

# Talking strategy: rising to the challenge of making denim jeans more environmentally sustainable

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## Abstracts

A large proportion of consumers believe that cotton apparel is more 'environmentally friendly' than apparel made from synthetic fibres. But the reality is that cotton apparel can cause immense damage to the environment—from the cultivation of cotton fibre to the dyeing and finishing of cotton garments and the laundering of the garments by consumers. The cultivation of cotton fibre involves huge amounts of pesticides, artificial fertilisers and water. In particular, it has been estimated that 2,565 litres of water are consumed in the growing of the cotton used in the manufacture of one pair of jeans. Even more water is consumed during fabric production, garment laundering and rinsing and washing operations in fabric dyeing or finishing processes. Also, a vast amount of water is consumed in consumer care during the lifetime of the jeans. In order to address the damage which is being caused to the environment by the textile industry, a great deal of work is being done to improve product and process sustainability. Some of the efforts are voluntary. But others are being forced by regulatory changes, and the expectation is that regulations will become more intense and widespread in the years to come. In this report, Robin Anson examines some of the latest developments which are aimed at making denim and jeans production more environmentally sustainable.

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