



77th IWTO Congress, Beijing

The environmentally friendly attributes bring wool back onto the retail floor!

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The 77th IWTO Congress, held in Beijing, China from 13. to 16. April 2008 has come to a close. More than 350 delegates from 27 countries discussed the positive attributes of wools under the theme "*Wool - The Environmentally Friendly Fibre*".

At the Congress, IWTO President Günther Beier re-emphasised the importance of capitalising on the ecological aspects of the Wool fibre and its inherent properties as a textile fibre, which can bring wool back onto the retail floor prominently. In this respect, President Beier congratulated especially Australian Wool Innovation (AWI)/The Woolmark Company for their very positive and innovative marketing approach which went a long way towards getting wool back into its rightful place as the world's premium Apparel and Interior Textile Fibre. Product innovations were shown to the delegates such as the "Shower Suit" which merely requires washing under a shower at 40 degrees C and then left to dry overnight to be fit for wear the following morning.

President Beier stated it was pleasing to see that the Australian Wool Growers have confirmed their commitment to eliminating Mulesing by 2010, and using pain relieving medication during the actual Mulesing operation in interim.

A milestone for IWTO at the Congress was the launch of two new projects related to lobbying in the area of Interior Textiles (e.g. to insure that wool was not disadvantaged by any legal regulations or building by-laws) and Apparel (e.g. to implement the IWTO Super S Scheme into law in Japan and the EU). The projects are initially financed through contributions from Argentina, New Zealand, South Africa, Uruguay and the UK, with some more countries likely to participate soon.

During the Congress, the new "4 Pillar Structure" of IWTO was launched. The 4 Pillars model clearly shows the increasing relevance of IWTO to the wool industry, expressing IWTO's four main tasks, "Trading Instruments", "Facilitating Marketing", "Lobbying" and "Networking".

A major technical issue was approved at the Congress with the inclusion of a new definition for "Organic Wool" which should support the industry to work united in this field. An international 'Code of Practice' will be developed over in the next few months in order to attempt to unify the definition world wide.

For further details about the Congress, please contact IWTO Head Office in Brussels under office@iwto.org

IWTO is the international body representing the interests of the world's wool textile trade and industry. Our multi-national membership includes woolgrowers, traders, primary processors, spinners, weavers, and garment manufacturers, together with retailers and other companies involved in wool related businesses.

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