Discover Natural Fibres Initiative

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For Immediate Release

Nominations for the DNFI Innovation in Natural Fibres Award Received

A fascinating array of nominations for the Discover Natural Fibres Initiative (DNFI) Innovation in Natural Fibres Award 2020 were received by the deadline on 11 September, and eight finalists have been identified. Final judging is underway, and the winner of the 2020 Award will be announced in early October.

The eight finalists for the 2020 Award fall into three broad categories, including the use of natural fibres in the manufacturing of biodegradable plastics and composites, practical techniques for the application of Integrated Pest Management in small-holder cotton production, and new uses or expanded uses for natural fibre materials. Researchers and institutions located in Germany, India, Iran, and the United States are among the finalists for the 2020 award.

Finalists for the 2020 DNFI Innovation Award include:

Dr. Noureddine Abidi, Professor and Director, Fiber and Biopolymer Research Institute, Texas Tech University: "*Production of bioplastic films from low micronaire cotton fibers."*

Mr. Erik Bell, Scientific Assistant, Institut für Textiltechnik (ITA) der RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany (with partners from The City University of Applied Sciences, INVENT GmbH, Wenzel & Hoos GmbH, SachsenLeinen GmbH, BAFA, Novacom GmbH, and Nova-Institut GmbH): "*Natural fibre-reinforced composites for structural applications based on novel zero twisted bast fibre yarns."*

Dr. Dibyendu Bikash Datta, Associate Professor, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Kolkata, West Bengal, India: "*Khadi Organic Cotton Clothing for Infants," and "Khadi Organic Cotton fabric waste for low cost eco-friendly sanitary pads."*

Dr Vishlesh Shankar Nagrare, Principal Scientist (Entomology), Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur, India: "*Management of Pink bollworm in Cotton in Central and South India."*

Dr. Seyed Abbas Rafat, Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran: "*New Look on an Ancient Fiber of Cashmere."*

Ms. Ann Cathrin Schönrock & Franziska Uhl, Founders, YarnSustain GmbH, Berlin, Germany: "*Saving Lost Resources - is Chiengora the new Cashmere?"*

Mr. Carsten Uthemann, M.Sc., Scientific Assistant, and Mr. Alexander Janßen, M.Sc., Head of Division Staple Fibre Technologies, Institut für Textiltechnik (ITA) of RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany, with support from the Institut für Polymerwerkstoffe und Kunststofftechnik (PuK) of TU Clausthal, Clausthal, Germany: "*Natural fibre reinforced plastics - Enabling their use for structural composite applications through appropriate fibre processing."*

About DNFI

The Discover Natural Fibres Initiative is a platform for those who believe in natural fibres. DNFI facilitates the exchange of information and experiences and works to advance the common interests of all-natural fibres in the face of competition with oil-based and wood-based manmade fibres. Representatives of natural fibre industries as diverse as abaca, alpaca, angora, cashmere, coir, cotton, flax, industrial hemp, jute, mohair, ramie, silk, sisal and wool participate in DNFI.

The Discover Natural Fibres Initiative (DNFI) was created in January 2010 as an outgrowth of the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009, declared by the United Nations General Assembly. DNFI is a voluntary association of individuals and organizations who work to further the interests of natural fibres by serving as a platform for information exchange, including statistics on fibre production and use, and by working to raise awareness of the benefits of natural fibre industries to the world economy, environment and consumers (www.dnfi.org). DNFI is entirely volunteer supported. There are no membership dues, the organization has no budget or Secretariat, and the organization does not conduct projects. Instead, DNFI facilitates communication and collaboration through the exchange of information.

Anyone with an interest in natural fibres is welcome to join DNFI by registering on the web site.

Previous Winners of the DNFI Innovation in Natural Fibres Award:

The 2017 DNFI Annual Innovation in Natural Fibres Award was won by **Ms. Marie-Isabel Popzyk**, Scientific Assistant at RWTH Aachen University and **Dr. Roland Klein**, Group Manager at the Fraunhofer Institute LBF in Germany. Their submission, "Reduction of the moisture absorption of natural fibers and production of no-twist yarns for use in structural components," showed that up to 100% bio-based, natural fibre reinforced plastics (NFRP) with low moisture absorption can be developed for application in structural components.

The 2018 DNFI award was won by **Velener Textil**. The winning process, "WECYCLED® - Real added value for weaving mills and our partners in the textile chain," was submitted by Mr. Ernst Grimmelt, CEO and Sales Manager Yarns, under the category of Innovative processes/procedures. Under the WECYCLED® system (www.wecycled.de), Velener Textil collects spent cones from partner mills and separates the unused cotton yarn in special sheltered workshops that meet the highest standards of employee safety and environmental protection. Velener Textil has developed a sophisticated method to recycle the recovered cotton into new yarns that fulfill the requirements for color fastness, strength and other attributes in high-quality consumer products. Commercial applications include the production of bed linen and knitted clothing.

The 2019 DNFI award was won by **Dr. Debasish Das**, Professor, University of Calcutta, Department of Jute and Fibre Technology, and **Dr. Subhas Ghosh**, Professor, Eastern Michigan University, School of Visual Built Environments, College of Engineering and Technology. The two researchers collaborated on the development of a biodegradable cotton-jute fabric with a waterproof coating that can substitute for non-biodegradable PVC-coated polyester. The new cotton-jute fabric is suitable for use in outdoor fabrics such as tarps, awnings, canopies, or automobile hooding material. In addition to being biodegradable, the natural fibre material meets fire-retardancy standards and allows the transfer of moisture vapor to avoid the accumulation of humidity on the underside of fabrics, while remaining waterproof.