



INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR COTTON PROMOTION

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Working with Higher Education to Promote the Use of Cotton

Report to the 64th ICAC Plenary Meeting
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The International Forum for Cotton Promotion's main objective is to encourage and facilitate domestically funded and domestically focused cotton promotion programs with organizations like yours. We try to bring ideas and techniques to you that enable your organization to execute promotions at relatively low cost, and we provide access to promotional tools for your use through the cotton promotion website, www.cottonpromotion.org.

In May 2004, the IFCP conducted a Cotton Promotion Workshop in Cary, North Carolina, at the Cotton Incorporated World Headquarters. Part of the three-day workshop agenda was reserved for exchanging ideas on how to go about making the idea of cotton promotion a reality. One strategy that everyone agreed was important to pursue was to work with Educational Institutions, particularly those that have an interest in textiles and

fashion. It is important to educate students about the benefits of cotton, not just because they are potential consumers, but also because they are the buyers and fashion executives of tomorrow. The IFCP decided to build one such program, and I'm very pleased to present that program to you today.

In February 2005, thirteen seniors in their final academic semester from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York City took on the challenge of developing a line of cotton-based products for their senior project requirement.

The team's primary project focus was to research, design, and manufacture a commercially viable line of denim jeans. As you already know, denim accounts for 20% of worldwide cotton consumption.

The group's secondary focus was to demonstrate how a domestically funded and domestically focused cotton promotion program could be developed at little or no cost, utilizing the resources of the IFCP.

With the help of Cotton Incorporated, the creative staff of the IFCP website, and other industry professionals in the denim business that donated time and expertise, the project was a great success. This was the beginning of Cake Denim. Cake Denim is a line of reasonably priced jeans for the 35-45 year old woman who can't find jeans to call her own.

The creators of Cake Denim chose a blend of Australian and U.S. upland cotton, had it spun into yarn in Thailand, and then yarn dyed, woven, and finished in China. The garments were constructed in Hong Kong, and then the specialty denim finishing techniques that the students designed, were applied in California.

They developed a marketing strategy based on solid research, and developed their overall image positioning and graphic design with guidance from the IFCP members and other contributors.

Cake Denim is very much a cotton story, from fiber content to consumer promotion. The product was built around fit, but the market development was built around cotton, cotton's properties, and readily available promotion tactics used by the cotton industry itself. In short, Cake Denim availed itself of the services of the International Forum for Cotton Promotion (IFCP).

This project will be presented in October at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York to about 500 top tier retail and fashion industry executives from all over the world.

The Cake Denim Project accomplished several objectives. First, it exposed a group of today's graduating seniors, who have now begun their careers in industry, giving them a real-life experience in developing textile-based products for consumer markets. But the

project also taught them how to use cotton content as a marketing tool to help develop a successful market presence.

What I hope you will focus on today is that the project demonstrates how to develop a domestically focused and funded cotton promotion program by utilizing the resources of the IFCP at very little cost. In fact, the only expense involved was filming the process to present it here today.

And of course, since the project will be shown to key players and decision makers in the textile, retail, and fashion industries, they will not just see product development, but will also see how the cotton promotion opportunity works hand-in-hand with new product introduction and differentiation.

I am very proud to have been the professor and project director for this program, but my presence was not what made this possible, albeit, perhaps easier. There are textile and fashion schools around the world with extraordinarily talented students, and professors eager to embark on real-time projects with you, the representatives of the cotton industry.

It should also be noted that within five days of a private preview of the project, a major U.S. based retailer showed interest in commercializing the program, which is still in discussion.

We consider this program to be a major step forward in our efforts to prove that cotton promotion is attainable and affordable, and to demonstrate one additional way that you can work with the IFCP to move your programs forward. That being said, I am pleased to present Cake Denim, and will be happy to answer your questions afterward. Thank you.

* The International Forum for Promotion (IFCP) is a forum of cotton institutions interested in the promotion of cotton. The mission of the IFCP is to encourage increased consumer demand for cotton. The principal objective of the IFCP is to encourage and facilitate national market development programs, organized by associations and commercial organizations in individual countries, and funded from domestic resources. The IFCP serves as a clearinghouse for the exchange of proven ideas and strategies to be implemented by national organizations, and by facilitating the establishment and expansion of national demand enhancement efforts. For more information please contact the IFCP@icac.org