

## Responsibly grown NZ wool blazes a new trail

In early October, UK retailer Marks & Spencer (M&S) one of the first major clothing retailers to launch a menswear range with wool certified under the global Responsible Wool Standard (RWS).

The launch reflects the increasing importance that retailers are placing on developing truly sustainable products, underpinned by ethical land management and animal welfare practices by farmers. The new range of men's blazers and waistcoats feature New Zealand lambswool, grown by RWS-accredited, Wools of New Zealand growers.

"This is wool in the 28-31 micron range, more traditionally used in the production of interior textiles. It's a big step for crossbred wool and it's tremendously exciting to see our wool moving into high end attire," said Rosstan Mazey, Chief Executive of Wools of New Zealand. "It also validates our ongoing investment in the technologies and assurance programmes that allowed this to happen."

The clothing fabric is manufactured by Abraham Moon & Sons, renowned for creating exceptionally high quality textiles out of their world class mill in Yorkshire. The menswear itself is being manufactured in Vietnam.

Steven Parsons, Brand and Business Development Manager for Wools of New Zealand in the UK, said the RWS was imagined and developed as the global standard for growing wool in 2016. "Wools of New Zealand have joined a rapidly growing number of international brands and the Textile Exchange as strong advocates for RWS as a global wool production standard, providing an assurance to consumers that the wool they are buying has been grown to the highest possible standards across farm management and animal welfare.

"M&S represent a powerful partner in that respect, as they are able to influence the value chain and change attitudes towards fibre production. There is a new reality out there for both producers and retailers and that is they need to be responsible for driving supply chains towards true sustainability."

Phil Townsend, M&S Raw Materials Specialist said: "We are very excited to be one of the first retailers to launch a range of RWS certified wool menswear pieces and are delighted to have a

played a significant role in its development along with the Textile Exchange and many other committed partners.

“Transparent sourcing shows a clear commitment to supporting progressive standards of animal welfare, grassland management and traceability across the wool sector, which we know is very important to our customers.”

Mazey said there were currently 14 grower shareholders accredited under the RWS, across both North and South Islands. “Through the launch of this new product we anticipate increased interest in our wool and RWS credentials. We expect more of our growers to become RWS certified as market demand builds.”

Rosstan Mazey

Chief Executive

Wools of New Zealand Limited

021 402 411