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Press release: South African Mohair industry update – April 2023

The global mohair clip for 2022 was 4.55 million kgs of which South Africa produced 51% and Lesotho produced 16%. Jointly, Southern Africa produced two thirds of the world's mohair.

The Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS) was developed by Textile Exchange in conjunction with the South African mohair industry and officially launched in March 2020. RMS certification assesses animal welfare and handling, social welfare, land management and provides a reliable and verifiable chain of custody for mohair through transaction certificates that accompany certified mohair through the supply chain as the mohair moves from one stakeholder to another.

RMS provides third party verification throughout the value chain.

The South African mohair industry secured the services of a dedicated vet in 2012, who was integral in helping to develop the animal welfare standards and best practices for Angora Goat farming.

The industry vet is available to all mohair farmers for their animal health and is funded by the industry. He plays an important role in terms of biosecurity for the mohair industry. (Which includes monitoring and management of animal diseases)

At the end of 2022, 71% of the South African mohair sold on the 14 official mohair auctions was RMS certified. We continue to engage with the commercial farmers who have not yet adopted RMS.

There are challenges for herder, communal and small-scale farmers in South Africa to access RMS certification, and the mohair from these farmers makes up approximately 15% of our clip. Textile Exchange launched a Communal Farmer Group certification module for all animal fibres when they launched their Responsible Alpaca Standard in 2021. This module adapts the audit model used for commercial farmers to recognise the constraints faced by communal farmers but so far this has only been used for alpaca and wool certification. Textile Exchange is continuing to refine this module and hopes that farm groups in South Africa will use it for non-commercial wool and mohair farmers in the future.

Farmers can choose to be individually certified, in which case they will have annual audits by a third-party Certification Body. But, more often farmers choose to become certified as part of a farm group. In the farm group model a farmer must be audited annually by one of the South African Mohair Brokers who have registered RMS farmer groups. In addition a proportion of the farm group will have an annual third-party audit. In South Africa the only certification body accredited by Textile Exchange is Control Union.

To make a claim about the RMS status of any product, the entire value chain needs to be certified. In South Africa, the local mohair value chain, post farm gate, is RMS certified - from broker, buyer, processor, dyehouses and the 2 industrial spinners.

Non-Executive Directors / Nie-uitvoerende Direkteurs: I.R. Bekker (Chairman / Voorsitter), I. Smith, P. van der Vyver

To manage traceability, Mohair SA partnered with Oritain, a world leader in using forensic science and technology to verify the origin of products and raw materials. Currently we have a 100% fit for purpose data base for South African mohair which means that Oritain can identify the origin of the mohair in an item that contains 100% mohair.

We have recently launched a pilot project with a group of South African farmers which will allow the mohair in the value chain to be traced to the farm of origin. This technology has the future potential to identify the origin of mohair in various blends. With transparency being of key importance, this partnership with Oritain will enhance the industry's future in sustainable sourcing.

The South African mohair industry is aware of the negative impact of climate change and supports the efforts to reduce carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 which can positively impact our earth.

Mohair SA recently signed an agreement with a 3rd party company to embark on a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) for the mohair industry. The data collection will commence in the second quarter of 2023. The various stages of the LCA will include, pre - farm gate, post - farm gate, and to the end of life.

By doing a LCA, we will obtain a baseline of the impact that our industry has on the planet. We can then use this to highlight the positive impact and implement the necessary changes to improve.

One of the ways to positively affect the impact we have on the environment is by implementing regenerative agriculture practices at the pre-farm gate stage. The mohair industry encourages our farmers to focus their efforts on regenerative thinking and farm management practices. There are various land management training courses available, and we encourage our farmers to take advantage of these opportunities.

The South African mohair industry is committed to producing mohair ethically and sustainably by offering RMS, a traceability solution, and the implementation of a LCA to quantify and improve the impact we have on the environment.



Marco Coetzee
General manager
Mohair South Africa

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