

Merino knitwear push into US market

Australian Wool Innovation Limited (AWI) and The Woolmark Company have joined forces in a three-year project to get more Americans wearing Australian Merino knitwear.

The project aims to use dedicated and accredited supply chains to meet specific US retailer and consumer requirements and expectations for easy care Merino knitwear.

This joint initiative capitalises on the development and marketing expertise of both companies.

Why is the US market special?

American consumers comprise a massive untapped market and have traditionally been a small market for woollen apparel.

US consumers are used to easy care cotton and man-made fibres which dominate knitwear apparel. The harsher North American climate demands that apparel must be machine washed and tumble-dried without shrinking and still look good, remaining soft and comfortable to wear even after repeated domestic laundering. As such, it is crucial that garments produced for the US market use the best easy care technology.

How will it work?

Leading yarn spinners have been accredited for Total Easy Care (TEC) processing.

Woolmark will work with the retailers preferred knitters to ensure products are technically suitable for the easy care demands of the US market.

Support will be provided to retailers for correct care labelling.

Work is also being carried out with the major US washing machine and laundry detergent manufacturers to help optimise



wool apparel performance for the different US laundering conditions.

Woolmark will work directly with retailers, their buying houses and knitters to develop products.

The apparel production cycle from yarn selection, through product development and manufacture to retail is typically about 18 months and initial discussions began during the major yarn shows in July 2004.

It is expected that the first knitwear garments produced through the project will retail in the 2005/2006 northern hemisphere autumn/winter season.

More selected retailers will be targeted for the 2006/2007 autumn/winter season.

at a glance...

- A joint project by AWI and The Woolmark Company that aims to get more Americans wearing Australian Merino knitwear.
- The best easy care technology is being used so that garments machine wash, tumble-dry and retain appearance and softness.
- The first knitwear garments are expected to retail in 2005/2006 northern hemisphere autumn/winter ranges.

For more information

Call AWI tollfree on 1800 070 099, visit www.wool.com.au or get in touch with:

Pascal Senkoff

Australian Wool Innovation Limited
General Manager Trade Development

t 61 2 9299 5155

f 61 2 9299 9880

e pascalsenkoff@woolinnovation.com.au

Australian Wool Innovation Limited

ABN 12 095 165 558

Level 5, 16-20 Barrack Street

Sydney NSW 2000

GPO Box 4177 Sydney NSW 2001

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