

Africa Cotton - Market Share Analysis, Industry Trends & Statistics, Growth Forecasts (2026 - 2031)

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Report description:

Africa Cotton Market Analysis

Africa cotton market size in 2026 is estimated at USD 6.27 billion, growing from 2025 value of USD 6.0 billion with 2031 projections showing USD 7.82 billion, growing at 4.53% CAGR over 2026-2031. The growth stems from expanded irrigation networks in the Sahel region, increased Chinese demand for West African cotton, and government policies improving farmers' access to water, agricultural inputs, and digital advisory services. According to the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, among the twelve cotton-producing nations in Africa, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso are the largest producers, with production projected to increase during the study period. Mali achieved its highest cotton production of over 685,000 metric tons in 2023, as reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical Database. The significant production volumes from these countries drive growth in the African cotton market. Sustainability certifications enable premium pricing through traceability, while impact-focused financing supports smallholder farm modernization. Despite fragmented production, major traders are pursuing vertical integration, investing in ginning facilities and sustainable farming practices. Inadequate rural infrastructure, an aging agricultural workforce, and foreign exchange limitations constrain modernization efforts. The adoption of new technologies and drought-resistant irrigation systems offers potential improvements for producers who meet quality requirements.

Africa Cotton Market Trends and Insights

Rising Area Under Cotton Cultivation

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The African cotton market is expanding as West African producers increase planted areas through public investments in irrigation and storage infrastructure. The International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), a member of the Islamic Development Bank Group, has approved a EUR106 million (\$119.4 million) financing facility for Burkina Faso to support its cotton industry. The funding was granted under a 'Mourabaha' agreement with the Burkinabe Society of Textile Fibers (Sofitex). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, Mali's cotton cultivation area increased from 590,000 hectares in 2022 to 710,000 hectares in 2023. Mali's Office du Niger currently manages 74,000 hectares of agricultural land, including cotton farming, and plans to expand by 3,300 square kilometers, indicating significant future supply potential. While these expansions increase farmer revenues, they expose rain-fed systems to climate variability, leading multilateral agencies to implement climate-smart irrigation guidelines. The sustained growth in planted area depends on climate-resilient water management systems and access to affordable agricultural inputs.

Growing Chinese Demand for West-African Lint

China imports 90% of West African cotton exports, maintaining price premiums for long-staple lint and supporting revenue growth in the African cotton market. The high fiber strength of African cotton meets Chinese textile manufacturing requirements. This dependency makes producers vulnerable to Chinese policy changes, particularly in reserve buying practices. African producers need to diversify their export channels while maintaining premium quality to protect their income from market fluctuations. China continues to expand its investments across the African cotton value chain, from cultivation to garment manufacturing, to ensure a consistent raw material supply. Programs such as Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) demonstrate China's commitment to African cotton and facilitate connections between African farmers, textile companies, and the Chinese market.

Low Ginning Out-Turn Ratios vs. Global Peers

African cotton gins consume 78 kWh per metric ton, significantly exceeding benchmark levels, which reduces competitiveness and decreases farmer margins. Automated saw cylinders can reduce energy consumption by 50% while maintaining fiber length integrity. In Cameroon, SODECOTON's operations demonstrate these challenges, as cotton shell waste from processing contains substantial untapped energy potential. The efficiency gap increases processing costs and affects fiber quality, as outdated ginning technology can damage cotton fibers and lower their market value. This creates a cycle where reduced profitability constrains investment in modern equipment.

Other drivers and restraints analyzed in the detailed report include:

Expansion of Irrigation Corridors Adoption of Genetically Modified Cotton Seeds Aging Smallholder Farmer Base

For complete list of drivers and restraints, kindly check the Table Of Contents.

Segment Analysis

The Africa Cotton Market Report is Segmented by Geography (Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Cameroon, Sudan, Nigeria, Egypt, and More). The Study Includes Production Analysis (Volume), Consumption Analysis (Value and Volume), Export Analysis (Value and Volume), Import Analysis (Value and Volume), and Price Trend Analysis. The Market Forecasts are Provided in Terms of Value (USD) and Volume (Metric Tons).

List of Companies Covered in this Report:

Market Overview Market Drivers Market Restraints Value / Supply-Chain Analysis Regulatory Landscape Technological Outlook
PESTLE Analysis List of Stakeholders

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Additional Benefits:

The market estimate (ME) sheet in Excel format
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