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How natural fiber producers ally for next Natural Fibre Connect

by **Maria Cristina Perarnau** — September 02, 2024

NFC (Natural Fibre Connect) will organising this year the fifth edition of the NFC conference. The event will be held between Biella and Prato on 16th-20th September 2024 and is the result of an alliance between leading animal origin natural fiber producers of alpaca, cashmere, mohair and wool organizations.

Involved in the project are The Schneider Group, the International Alpaca Association, Sustainable Fibre Alliance and Mohair South Africa. The project was born from a strong alliance among these natural fiber organisations willing to meet and discuss their shared sustainability goals and challenges set by 2030 as well as sharpen their commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

NFC is also supported by NGOs such as Textile Exchange, brokers, growers and processors, as well as certifying bodies and industry institutions such as Confindustria Toscana Nord.

The event's 2024 edition wants to examine the product environmental footprint and how natural animal fibers are considered in terms of impact and environmental services.

Among topics of discussion of the event will be challenges on animal welfare, resiliency, transparency, innovation and the aim to bring growers and herders closer to consumers.

Other topics on the table will be regenerative agriculture, chemical use in the industry, art, the role of natural fibers in fighting climate change, international alignment and connection to fight for more natural fibers, design, recycling and its challenges, are some of the hot topics the two-day conference will go through.

After the success of its 2023 edition, NFC has organised three distinct programs of visits also for 2024 in order that participants can experience a complete picture about the animal fiber scenario.

The program includes a mill visit program in the Biella district from 16 to 18 September and a Prato session program on 18 September. Along with them they will also hold a conference program taking place in Biella, at Città Studi Conference Center, on 19 and 20 September.

Participating the 19 September session will be, among others, Elena Schneider and Willy Gallia of The Schneider Group along with Sergio Tamborini (Ratti's CEO and Sistema Moda Italia's president), Gunter Pauli (The Blue Economy), Baptiste Carriere-Pradal (2BPolicy), Elisabeth Van Delden (Woolmark), Stephen Wiedemann (Integrity Ag Services), Dora Xu (Metabolic), Lindsay Humphreys (The Rethink Lab), Mariano Serratore (ICEA), Laura Kohler (Textile Exchange) and the Materials Matter Workshop with Laura Kohler, Bronwyn Botha and Siobhan Mombergh of Textile Exchange.

On the second day artist Claudy Jongstra will open the conference, followed by Vidheh Kadam (Textile Exchange) and Pascal Gautrand (Colectif Tricolor), speakingh about the European Wool Working Group. Then, as United Nations has declared 2024 as the International Year of Camelids, there will be the speeches of Horacio Duran (Vicuña and Guanaco) and Juan Pepper (Alpaca).

The Prato session taking place on 18 September 2024 will see the participation of Silvia Gambi and Francesco Marini, of Marini Industrie. Also on stage will be Elisa Cavasin (ZDHC), Giuseppe Bartolini (TIL) and Roberta Pecci (Confindustria Toscana Nord and Sistema Moda Italia).

A dedicated session will focus on Woolmark Recycled Wool Specification with Elisabeth van Delden (Woolmark), among others.

A series of mill visits to Biella will complete the initiative and will take place from 16 to 18 September. On the first day insiders will be able to visit Schneider Group at Pettinatura di Verrone and Tintoria di Verrone and more.

Lanificio Cerruti, Fratelli Piacenza, Burcina Park (non trovo sito ufficiale), Maglificio Maggia and Guabello will follow on the second day. On the last day Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia, Lanificio Ermenegildo Zegna, Casa Zegna and Reda will also open their doors.

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