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South African Mohair Industry's final statement regarding claims of animal abuse

Mohair South Africa condemns any acts of cruelty against animals, whether it be by farmers, farm workers, contracted labour or any individual that mistreats animals.

Following the release of PETA's video illustrating breaches of its guidelines and policies as well as South African National Legislation The Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962), Mohair South Africa immediately launched its own investigation into the allegations of animal abuse on South African angora goat farms. Simultaneously, and in order to ensure that a full and proper investigation was completed, Mohair South Africa engaged the services of an independent quality assurance company, SAMIC, to conduct an audit of the farms identified as having been visited by the PETA representative.

The investigations have identified that the shearing in the video footage originates from two farms. On both these farms the shearing was conducted by the same independent shearing contractor. Mohair South Africa has demanded a full report and explanation from the contractor in question as to the breaches of its guidelines apparent from the footage. The shearing contractor has also been requested to report on its disciplinary process in respect of the persons implicated in the video footage, and the measures it has undertaken to ensure the prevention of any future breaches of Mohair South Africa's guidelines and policies.

Mohair South Africa has also met with the National Council of the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (the NSPCA) in order to address the concerns arising from the video footage, the taking of action against those implicated, and to discuss the implementation of further safeguards to protect the angora goats, the wellness of which is paramount to an ethically sustainable mohair industry. We have offered the NSPCA our full cooperation as they conduct their ongoing investigation into the allegations made by PETA.

In the meantime the farms depicted in the shearing footage have been suspended from mohair auctions. They will undergo a probationary monitoring process and will be required to inform Mohair South Africa when their next shearing will take place. Mohair South Africa, along with a third-party investigator, will be present during shearing to ensure compliance with the industry's sustainable guidelines. The NSPCA will also be informed and will be welcome to send their own investigative team should they choose to do so.

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Mohair South Africa is committed to the sustainability of the mohair industry, not only in South Africa, but globally. As such it is a member of Textile Exchange, a global non-profit that works closely with its members to drive industry transformation towards better integrity, standards and responsible supply networks. Textile Exchange identifies and shares best practices regarding farming, materials, processing, traceability and product end-of-life in order to reduce the textile industry's impact on the environment.

Long before these reports surfaced Mohair South Africa implemented a comprehensive traceability system, which will allow us to track the exact origin of the mohair used in every item containing the natural fibre. To this end Mohair South Africa has allocated additional resources towards the continued assessment of angora goat farms, and encourage third-party assessments on as many farms as possible. Assessment, and obtaining a satisfactory rating will be necessary for marketing mohair, and producers' rating will be readily available and will be reflected in respect of the mohair sold at sales. This will enable every purchaser of mohair to ensure that it has been ethically produced. Should a producer not obtain a satisfactory rating following assessment, a sustainability accreditation will not be issued. This will serve to deter unethical practices in the production of mohair, and encourage self-regulation in an industry which takes pride in the safe, ethical, and sustainable production of this sustainable natural fibre.

The production of mohair supports approximately 30 000 people, many of whom are labourers living in the Karoo, a large, arid, sparsely populated semi-desert. A ban on mohair will leave many of these vulnerable people destitute, and will lead to the destruction of the mohair industry, as well as the loss of approximately 800 000 angora goats in South Africa. Mohair South Africa therefore not only has a responsibility to the 800 000 angora goats to ensure their continued safe and ethical treatment, but also to the thousands of people relying on the industry for their livelihoods.

In fulfilment of its mandate to advance the ethical production of this natural alternative to synthetic fibres, Mohair South Africa will continue the dialogue with the international clothing brands about their decision to stop using mohair, while at the same time continuing to act against any person who falls short of our standards.

Deon Saayman

Managing Director

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