

## STEP 1: DO SOME GROUNDWORK



BEFORE COTTON CAN BE PLANTED THE SOIL IS CAREFULLY PREPARED. OFTEN COTTON IS PLANTED STRAIGHT INTO THE STUBBLE OF A PREVIOUS CROP, LIKE WHEAT, WHICH MAINTAINS NUTRIENTS IN THE SOIL AND HELPS KEEP MOISTURE IN. THE SOIL CAN ALSO BE WEEDED AND GIVEN NUTRIENTS AND WATER BEFORE THE CROP GOES IN.

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## STEP 2: PLANT A SEED



COTTON SEEDS ARE PLANTED IN SPRING INTO WARM, NUTRIENT RICH SOIL. AFTER A FEW DAYS THE BABY COTTON PLANT EMERGES FROM THE EARTH AND, OVER THE SUMMER, GROWS INTO A GREEN BUSH ABOUT A METRE HIGH, WITH PINK AND WHITE FLOWERS THAT BECOME THE 'FRUIT' OR COTTON BOLLS.

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## STEP 3: GIVE IT A DRINK



WHILE THE COTTON PLANT IS GROWING, IT NEEDS TO BE WATERED A NUMBER OF TIMES DEPENDING ON HOW HOT IT IS AND HOW WELL THE PLANT IS GROWING. SOME OF THAT WATER COMES FROM RAIN, WHILE FOR MOST COTTON GROWN IN AUSTRALIA, FARMERS ADD WATER IN A PROCESS CALLED "IRRIGATION". AUSTRALIAN COTTON GROWERS ARE THE MOST EFFICIENT IN THE WORLD, GROWING MORE COTTON PER DROP OF WATER THAN ANYWHERE ELSE.

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## STEP 4: MAINTAIN A HEALTHY CROP



FOR A HEALTHY CROP, FARMERS NEED TO CONTROL PESTS THAT EAT COTTON, JUST LIKE IN A BACKYARD VEGGIE PATCH. INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) IS A CLEVER COMBINATION OF NATURAL AND CHEMICAL PEST CONTROL METHODS, SUCH AS ATTRACTING 'GOOD' INSECTS LIKE LADYBUGS TO EAT THE 'BADDIES'. SPECIAL CSIRO VARIETIES BRED TO REPEL INSECTS ARE GROWN AND NOW AUSSIE COTTON GROWERS USE OVER 80% LESS PESTICIDES THAN 20 YEARS AGO.

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## STEP 5: PICKING

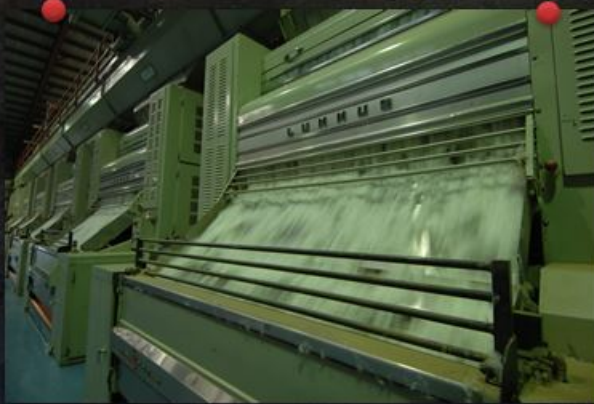


DURING THE HEAT OF SUMMER, THE COTTON BOLLS FILL WITH LINT AND SEEDS AND THEN SPLIT OPEN, REVEALING THE FLUFFY COTTON THAT'S READY TO HARVEST. MOST COTTON IS PICKED IN AUTUMN USING LARGE MECHANICAL PICKERS THAT DRIVE ALONG THE ROWS PULLING THE COTTON FROM THE BUSH AND LEAVING SOME OF THE PLANT BEHIND. THE LEFTOVER STUBBLE IS MULCHED BACK INTO THE SOIL READY FOR THE NEXT CROP AND THE SEED COTTON IS PACKED INTO MODULES OR ROUND BALES READY TO BE SENT OFF FOR PROCESSING.

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## STEP 6: OFF TO THE GIN



THE SEED COTTON IS SENT BY TRUCK TO A COTTON 'GIN', WHICH IS SHORT FOR 'ENGINE'. THERE IT IS PUT THROUGH BIG MACHINES THAT SEPARATE THE FLUFFY COTTON (GINNED COTTON) FROM THE COTTON SEED (FUZZY SEED). TRASH LIKE LEAVES AND DIRT ARE ALSO REMOVED AND THE GINNED COTTON IS PRESSED INTO BALES, EACH WEIGHING 227KG. THE COTTON SEEDS CAN BE PRESSED TO MAKE COTTON SEED OIL OR USED FOR STOCK FEED.

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## STEP 7: SETTING SAIL



ALMOST ALL OF AUSTRALIA'S COTTON IS PACKED INTO SHIPPING CONTAINERS AND SENT OVERSEAS TO BE MADE INTO FABRIC. AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF THE LARGEST EXPORTERS OF RAW COTTON, SHIPPING COTTON TO CHINA, INDONESIA, THAILAND, JAPAN, KOREA, INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH.

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## STEP 8: IN A SPIN



COTTON BALES ARRIVE AT A SPINNING MILL WHERE THE GINNED COTTON IS FIRST COMBED OUT TO DISENTANGLE THE FIBRES. THE COTTON IS THEN TWISTED INTO A CONTINUOUS THREAD TO BECOME DIFFERENT TYPES OF YARN. THIS YARN IS THEN BLEACHED AND CAN BE DYED ANY COLOUR OF THE RAINBOW.

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## STEP 9: WOVEN AND ALL SEWN UP



COTTON YARN IS EITHER KNITTED OR WOVEN INTO FABRIC AND THEN SEWN INTO COTTON PRODUCTS LIKE CLOTHES, TOWELS, SHEETS AND OF COURSE, DENIM JEANS! TO MAKE DENIM, WHITE AND BLUE YARNS ARE WOVEN TOGETHER INTO A TWILL COTTON CLOTH. COTTON OF DIFFERENT QUALITIES AND WEIGHTS IS USED TO MAKE VARIOUS PRODUCTS, FROM THE HEAVY AND HARD WEARING DENIM TO THE SUPERFINE LIGHTWEIGHT FABRIC USED IN COTTON SHIRTS.

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## STEP 10: ONTO THE HIPS



FROM A TINY SEED TO A FASHION STATEMENT ON EVERYBODY'S HIPS, DENIM JEANS MAKE A LONG JOURNEY FROM FIELD TO FABRIC. COTTON IS THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE NATURAL FIBRE AND DENIM IS AT THE TOP OF THE LIST, ACCOUNTING FOR 14% OF COTTON CONSUMPTION WORLDWIDE. JEANS ARE COMFY, HARD WEARING, LONG LASTING AND MADE FROM A BEAUTIFUL NATURAL PRODUCT THAT WE ALL LOVE, COTTON.

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