



Dalena White

**Dalena White, Speaker, Make the Label Count initiative, and Secretary General, International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO), Brussels, Belgium**

Ms White, are there initial signs that the work of Make the Label Count could start to bear fruit? What measures are you taking?

**MAKE THE LABEL COUNT**

Since its foundation in 2021, the Make the Label Count initiative has been working intensively to highlight the importance of natural fibres such as cotton and wool in EU legislation on the circular economy. Despite important successes, such as the provisional rejection of the PEF method in the Green Claims Directive by Parliament and the Commission, nothing has yet been finally decided. In the current dialogue, PEF assessments, which systematically detract from the benefits of natural fibres, could be reintroduced. The problem: PEF is based on lifecycle analyses that favour synthetic fibres by taking insufficient account of their short lifespan

and microplastic impact, while natural fibres such as cotton and wool are unjustifiably rated lower.

PEF has already been mentioned in the context of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR). There is a risk here that future ecodesign criteria will be based on an unsuitable assessment method. We are working to prevent this by involving experts in the relevant committees and convincing political decision-makers.

The coming months will be decisive: we are stepping up our efforts to ensure that natural fibres are fairly valued and promoted in the long term. However, the road ahead remains rocky and we must not let up in our efforts to continue championing these key issues.



**I like  
cotton  
stadlander** gmbh





**Prof Dr Ing Stefan Schlichter,**  
Professor of Mechanical and  
Process Engineering, Technical  
University of Applied Sciences  
Augsburg, Germany

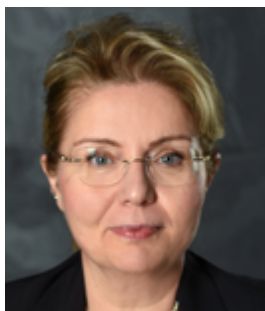
Professor Schlichter, what do you consider to be the most urgent steps that need to be taken to transform the textile industry into a circular economy?

Professor Dr Stefan Schlichter

The need for a circular textile economy is becoming increasingly urgent, as the linear textile economy is still the predominant model of the textile value chain. The incredibly poor balance between the production and use of textiles in terms of carbon footprint, consumption of resources and the use of environmentally harmful substances is increasing the pressure to act.

Looking at the entire textile value chain from used textile through to new marketable product is the key to creating marketable concepts that have a chance in reality. Focusing on product creation brings us closer to products that focus on fulfilling the holy trinity of technical, economic and ecological targets.

Incorporating the utilisation phase is the next logical step to really closing the loop. As part of the DATI pilot project Circular Textiles (CirTex) at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, an open innovation community with interested stakeholders from all areas of the circular economy is now investigating and integrating usage behaviour in more detail.



**Dr Müge Ekizoglu, General  
Manager, Izmir Commodity  
Exchange Laboratory R&D and  
Consultancy Services Inc.  
(Izladaş), Izmir, Türkiye**

Ms Ekizoglu, how is Turkish cotton quality affected by the recent climatic changes?

Dr Müge Ekizoglu

We have been working on this issue for a long time. We have an important database on the physical properties of Turkish cotton fibers. We are investigating the relationship between the climatic data of cotton-producing regions and the results of analyses (800,000 samples) conducted over the last ten years by our laboratories operating in different cotton production areas of Türkiye. We examine the meteorological data from our cotton-producing regions – such as temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind, etc. – based on the various growth stages of cotton.

According to the results we obtained, environmental factors such as temperature and humidity lead to significant differences in fiber quality in certain cotton-producing regions.

During the period from flowering to boll formation, high daily average temperatures contribute to higher strength values, while in some regions, they limit fiber length. Additionally, micronaire values are significantly affected by temperature and humidity conditions.

It is important to assess all climatic data (temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind) on a regional basis when evaluating cotton production areas. Our research on planning production conditions in anticipation of potential temperature increases in the coming years is ongoing.



**Roland Stelzer, Managing Director,  
Gebr. Elmer & Zweifel GmbH & Co.  
KG, Bempflingen, Germany**

Mr Stelzer, you recently presented a comprehensive CO<sub>2</sub> and energy analysis for 460 different fabrics from your company for the first time. What is so special about your approach?

Roland Stelzer

This analysis, which had a long lead time and took into account all the individual steps in detail, was initially carried out by Cotonea itself with the aim of being transparent and providing facts. The Cotonea production chain is at a very high ecological level. When other brands follow suit with similar data, we will be able to see this.

For now, our data is important information for the EU, which wants to use PEF (Product Environmental Footprint) to categorise cotton textiles as bad across the board. Cotonea even offers a number of fabrics that are CO<sub>2</sub> sinks! Standardised PEF information, which sets different system limits for different fibres, does not provide any information for consumers or the environment. What is also not taken into account in the discussion is that a longer lifespan can result in higher energy consumption in production.

With this transparency, Cotonea wants to make a positive statement in favour of cotton and especially organic cotton.

