

Discover Natural Fibres Initiative

Report of the Annual Meeting

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

3:00 PM to 5:30 PM

Office of Industrieverband Veredlung-Garne-Gewebe-Technische-Textilien e.V.
(IVGT)

Frankfurt, Germany (during Heimtextil)

Participants:

- EIMamoun Amrouk, FAO, (via web conference)
- Thomas Bressler, Wilhelm G. Clasen GmbH & Co. KG
- Debasish Das, Professor, Department of Jute and Fibre Technology, University of Calcutta
- Elke Hortmeyer, Director of International Relations and Communications, Bremen Cotton Exchange
- Ashish Mohta, Ajanta Textiles
- Christian Schindler, Director General, International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF)
- Stefan Schmidt, Industrieverband Veredlung-Garne-Gewebe-Technische-Textilien e.V. (IVGT)
- Cristian Siegert, Compañía de Empaques, Colombia (via web conference)
- Katarzyna Świącicka, Gdynia Cotton Association
- Terry Townsend, Consultant, Cotton Analytics
- Lihan Wei, ICAC Secretariat, (via web conference)
- Dalena White, International Wool Textile Organization
- Oliver Reimer-Wollenweber, Wilhelm G. Clasen GmbH & Co. KG
- Olivier Zieschank, Economist, ITMF
- Malgorzata Zimniewska, Institute of Natural Fibers and Medicinal Plants (via web conference)

Next Meeting:

The 14th Meeting of the Steering Committee of DNFI will be held on **Wednesday 13 January 2021** in Frankfurt during Heimtextil beginning at 3:00 PM in the office of IVGT.

Report of the 13th Meeting

Short Reports on Fibre Supply and Use:

Overview: Terry Townsend reported that world production of natural fibres reached approximately 33 million tons in 2019, an increase of about one million tons from the 2018 preliminary.

World cotton production is estimated by the International Cotton Advisory Committee at 26.4 million tons in 2019/20 (August/July), an increase of approximately 700,000 tons over the previous season. Jute production in 2019 is estimated at 3.2 million tons, an increase of 100,000 tons due to greater availability of planting seed. Production of wool is presumed to have declined in 2019 due to the impacts of drought and fire in Australia and drought in other countries of the Southern Hemisphere. Coir production is estimated in 2019 unchanged at about one million tons. Production of all other natural fibres is estimated at approximately 1.6 million tons in 2019. (Attachment 1)

Townsend noted that estimates of world natural fibre production come from a variety of sources, including FAO, international organizations, national fibre bodies, and private sources. He thanked all those who collaborate in the collection of statistical information.

Jute: Mr. Thomas Bressler, Wilhelm G. Clasen GmbH & Co. KG, reported that the 2019 jute crop in Bangladesh is estimated at approximately 1.5 million tons, a normal level. However, flooding during the harvest season resulted in a degradation of quality. As a consequence, rising prices for higher-quality fibres were a prospect until jute from the 2020 season becomes available. Mr. Bressler noted that earnings from jute production in Bangladesh dropped 20% in 2018/19 from the previous season to approximately US\$816 million. He noted that approximately 40 million people in Bangladesh are involved in the jute sector. (Attachment 2)

European Flax and Hemp: Dr. Małgorzata Zimniewska (past Chair of DNFI) provided statistics on production of flax and hemp in various countries in the European Union, Central Europe and Russia. She noted that the challenge for the European industry is to achieve economies of scale in long fibre production and spinning.

