

**What does sustainable cashmere mean, and how do you make sure yours is?**

It starts right at the beginning with protection of the land and biodiversity. Herd numbers have to be kept low so that the grasslands are not overgrazed and biodiversity is preserved. The herders and their flocks are nomadic. It's important that they and their families are properly compensated so they can maintain their lifestyle yet leave the land pristine. Biodiversity is incredibly important in maintaining stability of the ecosystem. The goats must have the five freedoms as defined by the Animal Welfare Council: freedom from hunger and thirst, freedom from injury and disease, freedom of comfortable living, freedom to express their nature and freedom from fear or pain.

It doesn't stop there though. Workers at the mill must be treated well and paid a fair living wage. The mill where my yarn is produced is a 'green factory', which means it is a low-carbon facility to improve greenhouse gas emissions, environmental pollution and energy consumption. I use renewable energy, low water consumption, and dye baths are fully exhausted. I reuse any plastics I need, and all my packaging has been recycled and is recyclable. My botanical dyes are all Global Organic Textile Standard certified, and my professional dyes are produced by a Swiss company which is a founding member of the Responsible Care Initiative and signatory to the United Nations Global Compact. They are extremely colour, wash and light fast and are used by the Victoria and Albert Museum in its fabric conservation too. I'm in very good company!

Having looked for a supplier for a long time and talked with many people, I came to realise that the only way to make sure the marketing claims were true was through transparency and accountability. My cashmere has many awards and certifications, from the Good Cashmere Standard award to the OEKO-TEX 100 certification for customer confidence and high product safety. I have a full list of certifications on my website.

**Where can readers get hold of your yarns?**

I sell online through my shop, and through selected retailers. I love exhibiting at shows and I will be at YarnDale in September and the Knitting & Stitching Show at Alexandra Palace in October. I publish all my upcoming shows on my website.

**Are there any designers you particularly admire?**

I love Kerstin Olsson's *Bohus Stickning* designs. I think she has a fabulous colour sense and a deep understanding of stitch architecture. I also love Xandy Peters' work for much the same reasons. They both approach knitting from new and surprising angles. I very much admire Kate Davies and her generous approach to her work. She's built a huge community, she supports local businesses and mills, and has showcased new designers and artists. A very outward-looking and collaborative approach.

**Is it (even) more expensive to buy sustainable cashmere?**

In my view, it's paying the true price. When you buy cashmere from herds that are too large, the environment pays the price, or the workers who are not paid adequately. Everything has a cost, and buying sustainable cashmere means you are buying a product that is viable in the long term, not only for that business but the planet as well. When you buy cheaper cashmere, the very properties that make it cheap also defeat the object of buying quality. Cheaper cashmere is a lower grade, so it is more scratchy and pills due to the shorter staple length. It's a false economy. If you look after good quality cashmere well, there's no reason it can't last a lifetime.

**What are your business goals?**

I'm looking forward to exhibiting at yarn shows and I like to showcase a new idea at each one. I'd love to release my first crochet pattern. I'm really looking forward to meeting more knitters, hearing what everyone's working on, what they're interested in and what they'd like to work on next. I'm keen to



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