



## **Nation's First Washable Wool Fabrics Made with Organic Wool Introduced by Vermont Organic Fiber Company at Outdoor Retailer January 22-25, 2009**

*O-Wool president speaking on sustainability panel and new fabric included in "Project OR."*

**For Immediate Release  
January 12, 2009**

**Sandra Marquardt, 301-592-0077**  
[smarquardt@onthemarkpr.com](mailto:smarquardt@onthemarkpr.com)

**Middlebury, VT** - [Vermont Organic Fiber Company](#) (VTOF), the nation's leading organic wool provider, will introduce "O-Wool® Washable," the nation's first washable wool fabrics made with organic wool grown and certified to the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's](#) (USDA) organic standard, at the [Outdoor Retailer](#) (OR) show in Salt Lake City, UT January 22-25, 2009 (booth 255-308).

In addition, VTOF president Matthew Mole will present at OR's "**Back to America**" seminar Thursday, January 22, 2009, from 12 to 1 p.m. in the Salt Lake City Marriott Downtown, Salon D.

VTOF has also contributed its new washable wool fabrics for use in the popular "**Project OR**" event. According to Outdoor Retailer, "Project OR commissions hand-picked five design students from top design programs around the country to produce a garment prototype that is original, an innovative use of performance and eco-friendly materials, and has a practical application for the outdoor market." Winners of the competition will be announced Monday, January 25, 2008, the last day of the show.

The washable wool fabric, now available in three outdoor apparel weights, (150g/m<sup>2</sup>, 220g/m<sup>2</sup>, and 250g/m<sup>2</sup>), uses the "3e-WOOL®" process (ecological, essential, easy care) to prevent O-Wool from shrinking and "felting" during washing. The process, which meets the IWS TM 31 standards for machine washability, uses hydrogen peroxide and mechanical action instead of chlorine (which is harmful to the environment). In addition, the innovative process uses one-third of the water used by traditional chlorine-based shrinking treatments and is certified to Oeko-Tex Standard 100, which tests textile products to ensure they are free from harmful levels of more than 100 substances known to be detrimental to human health.

Furthermore, based on manufacturer testing, the process results in superior anti-pilling properties when compared to conventional wool or chlorine-treated washable wool.

"While washable wool in general is becoming more widely available, O-Wool® Washable comes from sheep raised to the USDA's organic livestock standards and is processed in a more environmentally friendly manner than any other washable wool product available today," said Matthew Mole, VTOF president. "As the market for sustainable fibers grows, more and more companies were asking us for washable wool fabrics made with organic wool, so we created a product that would have the least environmental footprint and the best quality possible."

VTOF, a Green Steps member, will also display its wide range of other knit and woven fabrics, including blanket, flannel, herringbone, interlock, jersey, melton, pile, and wool suiting, as well as 'O-Wool® by Jasco®' fabrics.

## Vermont Organic Fiber Company

Vermont Organic Fiber Company (VTOF) is the nation's leading manufacturer of fabrics, blankets and yarn made from organic wool. O-Wool yarns and fabrics are made from certified organic Merino wool spun, knit, woven, and finished at facilities in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and South Carolina. Woolen spinning in the U.S. is certified to the new [Global Organic Textile Standard](#) (GOTS) as is worsted spinning carried out with partner mills in China. GOTS addresses all post-shearing stages such as dyeing and finishing, and includes social criteria. VTOF is one of the first and few companies in the U.S. to have partner spinning mills certified to GOTS and is getting all subsequent processing phases certified to the standard. Sales of O-Wool products grew 107 percent in 2007.

Current and recent designers using O-Wool yarns and fabrics include Bahar Shahpar, Linda Loudermilk, and Diane von Furstenberg, who featured 'O-Wool® by Jasco®' fabrics on the runway at Earth Pledge's Future Fashion show in New York City in February, 2008. In addition, companies from North America to Europe and Asia that have used O-Wool include Ecobaby Organics (San Diego, CA), Fox River Mills (Osage, IA), IBEX (Woodstock, VT), J. Crew (New York, NY), Loomstate (New York, NY), Maggie's Organics (Ypsilanti, MI), Patagonia (Ventura, CA), Wildlife Works (London, UK), and Mitsukoshi Department Stores (Tokyo, Japan).

Organic wool is part of the approximately \$1.9 billion global organic fiber industry, according to the *Organic Exchange Organic Cotton Market Report 2007*. For the wool to be sold as "organic" in the United States, the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Organic Program (NOP) requires that the sheep meet its livestock standards which call for the animals to be fed organic feed and forage from the last third of gestation and be raised without the use of synthetic hormones or pesticides. In addition, organic livestock producers are diligent in ensuring they do not exceed the natural carrying capacity of the land on which their animals graze, resulting in agricultural practices that are healthy for both the animals and the environment.