Sisal: Mr. Oliver Reimer-Wollenweber, Wilhelm G. Clasen GmbH & Co. KG reported that sisal exports from East Africa declined or stagnated during 2018 and 2019, but that exports from Brazil increased by about one-fifth. He noted that areas in both regions that were previously abandoned are being brought back into production. The world sisal market is being influenced by expanded use in construction applications, helping to support prices at relatively high levels. He observed that sisal is a renewable resource that serves as a net sink for carbon during its lifespan, and many industries are trying to expand the use of sisal and other natural fibres. He noted that the International Year of Natural Fibres in 2009 had provided an impetus to increased focus on natural fibre uses, and he commended the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for their support of natural fibres. (Attachment 3)

Cotton: Ms. Lihan Wei, Statistician, International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), (via conference call from Washington, DC) reported that slowing economic growth was affecting world cotton demand, and mill use of cotton in the current season, August 2019 to July 2020, is estimated essentially unchanged from two seasons earlier at 26.2 million metric tons. She noted that world cotton production is estimated at 26 million tons, including 6 million in India, 5.8 million in China, 4.4 million in the United States and 2.7 million in Brazil. World trade in cotton is expected to remain essentially unchanged from the previous season at 9 million tons. (Attachment 4)

Wool: Ms. Dalena White, International Wool Textile Organization (IWTO), reported that fires raging in Australia have the wool industry reeling in despair. She noted that the lowest rainfall totals in 100 years have been recorded in many parts of the Southern Hemisphere, resulting in the loss of millions of animals. Nevertheless, wool producers are hopeful that higher prices will support incomes, especially in the Merino Wool sector. She noted that global sheep numbers and wool production are the lowest in 100 years, and that the use of wool in retail products is trending downward. However, there is potential for market growth in active wear as the fibre performance characteristics and biodegradability of wool are better understood by more consumers. (Attachment 5)

DNFI Award

Dr. Das, speaking for both himself and Dr. Ghosh, thanked members of DNFI for the recognition given to their research and the resulting natural fibre products. Dr. Das noted that he had learned about the award through word-of-mouth at the International Conference on Natural Fibres in Porto in July, and he encouraged members of DNFI to reach out to potential award recipients.

Members of DNFI congratulated Dr. Das and Dr. Ghosh on their research achievement, and they encouraged Mr. Mohta in efforts to commercialize the resulting products.

It was decided that the DNFI Innovation in Natural Fibres Award will be conducted again in 2020. An announcement of the award will be prepared by early February, with a closing date of mid-September.

DNFI expressed appreciation to Dr. Schindler and ITMF for sponsoring the award trophies and participating in the presentation of the award during Heimtextil.

DNFI will suggest to the organizers of Heimtextil that the award ceremony in January 2021 might be more advantageously located in the lecture area of Hall 11.0.

Calendar of DNFI Activities for 2020-21

The next annual meeting of DNFI will be conducted on Wednesday, 13 January 2021 during Heimtextil. Members agreed that additional meetings are unnecessary, and that the work of DNFI can be conducted efficiently via e-mail.

DNFI Web site

Stefan Schmidt reported that nearly 10,000 visitors had come to the DNFI web site in the 60 days ending January 8, 2020. He noted that Google is the most common source of search engine referrals, but that visitors arrive at the site via Ask.com, Baidu, Bing and others. Visitors seem to be searching primarily for statistics and information about natural fibres. (Attachment 6)

Stefan received a sincere round of applause for his management of the web site.

DNFI Goals

There was a consensus that DNFI serves as a channel to raise awareness and communicate the positive attributes of natural fibres, and DNFI serves as a platform for the collection of statistics and exchange of information about natural fibres. Membership in DNFI is a by-product of content and should not be pursued for its own sake.

Mr. Amrouk observed that DNFI fills a gap in public knowledge of natural fibre attributes and industry characteristics. He noted that the United Nations General Assembly, at the initiative of Bangladesh, has tasked FAO with taking stock of the situation facing natural fibre industries every two years, and he would be reaching out to DNFI for assistance in this effort.

Election of a Chair; confirmation of the Vice Chair:

Elke Hortmeyer, Director of International Relations and Communication, Bremen Cotton Exchange, offered to serve as Chair of DNFI during 2020 and 2021. She has participated in DNFI activities since its founding in 2010.

Dalena White was elected to a two-year term as Vice Chair in 2019, and she confirmed her availability to serve the second year of her term.

Seeing no other nominations, the Chair observed that Ms. Hortmeyer and Ms. White were confirmed unanimously as Chair and Vice Chair of DNFI during 2020.

Adjourn

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:00 PM.