

HOBBS cotton procurement policy

INTRODUCTION

This Policy is intended to help all organisations that are involved in the manufacture or supply of goods to HOBBS, collectively known as suppliers, to understand the steps they need to take to ensure that forced and child labour does not find its way into HOBBS cotton supply chain.

As a supplier to HOBBS you will already be aware of our commitment to ethical trading, and of our Code of Ethical Standards. These standards seek to ensure the integrity of the HOBBS brand and the welfare of all workers involved. Our Policy focuses on compliance with local laws to ensure forced labour, child labour, freedom of association and health and safety issues are adhered to.

In this context we have serious concerns about the use of cotton from Uzbekistan¹ and Turkmenistan² as there is overwhelming evidence of Government sponsored use of forced and child labour in the harvesting of cotton. In 2014 Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were the sixth and 11th³ largest exporter of cotton in the world respectively and responsible for producing approximately 1.2m tonnes of cotton (over 10 percent of world cotton trade).

HOBBS commits to not knowingly source Uzbek and Turkmen cotton, or indeed cotton derived from forced and child labour sources, for the manufacturing of any of our products. As a result of this, HOBBS has made the decision to ban the use of cotton coming from these regions. This pledge will stand until the International Labour Organization (ILO) has verified that the respective governments have ended this unacceptable practice.

We understand that the cotton supply chain is complex and that tracing the origin of cotton in finished products is very difficult. However, we are asking our vendors and licensees to make their best efforts to trace their cotton sources and ensure that cotton fibre and yarn from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is not used in any HOBBS products. We are committed to supporting our direct suppliers in achieving this endeavour.

As such, HOBBS:

- Has established a company policy that prohibits the use of cotton grown in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and prohibits business with companies that are either invested in the cotton sector in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan or using Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan's cotton
- Has incorporated this ban in all our vendors' agreements

And as a supplier to HOBBS we require you to do the same by:

- Establishing a company policy that prohibits the use of cotton from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and prohibits business with companies that are either invested in the cotton sector in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan or using Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan's cotton
- Incorporating this ban into your vendors' agreements
- Request that your suppliers do the same

1 <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/uzbekistan.htm>

2 <http://www.cottoncampaign.org/turkmenistans-forced-labor-problem.html>

3 <http://faostat3.fao.org/home/E>

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We continue to learn more about these practices. HOBBS is looking into opportunities to map our cotton procurement supply chain and will work with our suppliers and stakeholders to develop and implement practices that promote adherence to ethical standards across the HOBBS supply chain.

HOBBS may elect to perform random audits on fabric mills and factories to ensure the country of the origin of cotton is not from Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan. Should cotton be found to be from either of these countries HOBBS reserves the right to refuse all merchandise connected to the contracts with no liability or obligation to the supplier.

Please return a signed copy of this letter to confirm your commitment to the ban of Uzbek and Turkmen cotton to Lynette Bradford at the HOBBS Head Office or email to Lynette.Bradford@hobbs.co.uk.

We greatly value your partnership in this endeavour and look forward to working with you on this issue and others in the future. Thank you for your cooperation with our efforts. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact your relevant technical manager or Lynette Bradford Head of Technical and Creative Development.

Yours faithfully,

Lynette Bradford
Head of Technical and Creative Development, HOBBS