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Maggie's Organics launches first-ever Fair Labor-certified clothing line *Michigan-based company sets new standard for apparel industry*

Ypsilanti, Michigan: [Maggie's Organics](http://www.maggiesorganics.com), the nation's longest-standing producer of clothing made with organic fibers, has again broken new ground in the apparel industry: The company is now also the first manufacturer in the world to sell clothing that is independently certified to a new standard for Fair Labor Practices and Community Benefits.

Maggie's sweatshop-free clothes are available in hundreds of stores across the United States and Canada, and also on many websites – including Maggie's home page at www.maggiesorganics.com.

Maggie's line of Fair Labor-certified apparel includes Knit Dresses, Camisoles, Tank Tops, Wraps, Hoodies, Pants for women, Scarves and T-shirts for men and women. Showing that ethically-made apparel can also be affordable, retail prices on the line range from \$12 to \$35. Maggie's sweatshop-free clothes come in sizes ranging from small to XX large, to fit a wide variety of body shapes. The company has again demonstrated that apparel can be fun, fashionable and affordable – and also produced in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.



Consumers have responded enthusiastically, says Maggie's founder and CEO Bená Burda. “Our customers are telling us on the phone, they're telling us on our Facebook page, and they're voting with their pocketbooks,” she says. “People love the idea of a quality product that feels good when you put it on – and is made in a way that respects the environment and also sustains workers at every stage of the production process.”

“We are excited to be able to offer these apparel items that not only look and feel great but they also have quite a story behind them,” said Jeremiah McElwee, Senior Whole Body Coordinator for Whole Foods Market, which sells Maggie's Organics clothing in hundreds of its stores nationwide. “Our customers will not have to second guess about what went on behind the scenes of the production of this product.”

Up until now, third-party certification of fair trade and/or fair labor practices has been available for commodity products such as coffee, tea, bananas and other agricultural goods. Maggie's Organics is the first apparel company, anywhere in the world, to receive this third-party certification, which includes onsite inspection at each step of the complex, multi-stage process of clothing manufacturing.

The Fair Labor Practices and Community Benefits Certification was issued by [Scientific Certification Systems \(SCS\)](http://www.scscertification.com), an independent monitor which inspected every stage of Maggie's production chain, from the growing of organic cotton and ginning and spinning the crop fabric into fabric in Nicaragua, to cutting and sewing garments in Costa Rica, to screen printing, office and warehouse operations in Michigan.

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Criteria investigated by SCS include: hiring, wages, working conditions, hours of work, freedom of association and freedom to organize, and access to housing, health care and transportation.

U.S. and Central American business partners who were certified as part of Maggie's Fair Labor apparel chain include:

- An organic cotton growers' association – Aprenic – in rural Nicaragua;
- A cotton gin cooperative – Coproexnic – also in Nicaragua;
- A new worker-owned spinning mill –Genesis – also in Nicaragua;
- A family-owned knitting, cutting and sewing factory – CIA Textiles – in Costa Rica;
- A silkscreen and design shop – VG Kids – located near Maggie's Organics in Ypsilanti.

“This wasn't just, you know, fill out some forms and we'll give you a sticker,” says Burda. “SCS was extremely rigorous. They looked at every aspect of our production process on two continents, including our office operations in Michigan.

“We've always taken pride in how we treat our planet and how we treat the people we work with, so this kind of certification means a lot to us,” says Burda. “Based on the feedback we're getting, it means a lot to our customers as well.”

In addition to winning certification from SCS, Maggie's Functional Organics is also the only company rated “A” for apparel by Free2Work.org, a project of the International Labor Rights Fund, which rates corporate practices on transparency, prevention of forced and child labor and employee empowerment. Maggie's is also participating in a pilot project for Fair Trade certification of apparel manufacturing with TransFair USA, a non-profit organization that has led the process of setting Fair Trade standards for coffee, tea, bananas and other commodities.

Note to reporters and editors: To interview Bená Burda, CEO and Founder of Maggie's Organics, please call 734.482.4000.

Maggie's Organics, based in Ypsilanti, Michigan, was founded in 1992 and produces adult and children's apparel made with certified organic fibers.

