

A BRAND STORY WORTH SHARING

ftc

FEELING THE SENSE  
WITH FAIR TRADE CASHMERE

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# FEELING THE SENSE WITH FAIR TRADE CASHMERE

## A BRAND STORY WORTH SHARING

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## A BRAND STORY WORTH SHARING

### TRACEABILITY IS OUR KEY TO SUSTAINABILITY

With our own cashmere goat farm and the own manufacturing facilities in northern China, we enable radical traceability along the whole vertical supply chain. Thus, the entire supply chain and therefore the sustainable development is in our hands. For the physical proof of origin and integrity of FTC® products, FTC® cooperates with ClimatePartner and OEKO-TEX®.

Our approach is continuous development in all areas of sustainability: social, economic, ecological, cultural. We take our responsibility and pursue various projects with stakeholders to think beyond the status quo and achieve common goals. We are committed to redefining social values and setting new global standards with traceability.



FTC® stands for Fair Trade Cashmere.  
The family business, founded in 2003,  
has established itself internationally as  
a specialist for cashmere knitwear in the  
premium segment.

## FASHION KNITS - WITH LOVE TO DETAIL

Annually six fashion collections (w&m) are created, with a home collection rounding off the range. All styles are completely climate neutral and certified by OEKO-TEX®. The FTC® designs are characterized by timeless classics with sophisticated knit-details and by fashion statements being all-time favorites.

## WHERE TO FIND US

For wholesale, the production is order based, which minimizes overproduction. Our showrooms and agents are interested in telling you more about it. Customers can discover a selected assortment of FTC® styles through our wholesale partners and our online store ([www.ftc-cashmere.com](http://www.ftc-cashmere.com)).



## OUR PASSION - YOUR MOMENTS

Collaborative projects with farmers, employees, and educational institutions, as well as our commitment to our **core values** **passion, carefulness, and responsibility**, have formed our base since the beginning of FTC®.

### VISION

Our vision is to be recognized worldwide for making it possible to consume fashion with a good feeling.

ftc



## OWN CASHMERE GOAT FARM, OWN MANUFACTURE - OUR POWER.



The uniqueness of FTC® comes with our own supply chain: From the cultivation of the fodder for our own cashmere goats, to the farm and all over to the whole manufacturing process to the finished fashion pieces (from combing, carding, dyeing, spinning, knitting, linking, finishing to packaging - every step is owned, managed and controlled by FTC®. Thus, we do not only have sustainability in our hearts, but also in our hands. We actually deliver on what our name promises: Fair Trade Cashmere.

Most of the cashmere comes from China, China is the land of cashmere. With its rich tradition and know-how over generations it was clear since the beginning in 2003, that FTC® wants to have an impact where the material comes from. Strong partnerships, and loyal employees enable growth and sustainable development. Furthermore the geographical distances along the supply chain up to the finished styles are very short (from Shaanxi to Hebei). Not only is our farm and manufactory located in China, but we also have fields for food cultivation and agriculture. We use local resources and traditional craft to promote cultural exchange.

## THEN AS NOW

We write history since 2003

- 2003 Foundation in Rosenheim, Germany
- 2004 Establishment of own production in China and logistics center in Europe
- 2005 Relocation of HQ to Zurich, Switzerland
- 2007 Start Farmer Protection Program and opening of Swiss international FTC® World Hope Shool (CN)
- 2009 Opening of FTC® Goat Breeding Farm in Shaanxi (CN)
- 2011 Exclusive material enhancement through innovative blend with Seacell
- 2016 Entry of the next generation with Jana and Adrian Knezovic
- 2017 Groundbreaking of New Shaanxi Goat Farm
- 2018 Installation of solar system in production facilities
- 2019 Launch of UpKnit (Upcycling for Uniqueness by FTC®)  
Conversion to green electricity in Europe  
Change to plastic-free packaging (paper-bags)
- 2020 Physical proof of the value chain by Haelixa
- 2021 Climate neutral products with ClimatePartner  
STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® certification  
Brand Collaboration with Calida  
Achievement of zero-waste production
- 2022 MADE IN GREEN by OEKO-TEX® certification



## PREMIUM CASHMERE FASHION



## WHAT IS CASHMERE

### Characteristics & Quality Indicators

The word “cashmere” is associated with soft, expensive textiles. The valuable fiber is harvested exclusively from cashmere goats, which were originally found in the high Himalayas (prior to their spread in other regions). To combat the rough living conditions of the mountains, over centuries the goats developed a double fleece. It consists of an outer coat (coarser hair) and a fine undercoat. In summer the two coats protect the animals from dust and sun and in the frosty winter it works as an insulator. Today, the large majority of cashmere comes from the heights in China.

