

Good reasons for buying IVN labeled products

Transparency at a glance

If you buy an organic product, you want to be assured that it was truly manufactured under **eco-friendly conditions** and is **free of harmful substances**. For food products, governments like the European Union legally regulate the use of terms like "organic" and "eco".

So far there are no such regulations pertaining to textiles and leather products. Therefore each manufacturer is free to interpret and apply these terms to his products. That is why it is commonly believed that clothing consisting of "naturally grown" cotton conforms to the designation "organic textile" even if the **precise conditions of raw material production and processing remain undisclosed**. This is all the more dangerous in view of the fact that the conventional textile industry (especially pesticide-saturated cotton cultivation) is known for its reckless exploitation of humans, animals and environment.

But **"real" organic products do exist** - and thanks to the IVN quality seals they are readily recognizable for consumers.

Guaranteed to have been produced in an eco-friendly manner, these products are free of harmful substances, offer high quality standards and, last but not least, they are manufactured under humane conditions.

Sustainability and social responsibility

Only products produced and certified according to the strict standards of the International Association of Natural Textile Industry are labeled with NATURTEXTIL BEST, GOTS and NATURLEDER. All three quality seals assure an **eco-friendly and socially responsible production**. This applies to the entire production chain: from fiber cultivation to the spinning and weaving mills to manufacturing and includes the dyeing and processing of textiles and, for leather products, tanning and finishing.

For those who choose a healthy way of life, who want to protect and preserve water, air and soil, for those who believe that people all over the world should be able to work under fair conditions and that animals should be held in ways appropriate to their species - for those who choose quality over mass consumption, these are the products of choice.

Strict controlling for safety

The IVN is the largest professional association for producers, retailers and service suppliers of the organic textile industry. All products labeled with one of its quality seals are supervised by independent certification bodies.

The Global Organic Textile Standard was developed by the "International Working Group on Global Standard" (IWG). This working group represents IVN's cooperation with three organizations from the USA, England and Japan which also undertake certifications in the organic textile sector. Together they developed GOTS in order to create a global standard and a clearly identifiable label.



Each of the four IWG members adapted one of their previous standards to this common label. **You as a consumer are now able to know immediately when you hold a genuine organic textile in your hands.** All GOTS certifiers must apply to the IWG and must also be ISO-accredited and officially approved.

All three IVN labels require that every enterprise taking part in the production process will be controlled and certified once a year. Additional spontaneous controls are possible. Not only technical aspects like chemical input or waste water residues are examined. Companies must also keep clear accounts of their operational funds, including specifically what they bought from whom and to whom which product was sold. That allows you, for example, to trace a T-shirt back to the cotton field and ensures that no more organic products are sold than were produced.

Interested in further information?

Our website provides more information and a list of suppliers:

www.naturtextil.com

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Certified Safety for Organic Textiles



The Quality Seals of

ivn

The Quality Seals in detail

IVN awards three different „quality seals“ for ecologically manufactured products. Although they vary in their respective requirements and application, they have a common goal: to offer you as consumer transparency and product security, providing a basis for your decision for eco-friendly, healthy apparel.



Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)

The minimum standard which IVN certified textile products must fulfill is GOTS, established as a worldwide standard for organic textiles.

90% natural fiber content is the minimum requirement for the GOTS label. Only 10% may be synthetic fibers or rayon. The only exceptions are made for hosiery and sportswear: for these items synthetic fibers and/or rayon can amount to a maximum of 25%. Additionally, **at least 70% of content fibers, both vegetable or animal, must be certified organic.**

Certified organic fibers are grown without chemical fertilizers or pesticides from plants or animals which are not genetically modified. Appropriate animal husbandry is compulsory. Organic farming protects soil, water and air, supports the variety of species and shuns genetic engineering.

In **fiber processing**, certain critical common chemical treatments are regulated: for example bleaching can only be done on the basis of oxygen and the chlorination of wools or the use of optical brightening agents is forbidden. Mechanical or thermal treatments are harmless and therefore permitted.



Substances used for **dyeing and printing** must be authorized by certification agencies as neither health threatening nor harmful to the environment. Dyes containing toxic heavy metals or aromatic solvents and carcinogenic amine-releasing azo dyes are taboo.

Textiles are sometimes provided with a functional **finishing**, for example "Crease Resist Finish", "Waterproofing" or "Anti-Pilling". With eco-friendly textiles, these finishings may only be achieved by mechanical, thermal or other physical treatments. Synthetic auxiliary agents are permitted only for softening, milling and felting.

Hazardous substances like heavy metals, formaldehyde, aromatic solvents, chloro-phenols (for example TCP, PCP) or halogenated solvents are forbidden in the entire production process. All substances must be biodegradable and may not harm soil, air and water.

Accessories such as appliqués, inlays, interfacing, cords and shoulder pads must be made of natural fibers or rayon. Metals used for zippers, buttons or fastenings must be free of chrome and nickel in order to avoid allergies.

To ensure **high quality**, all products must fulfill standards regarding fastness to light, perspiration, saliva, washing, rubbing as well as shrinking values.

Any product labeled GOTS must comply with strict residue values for a comprehensive list of **health-endangering or polluting substances**.

The "International Labour Organisation" has defined criteria which serve as minimum **social criteria** for GOTS: prohibition of forced or bonded labour, child labour, abuse or discrimination, a minimum living wage, safe working conditions and freedom of association.



NATURTEXTIL Certified BEST

This IVN quality seal represents the highest currently possible environmental requirements for textile products. It consequently exceeds the requirements of GOTS.

The fundamental difference is that BEST labeled products must consist of **100% certified organic fibers**.

The list of accepted **dyes and auxiliary agents** is more restricted than it is for GOTS: For example no exception is made for the use of copper in dyes.

Mercerization, a pre-treatment of cotton yarns with caustic soda to increase its gloss, is forbidden. In addition, the use of **optical brightening agents** is not permitted.

Accessories like inlays, embroidery yarns or edgings must be of natural fibers and may not consist of rayon.



NATURLEDER Certified

Especially for leather products, high standards of ecology and quality can only be achieved at the highest technical level.

The basis for leather products is the animal skin. The animals from which these skins are derived must be kept with the primary aim of producing meat, so that no additional environmentally unfriendly animal husbandry is necessary. **Wild and threatened animal species are explicitly excluded** for NATURLEDER products.

Before tanning, skins are conserved and cleaned, a process carried out by **cooling and salting**; synthetic preserving agents cannot be used. Surfactants and detergents used must be biologically degradable.

The **tanning process** is the most environmentally dangerous production step in leather production. For NATURLEDER products, primarily vegetable tanning products are applied or the traditional so-called "sámi tanning" method is used. The highly controversial chromium tanning and the application of tanning agents with a high formaldehyde content are not permitted.

Leather, like textiles, is dyed ideally with vegetable dyes. As a matter of principle, all **leather dyestuffs**, comparable to textile dyestuffs, must correspond to the European Union directive and be **free of heavy metal, AOX and carcinogenic aromatic amines from Azo dyes**.

Finishing methods improve not only the appearance but also the handling of leather and support its breathability. Mechanical methods like milling, staking or buffing are preferred; any use of coatings or finishes containing solvents is forbidden.

Particularly important for consumers is that certified NATURLEDER specifies **strict limits for hazardous substances** in the final product. These limit values go far beyond legal requirements. This is also true for **quality requirements** like rubbing fastness or tensile strength.

As leather products are also processed and traded internationally, the same **social criteria** throughout the entire production chain apply for certified NATURLEDER as for NATURTEXTIL.