

Mtns (Lawson Reps) Deanery Pastoral Council News

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Focus on Fair Trade for Lent

Cotton The fabric of everyday life

Cotton really is part of our daily life (just check your clothes tag!) - and it's also the livelihood of 100 million rural households in 75 countries across the globe. But price-wars and a life below the poverty line means that in many countries, cotton farmers may as well be giving the shirt off their backs.



Unravelling the issues

It's not surprising that cotton is the most important crop in the global textile industry.

A product in such high demand can often attract a raft of issues and with cotton; it's all about the global price tag.

The problem goes like this: producer countries that have stronger, more developed economies often subsidise their cotton industry. This creates what is known as 'artificially low' prices, that means it is below 'cost'. The first to lose out are the developing countries' local economies; the would-be export income - which could otherwise be invested in health or education - disappears. For the farmer, this means they have to hand over their crop for less than it costs to produce it. And there is nothing fair about a system that perpetuates this kind of hardship.

The solution is this. Enable farmers to fight poverty themselves through **Fairtrade certification**. First off, Fairtrade provides a **Minimum Price** paid to producers covering sustainable production costs; this then acts as a safety net when market prices drop. Beyond this, producers are eligible for **Fairtrade Premium** - an extra payment which the producers and their community decide how best to invest, be that for farming, health or education.

For more information about the effects of cotton growing to the environment and some fair-trade products go to <https://fairtradeanz.org/products/cotton> note: all Fair Trade info provided by the Diocese

Watch out for false fair trade claims!!

Modern day tea, coffee or chocolate manufacturers and some retailers keep us in the dark about the supply chain of their products trying to fool us with meaningless self-regulated assessment labels.

The Fairtrade Mark, 'Fairtraders of Australia' and World Fair Trade Organisation endorsement are assessments we can be confident are in the light.

