

The Good Cashmere Standard Boosts its Sustainability Credentials with Focus on Animal Welfare and Transparency

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A goat herder in Inner Mongolia.

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 fibers from Inner Mongolia. Version 2.0 of the standard, its latest, emphasizes 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 prioritise the welfare of the goats further,” 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.”



A cashmere goat in Mongolian steppe.

The Good Cashmere Standard 2.0

Following its revision by the Aid by Trade Foundation, GCS Version 2.0 is built on four pillars encompassing 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 fibers, which occurs 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. By the model, the standard’s first pillar addresses five clearly defined aspects: nutrition, environment, health, behavior, 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 is the launch

of a pilot project for animal welfare assessments. The assessments are based on the Animal Welfare Indicator Protocol (AWIN) and, 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 behavior to take the animals' perspective into account as well. Some auditors in China have already been trained as animal welfare assessors.

As part of the pilot project's evaluation, the program's further implementation for animal welfare assessments on farms in Inner Mongolia is planned. Beyond its focus on animal welfare, the standard's revision addresses three other pillars: people, management, and the environment.

It provides clear guidelines for protecting biodiversity and land through land management, achieving dignified labor conditions for all people involved in cashmere fiber production, and ensuring compliance with responsible business practices, the verification process, and GCS values.

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

Collaboration With TextileGenesis, A Lectra Company

Transparency and traceability in cashmere production are core concerns for Aid by Trade Foundation regarding 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 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 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, we aim to promote full traceability of responsible cashmere, from the place where the goats

are reared to the point of responsible cashmere, from the place where the goats are reared to the point of sale,” explains Amit Gautam, Founder/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. We are excited to reinforce this commitment by partnering with TextileGenesis to offer current and future partners the option of working through an established and technologically innovative platform.”



Tina Stridde, Managing Director, Aid by Trade Foundation.



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