



For Immediate Release
October 12, 2017

DNFI Innovation in Natural Fibres Award 2017

Popzyk and Klein Win in Worldwide Voting

Marie-Isabel Popzyk, Scientific Assistant at Aachen University and **Dr. Roland Klein**, Group Manager at the Fraunhofer-Institute in Germany were selected through a process of on-line voting by participants in more than 100 countries to win the 1st Discover Natural Fibres Initiative (DNFI) Innovation in Natural Fibres Award.

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 and brought to application in structural components. The researchers noted that natural fibres, such as bast fibres, are becoming increasingly important in technical applications such as composites. Natural fibres are inexpensive, environmentally friendly and characterized by low density and high mechanical properties. Compared to the production of glass fibre reinforced plastics (GRP), approximately 30% less CO² is emitted by NFRP and energy consumption is reduced by approximately 40%.

Terry Townsend, Chair of DNFI, noted that the research by Popzyk and Klein characterizes the dynamic nature of natural fibre technology. From performance apparel fabrics to innovative biocomposites, natural fibres represent solutions to 21st Century challenges.

The voting process for the DNFI Innovation Award began in July 2017 when a subcommittee of DNFI members winnowed the list of many excellent nominations to five finalists. Worldwide voting was conducted during August and September.

Ms. Popzyk and Dr. Klein will be officially recognized for their achievement at the Biocomposites Conference Cologne (BCC), 6 - 7 December 2017, Maternushaus, Cologne. Information about the conference is available at www.biocompositescc.com.

About DNFI

The Discover Natural Fibre 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. The purposes of DNFI are to advance the interests of all natural fibre industries and to encourage increased use of natural fibres in the world economy. DNFI is a voluntary association of individuals and organizations with interests in promoting natural fibres through collaboration, consultation and cooperation. The Organization (www.dnfi.org) works to further the interests of natural fibres by serving as a platform for information exchange, by providing 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.

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