



TERRATEX™

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The journey to sustainability at Interface Fabrics continues onward and upward with new innovations that deepen the value of the Terratex® brand of earth-friendly products. As our journey continues, we find there is not just one “right” way to lessen the environmental effects of fabric creation – there are many paths to be explored, each of which provides our customers with an equally valid way of meeting today’s aesthetic and performance needs while helping to preserve our planet for future generations. Terratex is all about choice. A choice to do something positive for the world. And a choice of products with which to do it.

4.1 - THE INFORMED CHOICE

The Terratex brand represents our commitment to help the commercial interiors marketplace tread as lightly on the environment as possible. The brand encompasses not just fabrics and other products, but also increasingly sustainable manufacturing processes (such as reducing water usage), evaluation systems (like our Dye & Chemical Protocol), independent validation programs (such as Green-e), and more.

Information sharing is also a vital part of the Terratex brand. Vehicles like the one you’re reading now are all about presenting the facts, sharing the knowledge and enlightening the community about the need for and benefits of this earth-friendly brand. We subject our Terratex-brand fabrics and products to a rigorous battery of tests and studies. We scrutinize the processes that create them and the processes that will transform them after you’re done with them. So you don’t have to take our word that Terratex is a better choice. You can examine the proof for yourself:

Life Cycle Assessments. A Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) analyzes the entire life of a product, including extraction of the raw materials, manufacturing, delivery, product use, and disposal or possible reuse. The result is a comprehensive yet easily understandable snapshot of the environmental impact of the product. This gives our customers a means to objectively evaluate the true environmental cost of our products. For more information on LCAs, see Terratext 2 at www.terratex.com.

Ecometrics. “Ecometrics” is the term Interface, Inc. founder Ray Anderson invented to describe the measurement system we use to track all the component and process factors contributing to the production of Terratex fabrics. We measure fabric content, the amount of energy and water expended, the amount of waste and carbon dioxide generated, and more. We compile Ecometrics data on a quarterly basis so that we can track and measure our sustainability progress over time. But this is not just a passive measurement system – our focus on gathering more accurate data has helped us identify additional ways to reduce material and energy use. Visit www.terratex.com for our most recent Ecometrics data.

Dye & Chemical Protocol. Dyes and chemicals account for just 1% of the total content of our fabrics and products; nevertheless, we are working to ensure that the dyes and chemicals we use meet the highest environmental standards possible. Our method for assuring this is the Protocol – a systematic method of evaluating all the ingredients in all the materials we use to manufacture our fabrics and products. Any ingredients not meeting this Protocol will be rejected or modified. Visit www.terratex.com for a general description of the protocol and an independent validation of its implementation.

These three systems enable us – and you – to evaluate the sustainability of Terratex-brand fabrics and products from a 360° perspective: Product (LCA), Process (Ecometrics) and Protocol (D&C Protocol). This allows you to make the most informed choice.

4.2 - BIO-BASED FABRICS – AN INDUSTRY FIRST

The newest addition to the Terratex family of fabrics delivers tremendous benefits from a product, process *and* protocol perspective. These fabrics are the first to be made from bio-based PLA (polylactic acid) fibers. These revolutionary new polymer fibers are made from annually renewable resources such as corn, rice, beets or other starch-based agricultural crops. Unlike the petroleum resources used to create conventional fibers, these “carbohydrate resources” are easy to replenish – we simply plant more.

Minimizing our reliance on oil-based raw materials and moving towards renewable resources has always been one of the key goals in our journey to sustainability. Three or four years ago, we became intrigued with new developments in the area of PLA polymers. In fact, our leadership in sustainability led Cargill Dow, the leading proponent of PLA technology, to approach us with the idea of using these fibers – marketed under the Ingeo® fiber brand name – to produce commercial interiors fabrics.

Ingeo PLA Fibers

The result is now available to you under the Terratex product umbrella. The use of Ingeo fibers deepens the value of the Terratex brand, because it offers our customers a broader range of environmentally friendly fabrics to choose from. Ingeo fibers are similar to polyester synthetic fibers and are ideally suited for a range of textile products and applications. Panel fabrics are just the beginning – other products with a variety of end uses are currently in development.

From a product perspective, PLA fabrics have a significantly lower environmental impact than fabrics made with virgin polyester – lower even than other fabrics in the Terratex family. Process benefits include the elimination of antimony and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, all PLA fabrics meet the Interface Dye & Chemical Protocol, and all of them will carry the green-e logo, which signifies that 100% of the electricity used to make these products has been matched with Renewable Energy Certificates. (See Terratext 3 at www.terratext.com.)

For a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of PLA fibers, visit www.cargilldow.com/corporate/life_cycle/index.asp

Compostable Fibers

Biodegradability is another key benefit of these fabrics. Under the right conditions, PLA fibers completely decompose instead of piling up landfills. Moisture and heat in the compost pile attack the PLA polymer chains and split them apart, creating smaller polymers and, finally, lactic acid. Microorganisms in compost and soil consume the smaller polymers and lactic acid as nutrients. The end result is a closed loop that emulates nature.

Genetically Modified Organisms

Developing bio-based products means assessing a whole new set of environmental impacts associated with agricultural practices rather than petroleum extraction. We are aware there is some concern over the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Many PLA fibers are produced from the starch components of #2 feed corn harvested from numerous sources, some which are farms using genetically modified seed. The chemical conversion process, however, does not involve the modified portions of the corn plant. Also, corn serving the PLA market is typically overproduction and would be grown with or without the decision to manufacture PLA. Ultimately, we believe our decision to pursue PLA products is far more sustainable than continuing to rely on oil and not seeking to influence PLA producers.

Our vision is to one day be able to source bio-based fibers that are farmer- and topsoil-friendly, use no patented life forms, and are from non-GMO sources.

4.3 - A COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

Our planet no longer has abundant oil reserves. But we do have a superabundance of agricultural resources capable of annual regeneration. U.S. government procurement programs encourage the use of these renewable resources by mandating purchase preferences for bio-based products. Thus, Interface Fabrics' decision to pursue bio-based solutions may become a competitive advantage for our customers. Even more importantly, we are convinced that becoming part of the bio-based business cycle at this early stage will give us the opportunity to influence the market towards sustainable processes, including organic farming methods.

As with everything we do, we are committed to a periodic evaluation of our work with bio-based products, and we'll chart our progress to insure we're on the right track to sustainability. We invite you to visit www.terratex.com for the very latest information.



Making an impact, not an imprint™

www.terratex.com

Terratex 4 is part of an environmental series inspired by Interface Fabrics' ongoing commitment to providing information about sustainability. Look for the first three Terratex installments online.

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