**Cashmere is harvested only once a year** when the goats are shedding between winter and summer. The fine hair loosens, which makes it easy being combed out by hand. During this process, an initial sorting by hand is made (dividing hair by color and texture).

Traditionally combing by hand is the way to collect the fine hair. This process is extremely time consuming and needs to be done by experienced farmers to ensure animal welfare. Still, the process can be stressful for the goats, which is why we started trials to shear the cashmere goats.

Shearing would be much quicker and with the right machines and regulations, the animals won't get hurt. If the material quality level can be held with the shearing method could potentially be the process of the future.

After the combing and sorting by hand, the material has to be carded, where only the fine hair remains, and the coarse hair is sorted out. This results in the precious raw material - cashmere.

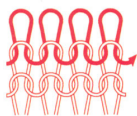
**The selection through carding also takes quality into account: The decisive factors are length and fineness.** The longer the fibers, the finer the spun yarn as well as the final knit. The fineness of the fibers is extremely important, only raw material of a diameter that does not exceed 0.019 millimeters can be called cashmere. Only in this way the unique cashmere touch and the high quality of this rare material can be safeguarded worldwide.

Under these rigorous combing and selection standards, 1.2 kilograms of combed fibers per goat will usually yield 300–400 grams of final FTC® raw material. **Cashmere is typically characterized by comfort and unique softness.**

## PLY AND GAUGE (GG)

But before the raw material can be turned into such exemplary products, it must be spun into yarn. The base for all FTC® knits is a high-quality 2ply thread. By multiplying this thread thickness and gauge (for simplicity:  $gg = \text{„mesh size“}$ ) vary. Thick, multi-ply knits require a higher amount of material. These products are often more expensive. However, that does not imply that fine cashmere products are necessarily cheaper. Very thin and complicated yarns do not only require proficiency in spinning, but also tear easily during production and thus require more delicate, time-consuming processing.

The gauge number is an indication of how many needles fit into one inch – this is the indication of how big or how small the stitches are. Depending on the gg and the base thread there is a specific range of ply. E.g. for 12 gg, using our 2ply-base yarn, we can only knit with 1ply.



1 inch  
(here with 4 needles)



12gg: Very common (basic) thickness - knitted with 1ply yarn of the 2ply base thread. FTC® uses this gg for its basic range and many trans-seasonal styles.



5gg: Courser knit, that varies in thickness and density. Knitting it with 4ply yarn (4x2ply base thread) for example can be used for a close, heavy structure. Whereas knitting it with 2ply (2x2ply base thread) results in a more open, loose structure.

**Conclusion:** It is the raw material and further processing that makes the difference. The ply of the knit style doesn't indicate quality. Only the ply of the base thread does.

## FTC® IS MORE THAN CASHMERE

Technical innovation and sustainability drive the development of our product lines to create unique collections.



### THE POWER OF NATURE: SEACELL-CASHMERE

With its soft feel and comfort-tempering properties, cashmere is a true feel-good product. FTC® wanted these properties to be enhanced even more. With additional research and aiming for innovation we came up with the idea to combine our precious cashmere with a regenerative, plant-based fiber: Seacell.

Seacell is an innovative, patented fiber derived from Lyocell and Seaweed. In the first step the mineral-rich brown algae are dried, crushed and then ground into a fine powder in a process with closed solvent circuits. In the second step the fine algae powder is then added to a cellulose mass and processed into the biodegradable Seacell fiber.

The FTC® exclusive Seacell-Cashmere blend has additional benefits. Thanks to Seacell the blend gives a special caring effect on the skin which is highly beneficial for people with sensitive skin. Because of the natural skin moisture, the vital substances from the algae are released when the Seacell-Cashmere garments are worn.



### ORGANIC COTTON / CASHMERE

Another blend that FTC® offers is Organic Cotton / Cashmere. High quality knitwear even in summer for a unique and cooling feeling. The styles are made of 70% Organic Cotton and 30% Cashmere.



## UPKNIT - UPCYCLING FOR UNIQUENESS

Our upcycling collection (UpKnit - Upcycling for Uniqueness by FTC®) is produced with our own pioneering technology. To reduce material waste as much as possible, residual yarns from the production are elaborately recycled with our innovative technology. This creates different color variations and makes each item from our Upcycle line unique. Thanks to UpKnit we reached a zero-waste production.

