

## Pakistan's Cotton Sector Faces Urgent Need for Revival



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World Cotton Day OCTOBER 7, 2025

Theme: The Fabric of Our Lives

Pakistan's cotton sector, once hailed as "white gold," is facing a critical decline, threatening the livelihoods of millions and the nation's textile industry. Observed annually on October 7, World Cotton Day highlights the vital role of cotton in sustainable development and the global economy. This year, the theme "The Fabric of Our Lives" underscores the urgent need to revive the crop in Pakistan.

Cotton drives Pakistan's largest industry, connecting farmers from South Punjab to textile mills in Faisalabad and shaping export earnings. Yet fields are shrinking, yields are falling, and many farmers are abandoning cultivation. Crop diseases such as Cotton Leaf Curl Virus, pests including whiteflies and pink bollworms, and extreme weather events have devastated production.

Pakistan now imports millions of bales each year to meet domestic textile demand, while average yields remain among the lowest globally.

The textile sector, reliant on local cotton, faces higher production costs due to imports, weakening its competitiveness in international markets. Experts warn that without a robust domestic supply, exports cannot grow, calling for long-term solutions such as research funding, certified seed programs, fair pricing, and modern farming practices.

Revival strategies focus on science and support for farmers. Development of virus- and heat-resistant varieties, training in pest management, irrigation, and soil health, and government

incentives for high-quality seed production and ginning technology are essential. Climate-smart measures such as drip irrigation and crop rotation can further stabilize yields.

World Cotton Day 2025 serves as a reminder that behind every garment lies the effort of millions of farmers. Restoring cotton production is crucial not only for the economy but also for Pakistan's national identity. Coordinated action among scientists, policymakers, and industry stakeholders can rebuild the sector and ensure that cotton once again becomes a source of pride and prosperity.