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Axfoundation & Klippan Yllefabrik

Swedish Wool Revolution: Transforming Discarded Fibers into Sustainable Fashion with Innovative Worsted Yarn



Unlocking new avenues in sustainable fashion, this innovative soft worsted yarn, crafted from previously discarded Swedish wool, offers fashion brands access to high-quality, biobased, and recyclable material. Photo: Axfoundation and Klippan Yllefabrik.

Half of Sweden's wool is wasted due to excessive vegetable matter, but textile manufacturer Klippan Yllefabrik, in collaboration with The Swedish Wool Initiative led by Axfoundation, offers a solution. Introducing premium worsted yarn crafted from previously discarded Swedish wool, now embraced by multiple prominent fashion brands.

"It's a massive waste of resources to discard Swedish wool simply because it contains excess straw residue. Klippan Yllefabrik has found a solution by combing the wool and removing these plant parts, a step towards a sustainable fashion industry," explains Gösta Magnusson, Chairman of Klippan Yllefabrik, a veteran with over 50 years in the wool industry.

The concept for Swedish worsted yarn originated at the kitchen table of a wool broker at Väst kustens Ullinsamling in Laholm, Sweden. Excess wool, unsellable due to excessive plant residues resulting from top-tier animal welfare practices in Sweden, sparked the idea. Meanwhile, Klippan Yllefabrik sought high-quality wool for fashion buyers who previously shunned slightly coarser Swedish yarn.



Previously, Klippan Yllefabrik rejected wool with high levels of vegetable matter, knowing that debris persisted even after washing, carding, and spinning. By introducing an additional step - combing the wool - the plant residues could be effectively removed, resulting in a soft and pliable worsted yarn. This breakthrough opens new avenues in the Swedish wool industry, according to Gösta Magnusson:

"Swedish wool has traditionally been relegated to coarser materials and stuffing. This new worsted yarn, however, offers something entirely different - a fine yarn from Swedish wool, crafted in Europe, ideal for sustainable fashion. It's slightly thinner and perfect for knitting warm sweaters."

This Swedish wool innovation is a standout achievement of The Swedish Wool Initiative - a collaborative effort across the wool value chain. Successes include Sweden's first national classification system for wool and an improved infrastructure with wool brokers connecting buyers and sellers. Several product innovations have also been launched ranging from new yarns to finished wool products in fashion, outdoor, and home décor. Johan Sidenmark, Project Manager for The Swedish Wool Initiative at Axfoundation, underscores the significance of collaboration in maximizing Swedish wool utilization:

"This is a prime example of innovation bolstering sustainable textile production. However, such strides wouldn't be possible without uniting the entire value chain, from sheep farms to industry. By aligning Swedish wool processing with industrial needs, we pave the way for sustainable products across various sectors, particularly fashion."

The demand for worsted yarn has surged, with renowned Swedish brands like Filippa K, Tiger of Sweden, and Röyk already planning to incorporate it into future collections.

"We're proud to present this innovative worsted yarn to the market. It's ready to use and available in various colors. We hope this sparks interest among many more," says Pernilla Roos, Marketing Manager at Klippan Yllefabrik.

For more information on The Swedish Wool Initiative: <https://www.axfoundation.se/en/projects/the-swedish-wool-initiative>

Learn about the Swedish Wool Standard - a national classification system:
<https://www.axfoundation.se/en/swedish-wool-standard>

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Facts and Images

About The Swedish Wool Initiative

The Swedish Wool Initiative, led by Axfoundation, is a broad collaboration between stakeholders across the value chain – from sheep owners to Swedish companies in fashion, outdoor, and home décor. The goal is to enable Swedish brands and suppliers to easily access competitive Swedish wool raw materials of high and consistent quality. The project is a collaboration between Axfoundation, Filippa K, Fjällräven, Tiger of Sweden, Klippan Yllefabrik, Smart Textiles/Science Park Borås, IVL Swedish Environmental Institute, Chalmers Industrial Technology, Circularista, LE Wool Consultancy, Görvälnlammet, Norrby Farm, West Coast Wool Collection/CC Wool, Ullcentrum, Ullkontoret, Swedish Sheep Shearing Association, LRF, and TrusTrace. The project's expert group includes Animalia, Norilia, Hushållningssällskapet Halland, and the Swedish Sheep Breeding Association. The project is carried out with support from Sweden's innovation agency Vinnova.

About Swedish Wool and Textiles

- Sweden produces approximately 1,000 metric tons of wool annually, but over 50% is discarded.
- Sweden imports over 1,700 metric tons of wool each year in the form of raw wool, carded wool, and yarn.
- Imported wool often has a higher carbon footprint than Swedish wool and is often produced with lower animal welfare standards.
- Global demand for new textile fibers is expected to rise by 150% by 2050, intensifying pressure on climate and the environment.
- Swedish fashion and textile brands increasingly seek regionally produced, biobased, and recyclable materials, exemplified by wool.
- Industrially, Swedish wool has previously been used mainly for coarser materials, such as furniture and stuffing. With new approaches, soft yarns can also be developed, for example, for the fashion industry.
- Worsted yarn: A soft, thin, and pliable yarn typically used for sweaters. It is manufactured by gently combing the wool with a special machine.
- Woolen yarn: Manufactured through carding in a carding machine, which ensures that all residual materials present in the wool are incorporated into the yarn.

Images

- Gösta Magnusson, Chairman of the Swedish textile manufacturer Klippan Yllefabrik and a veteran in the wool industry with over 50 years of experience.
- Pernilla Roos, Marketing Manager Klippan Yllefabrik.
- Johan Sidenmark, Project Manager Future Materials at Axfoundation and Project Manager of The Swedish Wool Initiative.
- Wool broker Charlotte Jansson and sheep shearer Carl-Oscar Allered at Västkustens Ullinsamling in Laholm.
- Sweden is among the countries with the highest standards for animal welfare. Swedish sheep graze outdoors in the summer and are housed indoors with straw bedding during the winter. This results in some of the wool having a high proportion of vegetable matter.
- Unsorted wool with a large proportion of vegetable matter.
- Swedish sheep.
- A new innovative worsted yarn made from Swedish wool that was previously discarded.