## PURE NATURE

Our Natural Yarn line consists of 100% undyed and unbleached cashmere. The completely biodegradable styles are available in the colors Natural Cream, Natural Sand and Natural Taupe.

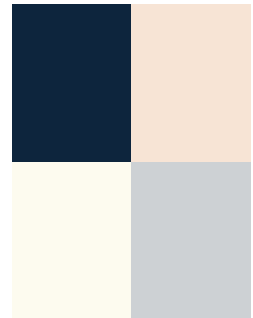


## BABY CASHMERE

Baby cashmere is obtained exclusively from the underfur of young cashmere goats aged from six to approx. 18 months. For this reason, the availability of this special material is extremely limited. The softness and lightness of Baby Cashmere are incomparable.

## THE T BY FTC®

FTC® offers a trans-seasonal, permanent collection of T-Shirts. All-time-favorites with the perfect fit - „The T“ for every occasion, is offered in a range of basic colors and some additional seasonal colors. Those jersey styles are made of 70% Organic Cotton / 20% Seacell / 10% Smartcel, with our cooperation partner based in Portugal.





## WE DO CARE

We do accept, take, and live responsibility

FTC® embraces social as well as environmental and economic challenges. We want to create valuable relationships and improve regional living conditions.

As a result, over the years strong partnerships, and a deep understanding for people's needs in the provinces Shaanxi and Hebei have been developed. These close and long-lasting relationships help to ensure the outstanding quality of FTC®'s offer. Proper breeding of goats, use of local natural resources (such as rammed earth), expert dyeing and processing and many more factors are crucial to producing high-quality fashion.



Rammed earth as construction material with partner Lehmag AG



FTC® farmer since the beginning



CEO Andreas Knezovic with two employees in FTC® goat breeding farm (Shaanxi, CN)



Brand-Collaboration with Calida (Jana Knezovic & Janine Weiz-Bühler)



Administration department in Hebei FTC® Manufacture for the Fashion Revolution Week 2022

## OUR COOPERATIONS & CERTIFICATES

We see certificates as opportunities, for more traceability and transparency. Certificates open ways for improvement but also offer a credible guidance for partners and customers. Due to the change in standards our certificates can also be adapted. Have a look at the recent changes online.



### OEKO-TEX®

Since 2021 all FTC® styles are STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX® certified. We directly wanted to level-up and proceeded with the STeP by OEKO-TEX® to then being certified with the MADE IN GREEN BY OEKO-TEX® from mid 2022.



### ClimatePartner

The collaboration with ClimatePartner has enabled an effective tracking and measurements of all our emissions along our own supply chain. This partnership supports us in reducing our CO<sup>2</sup>e since 2021. Furthermore, we support projects (e.g. for solar-energy and deforestation) in China through our CO<sup>2</sup>e offsetting. Thus, all FTC® styles are climate neutral.



### HAELIXA

For the physical proof of origin and integrity of FTC products, FTC® cooperates with Haelixa - A Swiss innovation company, which enables a physical proof of origin with a liquid DNA marker.



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

by setting new standards for the industry

### IT ALL STARTS WITH THE CASHMERE GOATS

Since 2008 the **FTC® Goat Breeding Farm & the Farmer Protection Program** guarantee fair market prices for farmers, as well as labor protection and support. FTC® has an exclusive contract with the farmers for the purchase of the cashmere raw material at market prices plus a premium.



### NEW CASHMERE GOAT FARM

With our own Cashmere Goat Farm, we carry a pioneering role – in terms of traceability and quality. The conditions and breeding processes are enhanced and improved. **The New Shaanxi Goat Farm** broke ground in winter 2017 and currently houses around 30'000 of its own Cashmere goats. It is run in cooperation with the Agricultural University of Yulin (Shaanxi).

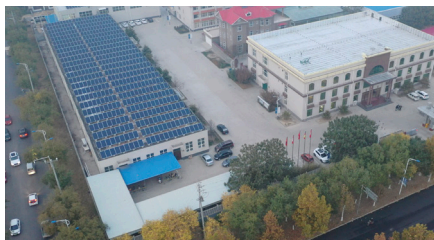
With this partner, FTC® can guarantee animal welfare and breeding on site. Strict animal welfare rules apply, and modern, sustainable construction methods are used throughout the site (by building with rammed earth). In this way, FTC® ensures that the available resources are used optimally and that people, animals and the environment are respected.



## A RESPONSIBLE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES



A water purification plant ensures that, after the dyeing process, only clean wastewater flows into the local water system.



We are also a regional pioneer with solar panels on the roof of our plant and therefore are shaping our electricity mix with renewable energies.

