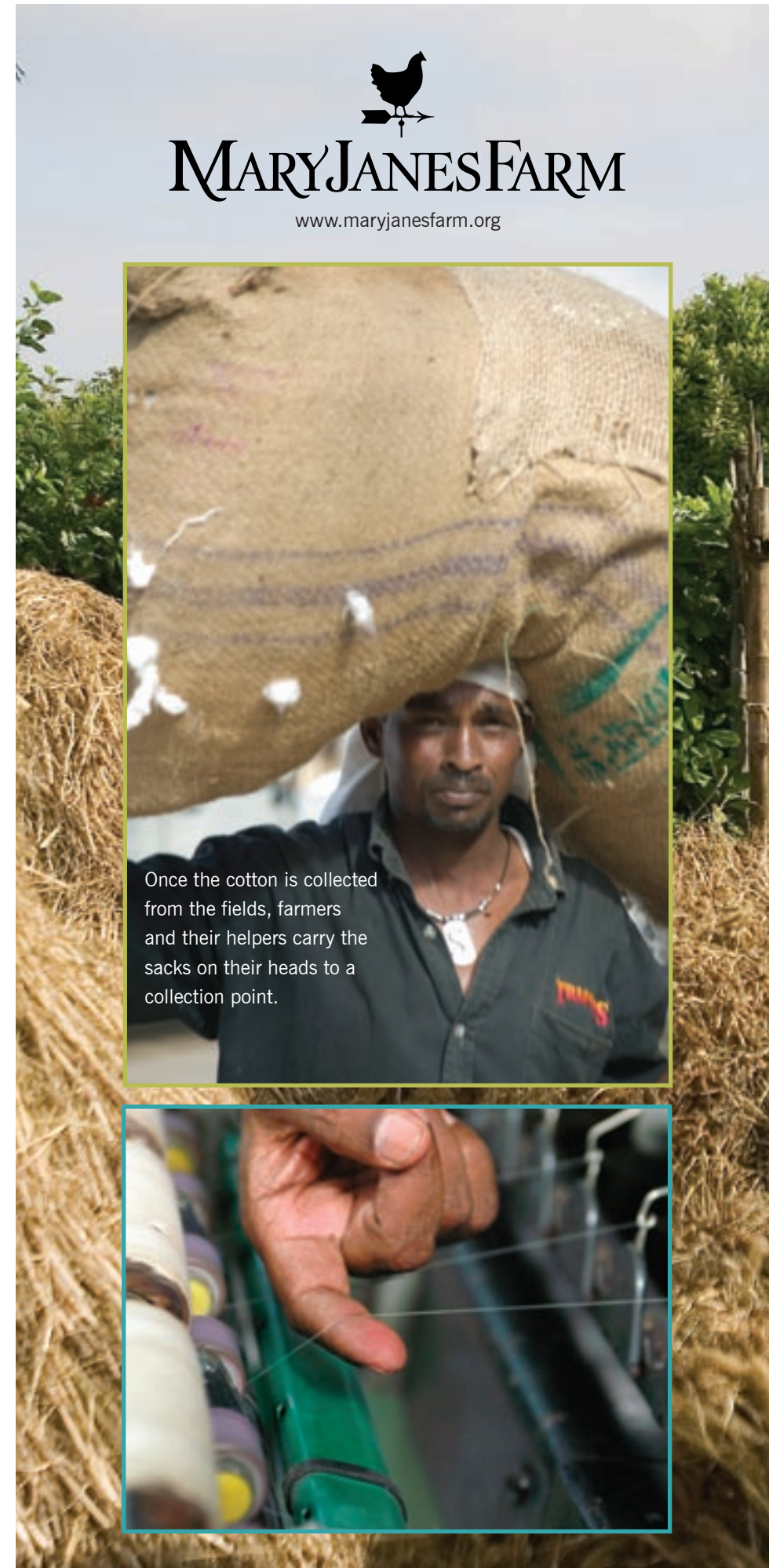




Make yours
organic


MARYJANE'S
home
sheets and towels




MARYJANE'S FARM
www.maryjanesfarm.org



Once the cotton is collected from the fields, farmers and their helpers carry the sacks on their heads to a collection point.



As we go, so goes the world, for the world is us.
The revolution that will save the world is ultimately a personal one.
– Marianne Williamson

Why?



