



ALPACA MONTHLY NEWS

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EDITORIAL

WHAT ARE ECO TEXTILES AND WHY WE NEED THEM FOR THE FUTURE ?

Organic and eco textiles cover a wide range of natural and recycled fibres.

Certified Organic textiles are grown in controlled settings with no pesticides, herbicides or synthetic fertilizers and are certified by international bodies such as Control Union, IMO (Institute for Marketecology) or One-Cert. The term “eco textiles” refers to a select group of textiles that have a reduced carbon, energy and pollution impact when compared to the standard methods used to produce textiles and manufacture clothing.

Generally, eco friendly fabrics are produced from crops that do not require pesticides or chemicals to be grown, use less water and energy to be produced and processed and create less waste during production, processing and at the end of their useful lives (known collectively as their “environmental footprint”). Sustainable textiles can also refer to man-made fabrics produced from renewable sources such as bamboo or wood.

Today, there is a multitude of eco friendly fabrics whose benefits go beyond their positive social and environmental footprint. In many cases the fabrics are softer, more durable, hypo-allergenic, stronger, UV resistant and more moisture absorbent than conventional, for example, cotton.

The case to buy organic clothing rather than conventional clothing can now be backed with facts not sentiment. Some examples include:

- approximately 10,000 to 17,000 litres of water are required to produce 1 kilo of conventional cotton lint whereas organic cotton uses only nearly half this amount.
- conventional cotton consumes 11% of the world's pesticides and 24% of the world's insecticides, despite the fact that cotton only uses 2.4% of total arable land.

- the main raw material used to produce polyester is oil - oil is a non-renewable resource so polyester production is not sustainable.
- polyester is not biodegradable - all polyester textiles that end up in landfills will remain there for a very long time.

As the world's population continues to grow the de-

mand for textiles will grow with it. To meet this demand without affecting the health of our planet, we simply must find sustainable textile solutions.

Those sustainable solutions are there in the form of organic cotton, organic wool and animal fibres, hemp, Tencel, silk, bamboo, etc. but, in the final analysis, it is up to us to make the conscious choice to change our purchasing decisions.

CAMELID CLIPS

On November 16th it was announced that the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) has signed an agreement with the regional government of Arequipa to promote the private sector for the productive development of various sectors, including textiles and clothing made from alpaca fibre.

According to a statement issued by regional government of Arequipa, the multilateral financial institution's representative in Peru, Eleonora Silva, signed a technical cooperation agreement with the President of the regional government of Arequipa Juan Manuel Guillen, during the Summit of Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs) 2013, held recently in the region.

The initiative seeks to facilitate a process of creating dynamic competitive advantages in Arequipa by coordinating the work of the national and local governments as well as local stakeholders from the public and private sector around two important areas of textiles and garments made with alpaca fibre.

Ms. Silva said the CAF has developed these types of activities to promote the development and productivity of human capital as well as strengthen competitiveness amongst SMEs. The initiative would lend strong support to SMEs through providing technical assistance and granting financial aids, she added.

The CAF representative said the signing of the cooperation agreement represents the first phase of a

much broader involvement of CAF in the development of the region by implementing concrete actions to achieve sustainability and competitiveness in SMEs operating in the sector.

For his part, Juan Manuel Guillen, welcomed the initiative from CAF and expressed gratitude stating that the signing of the deal is a strong commitment towards the development of the public and private sector, to help them pursue their efforts towards the goal of developing the region.



Left to right: Juan Manuel Guillen and Eleonora Silva put pen to paper





From left to right: Alois Patthey (Grupo Inca); Congressman Daniel Abugattas; Juan Pepper (Michell & Cia., S.A.) and Gilberto Sarfaty.

At a ceremony that took place in the Porras Barrenecheo Salon in the Congress building in Lima, Congressman Daniel Abugattas presided over a ceremony which saw recognition awards presented to Gustavo Gutierrez (representing the National University of La Molina); Hector Carrasco (President of the Sociedad Peruana de Alpacas Registradas - SPAR); CECOALP (an alpaca farming association from Puno); Alois Patthey (representing his grandfather and founder of Grupo Inca, Francis Patthey); Juan Pepper (representing Michael Michell of Michell & Cia., S.A.) and Gilberto Sarfaty (of the now defunct Prosur S.A.).

