

## The facts behind the fashion



On average, each of us throws away £400 worth of clothes every year.

Over half of all the clothes, shoes and accessories bought by women in the UK last year have never been worn!

63% of our clothing is dumped in landfill where it can rot to produce methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.

Clothes don't just cost us money, they have a massive hidden impact.

## Climate change

Clothes manufacturing uses 10 times more energy than producing steel!

Making synthetic fabrics like polyester uses more energy than natural fabrics like cotton.

The equivalent of a year's carbon emissions from all the homes in Wales is produced by Britain throwing away its unworn clothes each year!



**1,700kg of fossil fuel**

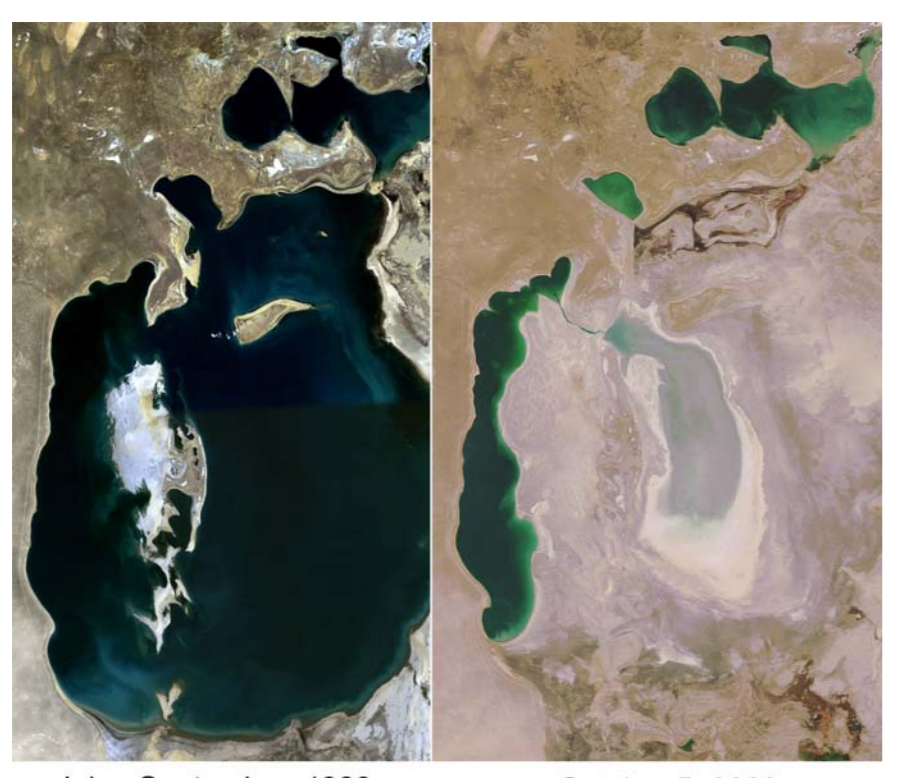
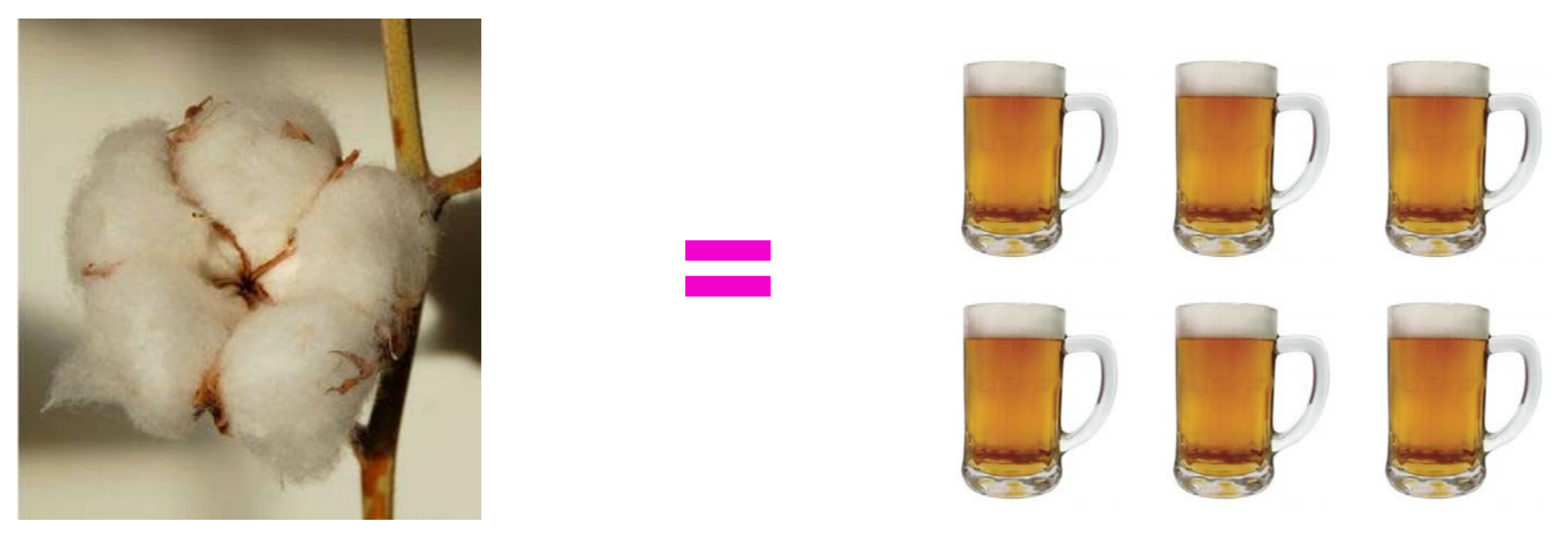
**= 450g of waste in landfill**

**4kg CO2 emissions**

Buying second-hand clothes reduces carbon emissions.

## Water hungry

Cotton is the world's thirstiest crop – six pints of water are needed to produce one cotton bud!



The demand for water to irrigate cotton fields has caused to the draining of the Aral Sea.

Comparison of Aral Sea between 1989 and 2008  
(images from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aral\\_Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aral_Sea))

July - September, 1989      October 5, 2008

Buying second-hand clothes saves natural resources.

## Poisonous

Aldicarb is one of the most common pesticides applied to cotton. A single teaspoonful on the skin can kill an adult.



Up to 5 million cases of pesticide poisoning occur each year, resulting in 20,000 reported deaths among agricultural workers.

Buying second-hand clothes, or organic cotton where possible, reduces the use of pesticides.

## Social impact

Hundreds of thousands of people across the world work long hours, for little pay, in dangerous conditions to harvest cotton or to make cheap clothes.

In Andhra Pradesh, India, over 100,000 children work 13 hour days for just half a euro.



Picture courtesy of Environmental Justice Foundation [www.ejfoundation.org](http://www.ejfoundation.org)

Workers in Bangladesh get paid 5 pence an hour to make cheap clothes for the UK.

Buy second-hand or fairtrade clothes where possible to prevent sweat-shop labour.

## Take Action

Wash your clothes at lower temperatures and don't tumble dry or iron and you can reduce your climate change impact by 50%.

A stitch in time to prolong the life of your favourite shirt uses nine times less energy than replacing it.



Donating unwanted clothes instead of dumping them couldn't be easier. Use your nearest charity shop, textiles recycling bank or special doorstep collection.

For more tips to waste less textiles visit us at [www.recap.co.uk/reducing-waste](http://www.recap.co.uk/reducing-waste).