



PRESS RELEASE

The Good Cashmere Standard Boosts Its Sustainability Credentials With Focus on Animal Welfare and Transparency

Hamburg, 18 April 2024. By revising the standard's criteria and embarking on a new collaboration with TextileGenesis, A Lectra Company, the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) is boosting the credentials of The Good Cashmere Standard® (GCS) as an independent seal for sustainably produced and traceable cashmere fibres from Inner Mongolia. Version 2.0 of the standard, its latest, places greater emphasis on animal welfare in cashmere production. In addition, AbTF is underlining its commitment to transparency and traceability in the production chain by working with TextileGenesis, A Lectra Company, which provides a platform for tracing textiles.

“We are certain that the Aid by Trade Foundation's revision of The Good Cashmere Standard will serve to further prioritise the welfare of the goats,” states Tina Stridde, the managing director of the Aid by Trade Foundation, adding, “To accelerate progress towards achieving transparency and traceability from raw cashmere to the final product, we are also working with TextileGenesis, an established, technologically innovative platform.”

The Good Cashmere Standard 2.0

Following its revision by the Aid by Trade Foundation, GCS Version 2.0 is built on four pillars that encompass the key aspects of sustainable cashmere production: cashmere goat welfare, the environment, people, and management. With these pillars and the accompanying criteria, GCS is effectively and comprehensively moving cashmere production towards greater sustainability, both at the farms and in the first stage of processing cashmere fibres, which takes place at buying and dehairing stations.

The revision revolves around goat welfare. This is also the first pillar, which was developed on the basis of David J. Mellor's model of five domains of animal welfare. In accordance with the model, the standard's first pillar addresses five clearly defined aspects: nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state. Fulfilling the criteria of this pillar means not only meeting the goats' physical needs but also providing them with positive emotional experiences.

Also coming up this year is the launch of a pilot project for animal welfare assessments. The assessments are based on the Animal Welfare Indicator Protocol (AWIN) and, taken together with GCS criteria, paint a comprehensive picture of animal welfare conditions. To supplement the detailed information collected through audits, at least one indicator was selected for each of the assessment's four sections—nutrition, environment, health, and behaviour—as a way of taking the animals' perspective into account as well. Some auditors in China have already been trained as animal welfare assessors for this purpose. As part of the evaluation of the pilot project, the further implementation of the programme for animal welfare assessments on farms in Inner Mongolia is planned.

Beyond its focus on animal welfare, the standard's revision also addresses three other pillars: people, management, and the environment. It provides clear guidelines for protecting biodiversity and land through land management, achieving dignified labour conditions for all people involved in cashmere fibre production, and ensuring compliance with responsible business practices, the verification process, and GCS values.

The implementation of The Good Cashmere Standard 2.0 and its criteria will be mandatory as of 2025 and will be monitored through independent verifications at regular intervals.



Collaboration With TextileGenesis, A Lectra Company

Transparency and traceability in cashmere production are core concerns for the Aid by Trade Foundation with regard to the implementation of The Good Cashmere Standard. AbTF thus plays a major role in ensuring that companies and brands can comply with the rising requirements for responsible textile production. Since the very beginning, the standard has required producers to separate verified cashmere from non-verified cashmere. Compliance with these requirements is monitored through audits, and only products that really contain verified cashmere wool may bear the GCS label. In addition, a product with The Good Cashmere Standard label must contain only verified cashmere.

Until now, the implementation of these requirements for processing cashmere wool has been documented in AbTF's proprietary tracking system; going forward, GCS-verified cashmere will be traced through TextileGenesis, A Lectra Company. "For fashion brands, guaranteeing the transparency and reliability of their supply chain has become a key issue. By entering into this partnership with The Good Cashmere Standard, our aim is to promote full traceability of responsible cashmere, from the place where the goats are reared to the point of sale," explains Amit Gautam, the founder and CEO of TextileGenesis, A Lectra Company.

Christian Barthel, the head of business development at the Aid by Trade Foundation, adds, "At The Good Cashmere Standard, we place great value on traceability and transparency. We began by investing in a robust system that enables us to trace every order back to the cashmere producer. Now, we are excited to reinforce this commitment by partnering with TextileGenesis to offer both current and future partners the option of working through an established and technologically innovative platform."

About The Good Cashmere Standard

Through The Good Cashmere Standard (GCS), the Aid by Trade Foundation has been setting the benchmark for the production of sustainable cashmere from Inner Mongolia since 2020. GCS criteria cover the most important aspects of cashmere production. Aiming to protect nature and to improve the welfare of cashmere goats and the living conditions of goat herders, the standard was developed with input from goat herders as well as experts in animal welfare and the industry. There are now some 9,100 farms with a total of 4.3 million goats participating in The Good Cashmere Standard. Around 2,200 tonnes of cashmere wool are currently verified by The Good Cashmere Standard. More than 50 international textile companies and household-name brands—including Bestseller, J.Crew, Galeries Lafayette, H&M, s.Oliver, and The White Company—use the verified cashmere wool for their products. Learn more at: www.thegoodcashmerestandard.org

About the Aid by Trade Foundation

Founded in 2005, the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) is now an internationally renowned non-profit organisation that works throughout the world to promote sustainable raw materials. Its activities make a decisive and measurable contribution to improving the living conditions of people and animals while protecting the environment. AbTF takes a practical approach by creating and maintaining a variety of standards to verify raw materials: Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), Cotton made in Africa Organic (CmiA Organic), the Regenerative Cotton Standard (RCS), and The Good Cashmere Standard (GCS). A global alliance of textile companies and brands purchases the verified raw materials, paying a licensing fee to AbTF's marketing company, ATAKORA Fördergesellschaft GmbH. AbTF collaborates closely with industry experts and with specialists in animal and nature protection. Learn more at www.aidbytrade.org

About TextileGenesis™, A Lectra Company

Founded in 2018, TextileGenesis, A Lectra Company, provides a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that enables fashion brands and sustainable textile manufacturers to ensure a reliable, secure and fully digital mapping of their textiles, from the fiber to the consumer, and thereby guarantee their authenticity and origins. The platform provides traceability for textiles, leather and footwear, employing fiber forwards traceability for sustainable and certified materials and Supply Chain discovery approach to traceability for conventional materials. Its innovative traceability mechanism, which addresses both ends of the textile value chain, as well as its network of partners for material certification, and its technology platform guarantee the exchange and tracking of reliable and secure data throughout a material's life cycle. TextileGenesis platform also identifies and flags supply chain compliance/legal risks across the value chain from tier 1-4 for brands.

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