

First standard for sustainable cashmere unveiled



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German non-profit Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) has developed a new standard for sustainable cashmere. In view of the current discussion about the welfare of cashmere goats, the increasing demand for transparency and corporate responsibility, the foundation's Good Cashmere Standard improves cashmere production on many levels, the company said in a statement.

It covers both the welfare of animals, the protection of nature and the working conditions of farmers and farm workers. It has been developed in close collaboration with animal-rights specialists and independent cashmere-production experts.

Farmers and buying stations for cashmere wool in Inner Mongolia are certified only if proven to be in compliance with the standard's criteria. The cashmere farmers first complete a comprehensive series of questions on their livestock-keeping practices.

Based on these results, independent third parties visit their farms to verify the proper implementation of the standard. The standard is starting off with 2,000 farmers in the region of Inner Mongolia in northern China, where cashmere goats are kept by settled farmers rather than roaming broad pastures with nomadic herders.

According to AbTF managing director Tina Stridde, "The Good Cashmere Standard provides a standard for the important resource cashmere. It meets increased consumer demand for sustainability, quality, and transparency. Many consumers want to be certain that the textiles they purchase were produced in accordance with social and environmental standards and that no animals were harmed in the process."

The new standard now offers businesses their first opportunity to sell products made from certified, sustainable cashmere wool from Inner Mongolia.

A key stakeholder for The Good Cashmere Standard is the ERDOS Cashmere Group, one of the largest producers of cashmere and based in Inner Mongolia. ERDOS has been an important partner and supporter for the new standard from the beginning and they will offer and process certified cashmere wool already this year, in addition to four other producers.

On the demand side Peter Hahn, one of Germany's leading cashmere retailers, has been the first retail partner of The Good Cashmere Standard. Peter Hahn has already been joined by additional fashion brands including BESTSELLER, H&M Group, J.Crew, Madewell and Lacoste.