During the ceremony papers were presented to a select audience by speakers from Central Lanera-Uruguay; Promperu; the Italian Trade Agency and Future Brand-Argentina on subjects relating to the importance and unique properties of Peru's camelid fibres.

Lovers of traditionally knitted sweaters will appreciate this article written by Ben Fogle and published in the UK newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, on 1st December:

"I am the definition of a jumper junkie. I have a great collection of hand-knitted tops from across the globe, from Icelandic sweaters to Peruvian alpaca jumpers. I like to collect them in lieu of souvenirs. I have a beautiful hand-knitted jumper from Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides and a wonderful Fair Isle sweater made from the same design and pattern as worn by the early polar adventurers.

But the sweater with which I am most obsessed is the iconic Guernsey. I have half-a-dozen in various colours, although blue is the officially recognised colour of the sweaters which have been made in the bailiwick in the Channel Islands since the 16th century.

Guernseys are traditionally navy blue and made from a specially coated worsted wool that makes them not only warm, but waterproof. The worsted wool is twisted to make it stronger than regular wool, which helps to give the jumper its sturdy character. All traditional Guernseys are made to the same pattern with a square neck, making them reversible, but it is the patterning at the shoulders which in the past was often specific to a parish or family. One reason for this was to help identify the bodies of fisherman lost at sea when they were washed ashore.

But there is a threat to the Guernsey because there are so few people with the knowledge to knit them.



A traditional navy blue Guernsey sweater

Like so much of our heritage, hand-knitting is becoming a dying art, and all of this despite a spike in demand. Japan is currently the biggest market in the world for the Guernsey but the Islands' manufacturers are struggling to keep up with demand due to a lack of knitters.

Once used by prospective wives to "lure" future husbands by demonstrating their "industrious nature" with ornate patterns, the jumpers were also part of the rating uniform of the 19th-century Royal Navy and they are reputed to have been worn during the Battle of Trafalgar. Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots both owned Guernsey knitwear, indeed Mary insisted on wearing a pair of Guernsey stockings when she went to her execution.



Timo Weiland, Donna Kang and Antonio Azzuolo get to know an alpaca during their trip to Peru

A joint initiative between the Trade Commission of Peru in New York and Company Agenda has led to the launching of “The Alpaca Project”, which aims to bring global awareness of the Peruvian alpaca industry.

One of the Project’s first actions has been to send a group of New York fashion designers to Peru to get to learn how the fibre is produced and processed there so that they can create and show a number of alpaca garments in their collections during New York Fashion Week in February 2014.

Five designers, Antonio Azzuolo, Charles Harbison, Caitlin Wiman (of Rachel Comey) Timo Weiland and Donna Kang flew to Peru for six days in late November to study the entire alpaca production chain.

Starting in Arequipa, the group visited the production facilities of Incalpaca TPX, S.A., Michell & Cia., S.A and Art Atlas before journeying to the country’s Altiplano region where they met Cucho Velasquez who farms a herd of approximately 1,000 alpacas.

On their return to New York, the designers reflected on their experiences:

“It gave me more of an appreciation for where it’s all

coming from because I have never seen that before,” said Wiman, who has travelled to Peru several times to oversee production for the Rachel Comey brand.

“I’m taking away a love of the fabric, a love of the fibre, a love of the yarn,” said Harbison, who plans to use alpaca to make a draped coat. “I think it’s because Peruvians have a love for it, and I’ve walked away feeling intimately connected as well.”

“I’ve never been to Peru and this trip allowed me to more completely understand the complexity behind this fibre,” said Azzuolo, who has worked with alpaca in the past. “It’s a noble fibre, but it’s so much more than just that. It’s noble in the true sense in that it’s so directly connected to the culture of Peru.”

“The trip was incredibly inspirational, not only from a design standpoint, but on a human standpoint,” said Kang.

So, in February, The Alpaca Project will make its debut during New York Fashion Week when the designers who were on the trip, along with brands including VPL, Tocca, and Nanette Lepore, will parade their alpaca designs on the runway.

IAA ALPACA MONTHLY BULLETIN

The IAA Alpaca Monthly Bulletin is aimed at keeping members informed of news from the IAA. We encourage any member to supply articles of interest to update members about developments in the Camelid world. Articles with a human interest angle are particularly welcome.

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