

P E R F E C T L I N E N S

Four Myths About Organic Sheets

▪ Myth 1: Organic Sheets Must Be Chemical Free

- Even if the cotton is truly organic to begin with, organic sheets are made with chemicals after the fiber stage.
- In fact, most organic sheets use more chemicals than regular sheets. So in an effort to go chemical free, you could be unintentionally exposing yourself and your loved ones to the exact things you are trying to avoid.
- Without the help of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, stronger, longer, finer more-uniform cotton fiber cannot be grown.
- This is because organically-grown plants are relatively “starved” of plant nutrients compared to their non-organic counterparts. They're also more susceptible to insect pests, which lower the crop yield (organic farms produce only 40% as much cotton as non-organic farms).
- These nutrient deficiencies and pests also injure the growing cotton in ways that affect how sheets feel to the touch.
- Higher doses of synthetic chemicals can make inferior organic cotton behave as non-organic cotton. These chemicals include: detergents, optical brighteners, biocides, wetting agents, lubricants, sequestering agents, stabilizers, emulsifiers, complexing agents, and softeners.

- **Myth 2: The USDA verifies organic cotton suppliers.**
- The USDA (US Department of Agriculture) is the sole authority to verify organic cotton is grown without genetically-modified (GMO) seeds and without synthetic fertilizers or synthetic pesticides.
- USDA does not do the job itself. Instead, the USDA certifies 3rd-party agencies
 - 3rd-party agencies rely on a paper-based physical chain of custody and only one unannounced inspection per year. The USDA is less involved than we would have assumed:
 - The USDA provides no oversight after the fiber stage. Once organic cotton leaves the farm, it travels thousands of miles and trades hands dozens of times before it reaches you in the form of sheets. The opportunities for mishaps are plentiful and worrisome, ranging from shipping mistakes to unscrupulous suppliers who misrepresent their cotton as organic.
 - 47% of the 3rd-party agencies failed to uphold basic USDA standards according to an investigation by the Wall Street Journal.
 - 3rd party agencies cannot monitor farms 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Whether accidental or intentional, contamination (synthetic pesticides meant for an adjoining crop ending up on organic crops) is a frequent problem, especially considering most organic cotton comes from countries which have very little oversight regarding the enforcement of regulations.

- There have been cases of outright fraud. Supply chain security is vulnerable when farmers can double their profits by mislabeling cotton as organic. What mechanism ensures or determines organic cotton's authenticity? No definitive international study has been carried out on the scope of the fraud. Lapses or misrepresentation by first-time offenders incur warnings but generally no penalties. Repeat or flagrant errors simply disqualify the farmer but fines or penalties are small and are rarely applied.

“Once a certified bale of cotton is processed into a yarn there is no absolute testing technique that can determine whether or not that product is made from organic versus non-organic cotton (Cotton Inc.).”

■ Myth 3: Organic Means no Pesticides or Fertilizers.

- Organic cotton is grown using natural pesticides and fertilizers. Don't be fooled by the word natural! It's really just a buzzword. Organic chemicals can be just as harmful, if not more harmful, than synthetic ones.
 - Organic pesticides and fertilizers can be more toxic than synthetics, according to research quoted by Scientific American.
 - Farmers use 3-4 times as much organic pesticides to get the same results because organic versions are not as effective as synthetic alternatives.
 - Not long ago, half of the pesticides approved for use by organic farmers failed to pass the EU's safety evaluation required by law.

▪ Myth 4: Over Time the Added Chemicals Will be Removed.

○ Manufacturers use some chemicals that can't be washed out. Here are just a few:

- Wrinkle-free (no-iron / permanent press / easy care) sheets are usually made using a version of formaldehyde, which the New York Times confirms is a toxic chemical designed not to wash out.
- Colorfast dyes used in prints and solid-color sheets are chemically bound to react with individual fiber molecules so they don't wash out.
- Softeners (such as silicones, polyurethanes and ammonium compounds) and stiffeners (such as starch resins and polyvinyls) improve the “hand feel” of the sheets.
- Anti-static, anti-pilling, anti-bacterial finishes, etc modify the cotton fiber using a diverse range of chemicals for these functional enhancements.

Perfectlinens Media Contact:

Perfectlinens

Lauran Tilden, Communications

Press@Perfectlinens.com

(212) 273-1000 x 2