GM Genocide

Excerpted from The Daily Mail, UK, November 2008

An estimated 125,000 farmers in India have taken their own lives as a result of the ruthless drive to use India as a testing ground for genetically modified crops. According to the Indian Ministry of Agriculture, more than 1,000 farmers, facing huge debt, hopelessness, shame, and the loss of their land, kill themselves each month. Most swallow insecticides—chemicals they were promised they would not need when they were coerced into growing GM crops—resulting in slow, agonizing deaths while their horrified families watch helplessly.

In 1998, the World Bank's policies forced India to open its seed sector to global agribusiness giants. Millions of Indian farmers were promised previously unheard of harvests and income if they switched from farming with traditional seeds to genetically engineered seeds, which are non-renewable and require repurchase for each growing season. Beguiled by the promise of future riches, the farmers borrowed money in order to buy the GM seeds. But when their harvests failed, they were left with huge debts and no income. In futile attempts to relieve themselves of debt, some farmers even sold their own organs. When these attempts failed to rectify their financial situations, many farmers found no way out but suicide. In some cases, women have taken over farms from their dead husbands—only to kill themselves as well.



The resulting "GM Genocide" crisis was highlighted in late 2008 when Britain's Prince Charles claimed that the issue of genetically modified seeds had become a "global moral question"—and the time had come to end its unstoppable march. Pro-GM "experts," backed by lobbyists and prominent politicians, claim that it is rural poverty, alcoholism, drought, and "agrarian distress" that are the real reason for the horrific toll.

But facts show that the price difference between traditional seeds and the GM seeds is staggering: GM seeds can cost 1,000 times more. Farmers were promised that these were "magic seeds"—producing better crops that would be free from parasites and insects. In a bid to promote the uptake of GM seeds, traditional seed varieties were banned from many government seed banks. But far from being "magic," GM pest-proof strains of cotton have been devastated by bollworms, a voracious parasite. Nor were the farmers told that GM seeds required double the amount of water, proving a matter of life and death. With rains failing for the past two years, many GM crops have simply withered and died, leaving the farmers with crippling debts and no means of paying them off.



Organic Cotton Saves Lives

Excerpted from Organic Consumers Association

Organic cotton projects, like the one initiated by [Indian] textile manufacturer Arvind Ltd. in 33 villages in the Akola region of Maharashtra, are helping. "There has not been a single case of farmer's suicide in the area where we have launched the project in February last year," said Arvind agri-exports chief manager Mahesh Ramakrishnan. The project, which avoids the use of fertilizers and pesticides, has already begun raking in cash for farmers. They have received about \$2 million as premium for the 1,200 bales of organic cotton that they delivered to the company. Fair-trade labeling allows consumers and distributors alike to track the origin of the goods to confirm that the benefit is reaching the farmers.

Currently, 100 farmers are working under the project. The project area is in two talukas [districts]—Akola and Akot—in which 293 farmers participate. The farmers have been organized into self-help groups of 10-15 neighbors. The company is training the farmers and providing specially evolved cottonseeds, since genetically modified BT cottonseed is not allowed in organic farming.

"We have not owned farmers' land. We will pick up whatever they produce. They get payment within seven days. They are happy about it. In the project, more than 42 percent of participants are small farmers. Only 30 percent own 10 acres," Hardikar [Arvind representative] said.



Did You Know?

- Cotton has been used to make clothing since 2200 BC.
- Cotton accounts for nearly 40 percent of total world fiber production.
- Cotton is the most comfortable and durable of all the fibers, natural or synthetic. Because of its versatility, cotton is one of the most widely traded commodities in the world; it represents an essential component of foreign earnings for more than 80 countries.
- China (24 percent), the U.S. (20 percent), and India (16 percent) together produce over half the world's cotton.
- Cotton is one of the most heavily sprayed commercial crops in the world, and the chemicals used on non-organic cotton are among the most toxic classified by the EPA. **It takes close to two pounds of chemicals to make just ONE non-organic sheet set.**
- Commercial cotton farming uses only about 3 percent of the world's farmland, but consumes 25 percent of the world's chemical pesticides and fertilizers. (In the U.S. alone, over 600,000 tons of chemical pesticides and fertilizers are used on cotton each season.)
- Organic cotton is grown and processed without the use of harmful chemicals. Sustainable farming practices that do not pollute ground or surface water, soil, or air are used to produce organic cotton.
- Organic cotton is safer for farmers, for you, for your children, and for the environment. Organic cotton also feels softer, smells cleaner, and is more hypoallergenic.