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C4 Emerges to Promote Climate-Beneficial Cotton

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C4 IS FOUNDED ON THE PREMISE OF WORKING TOGETHER PRE-COMPETITIVELY AND AIMS TO CREATE A STRUCTURE FOR INVESTING IN REGIONALLY GROWN "CLIMATE BENEFICIAL" COTTON. **COURTESY**

A group of businesses that sell [cotton](#) goods across industries including apparel, home goods, agriculture and personal hygiene banded together to assemble The [California](#) Cotton & Climate Coalition, known as C4.

Led by [Fibershed](#), White Buffalo Land Trust, Torus and Materevolve consulting, in partnership with Chico State University, Agri Technovation, Carbon Cycle Institute, Bowles Farming Company and Stone Land Company, C4 is founded on the premise of working together pre-competitively and aims

to create a structure for investing in regionally grown “Climate Beneficial” cotton.

“Reversing the supply chain, or otherwise known as ‘Farm Forward,’ is an important pivot we need to make in the process of revaluing agriculture as the foundation of our textile system,” said Rebecca Burgess, founder and director of Fibershed. “We’ve done a great deal in our recent history to devalue critically important facets of our ecosystem for the purpose of accumulating monetary capital. There’s no time like the present to recapitalize and recarbonize our soils, put the necessary value on a balanced carbon cycle and honor all the human relationships that make our textile culture manifest.”

C4 is working in the California bioregion, where it is estimated that the land has lost crucial quantities of carbon from its original, natural storage levels. This loss significantly advances the imbalance of the carbon cycle and directly contributes to climate chaos, the coalition noted.

With 187,000 acres of cotton currently growing in California, the research and learnings from the project have the potential to create a roadmap for regional farmers to regenerate the health of their soil, which can increase resilience to drought, counter erosion and benefit the climate.

Through the coalition, founding brands Coyuchi, MATE the Label, Outerknown, Reformation and Trace have united to source cotton directly from farmers who have transitioned to climate beneficial practices. This cotton will be used to develop products that will be released on a rolling timeline throughout the next year, the purchase of which will directly support the livelihoods of the farmers that grew it.

C4’s additional founding members are Imperial Yarn, Circular Systems, [Parkdale Mills](#), [Swisstex](#) and [Allenberg Cotton](#). C4 continues to grow, recently adding Laguna EnviroFabrics, [Carhartt](#) and Natural Fiber.

C4 is a relationship-building project where farmers, merchant and gin operators, researchers, farm technical service advisors, nonprofit organizers, family foundation funders, brands, designers, textile developers, spinners and textile mills are working together to bring a new agronomic and textile development system forward that is generating natural material goods for the marketplace.

Brands that are sometimes competitors in the marketplace have come together with stakeholders to support soil health-focused transitions in the

food and cotton growing landscapes. By working together, risk is shared by all partners, which is critical to implementing innovative practices on-farm, in the mill and in the development of new goods, the coalition said.

The California Cotton & Climate Coalition aims to build capacity within all stakeholders to grow, source and develop climate beneficial, farm-forward textiles and supply chains in the future

“No singular brand, farm, retailer or researcher has the power or influence to mobilize the change necessary to balance our climate,” Eileen Mockus, CEO and president of Coyuchi, said. “Sustainability, especially in textiles where there are so many players in the supply chain, is only achievable when everyone gets a seat at the table, and that’s what makes C4 so crucial. Never before have there been so many voices united toward the advancement of regeneration and I am beyond thrilled to see how strength in numbers can benefit all of us. Coyuchi is proud to be a founding brand of the coalition and hopes to influence other businesses to join us on this journey.”

Cannon Michael, president and CEO of Bowles Farming Company, said through its work in C4, the company hopes to highlight cotton produced with the highest standards that is helping to offset climate impacts and bring cotton products to the market “with an honest and amazing story behind them.”