from China to Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia where the labor is cheaper than China and India. It

may even go to Africa provided the political situation is right, said Mr. Leonard Farias, a textile chemist with the USA based Cotton Incorporated.

Nanofiber Market to Reach 4 Billion US Dollars by 2020

With productivity increase and enhancement of applications, nanofiber market size will be about 4 billion US dollars, according to Mr. Kial Gramley of FibeRio Technology Corporation, USA.

Mr. Gramley, Vice President of Marketing and Business Development at FibeRio Technology Corporation, introduced recent advancements in the Forcespinning nanofiber production at the 2011 Spring Materials Interest Group meeting of the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists, on May 25th in Research Triangle Park, USA.

FibeRio debuted mechanical method of nanofiber production called Forcespinning last year. The process is aimed at productivity increase to enhance the scope of nanofiber application in a wide array of products. In a question posed by this scribe on the productivity comparison with other existing methods of nanofiber production, Mr. Gramley said the centrifugal force method of FibeRio technology is at least one order magnitude higher in productivity. Durability of nanowebs is still a challenge and a panacea is yet to be achieved.

Wellesley, MA-USA based BCC Research in June last year estimated the current nanofiber market size to be about 140 million US dollars and is expected to reach 2.2 billion US dollars by 2020.

Diapers are Health Indicators for Children

On an average some 3000 diapers are being used by a baby per year. Diapers can serve as indicators for the health of babies and growing up children, said Ms. Pauline Mills, a certified lactation consultant at the University Medical Center, Lubbock, USA. Addressing a class of "would be" mothers in Lubbock on June 2nd, Pauline Mills said, 7 days or older babies until the time they give up using diapers on an average use 7-8 diapers per day.

Diapers are used from the day one of child birth. 1 to 2 wet diapers are used on the first day of birth. The more the food, a baby consumes, they have to discharge more which is reflected in the number of diapers being used. For a 1 week grown baby, a reduction of even one or two baby diapers usage per day can be a signal of less bowel movement and associated illnesses.

Although diapers are used from the get go, wipes are not generally used for 1 to 2 weeks since the time of birth. Some physicians recommend using wet cloth moistened with clean water instead of wipes, said Ms. Mills. As most of the wipes are alcohol based, it may dry the babies' skin and eventually cause some irritation. If at all-wipes are needed, unscented and non-alcoholic wipes have to be used after at least two weeks of child birth, said Ms. Mills.

Export Enhancement Shocks the Indian Spinning Sector Cotton export enhancement by one million bales this season has shocked the Indian cotton spinning sector.

Coimbatore-based The Southern India Mills' Association in a statement today, June 9th has expressed dissatisfaction with the recent Indian government's decision to cap the cotton export this season at 6.5 million bales of 170 kg each instead of 5.5 million bales. Government of India on June 8th decided to increase this year's cotton export by one million bales (170 kg each).

Mr. J. Thulasidharan, Chairman of SIMA has stated that the government has earlier assured to maintain a closing balance of 5 million bales. With the enhanced export limit, the closing stock this year will come down to 1.75 million bales. In a statement, SIMA Chief has criticized India's Agriculture Ministry for over estimating this year's crop to be 33.9 million bales. SIMA is backing an estimate of 31 million bales, which is less than the Agriculture Ministry's estimate.

SIMA has pleaded the Indian government to reconsider its June 8th decision to allow more cotton export from India.

Drought to Lower New Cotton Supplies

Severe drought in West Texas will lower supplies of new cotton crop in 2011.

Severe drought in the High Plains of Texas, world's largest contiguous cotton patch will lower US cotton production this year. Recently, the United States Department of Agriculture lowered 2011 crop estimate by 1 million bales (480 lbs each) from its earlier May estimate. Such a downward correction so early is deemed highly unusual by industry leaders and speculations are such that the production estimate could be further lowered in months to come.

In a meeting on June 10th, Mr. Steve Verett, a well-respected cotton farmer and the Executive Vice President of Plains Cottons Growers, Inc. of Lubbock, Texas warned that a significant rainfall is needed to salvage dryland cotton. "I am glass full kind of a person, but we have to face reality," said Verett, indicating a turnaround in crop production is highly unlikely this year. Dryland cotton crop in West Texas is likely going to be abandoned, said Dr. Kater Hake, Vice President of Agricultural Research of Cray, NC based Cotton Incorporated. We can't keep irrigating and in some point farmers have to abandon irrigation, said Verett talking about irrigated crop in West Texas. Hake agreed that farmers have to make decision on how they irrigate and in any case due to the limited availability of water this summer, total bales will come down.

Mr. Shawn Wade, Director of Policy Analysis and Research at Lubbock-based Plains Cotton Growers, Inc. commenting on the impact of severe drought this year on the US cotton crop said, "at this time there appears to be real potential for the High Plains region to produce as much as 2 million fewer bales in 2011 than that in 2010."

The High Plains area in West Texas produced about 30% of US cotton crop last year. Given the adverse weather condition in West Texas, the output from the United States this year will be heavily curtailed.

Mr. Henry Gantz, Group Editor of the Cotton Media Group, Cordova, USA in a separate communication to this scribe said he is praying for rain, which reflects the severity of weather on US cotton crop, this year.

The way forward for the Indian textile sector is sustainability in many different forms, ~.e., economic and environmental.

Views presented here are that of the author.

Originally Published in Textile Review, July-2011

The author is associated with Nonwovens and Advanced Materials Laboratory of The Institute of Environmental and Human Health Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas USA.