## SOCIAL PROJECTS



The **Swiss International FTC World Hope School** provided primary education for farmers' children in the region of Shaanxi. Monetary contributions from FTC® continue to flow into the education system.

## PLASTIC-FREE PACKAGING



Our products are packed plastic-free, with FSC certified craft paper, which is easily recyclable and comes from renewable resources.

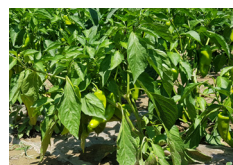
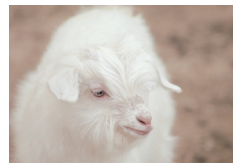
## OUR VALUE CHAIN IN DETAIL

### Own Goat Farm, Own Manufacture - Our Power

#### THE FTC® CASHMERE GOATS

Since the very beginning of FTC®, we had our own CASHMERE BREEDING FARM and additionally have closely been working with independent farmers. Based on the FTC® Farmer Protection Program, FTC® warrants them the high standard of animal welfare as well as the purchase of raw material at market-driven prices.

A milestone was reached 2017 with the opening of our second own farm: FTC® NEW SHAANXI GOAT FARM with approximately 30'000 goats. This enables even greater understanding and closer relationships with local employees. To obtain the best cashmere material, the animals must be healthy and well. In addition to animal welfare, which is ensured by set conditions and treatment-rules for the farmers and monthly medical examinations, a major factor is the nutrition. For this purpose, FTC® grows alfalfa and corn, which are then processed into animal feeding capsules. The fields for the fodder-crops are in close proximity to the cashmere goat farm.



#### COMBING IN SPRING

Cashmere harvesting takes place annually between April and June. The fine underhair of the goats is combed out and pre-sorted according to different quality categories. The combed-out undercoat forms the basis for the cashmere material. Approximately 300-400 grams of final raw material are obtained from one goat per year. The youngest goats give the particularly fine and exclusive baby cashmere.



#### WASHING, SORTING, CARDING

The raw material is transported to the FTC® manufactory in the nearby province of Hebei (CN), where the further process steps take place. After washing the first raw material and after carding (machine combing of the first raw material) 8 to 12 times, the final raw material is ready for further proceeding. The fineness and the length of the hair determine the quality of cashmere. These steps happen in the company's facilities as well. The electricity used for this is partly generated by the solar panels on the plants' roof.



## DYEING

The flake dyeing is an essential part for the high quality. The raw material is dyed exclusively with STANDARD 100 BY OEKO-TEX® certified dyes in the company's own dyeing plant. The water used is purified with a water treatment plant before being reintroduced into the water network. We are currently in a testing phase for natural colorants to test a broader color spectrum and variations.



## SPINNING

The final cashmere dyed material is spun in a complex spinning process, which takes also place in our plant in Hebei.



## KNITTING & LINKING

FTC® styles are knitted fully-fashioned on the modern flat knitting machines. Particularly time-consuming is the manual work of the subsequent linking, with which the knitted pieces are joined together. By not cutting and sewing the garments, we already achieved minimum production waste. Thanks to our UpKnit collection, we've reached a zero-waste production, where the yarn leftovers from the knitting process are upcycled into colorful and unique styles.



## FINISHING, PACKAGING, DELIVERY

Each and every style is checked and finished by washing and ironing. Our products are packed with FSC® certified paper (which is easily recyclable) and then delivered to our customers.



## WHOLESALE AND ONLINE RETAIL

FTC® style can then be found spreaded all over the world, in our online shop ([www.ftc-cashmere.com](http://www.ftc-cashmere.com)) and in selected premium and luxury concept and department stores.



## THE FAMILY BEHIND FTC®



As founder and CEO of FTC, Andreas Knezovic is largely responsible for the production in China, where he is dearly known as „Lao Hu” – big tiger. This term of respect signifies leadership qualities, courage, and success. His open, ambitious, and generous manner enabled Andreas Knezovic to find reliable, strong partners in China. Without these partnerships, business activities in China would have been impossible.

With creativity and intelligence his wife Jutta Knezovic complemented FTC® as a strong partner since the company foundation back in 2003. She has been leading the European business and acting as COO. With her, and the brands signature knits, FTC® could be established as a premium fashion brand.

The second generation is formed by Jana and Adrian Knezovic, young and talented spirits who will lead the brand into the future. Jana is going to follow the footsteps of her mother Jutta Knezovic, by taking over the role of Head of Product - whereas Adrian is responsible for the business overseas and increasingly involved in the strategic partnerships in China.



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