

37. International Cotton Conference Bremen Successful Conference Attracts Around 400 Guests

Bremen, 02 April 2024: Around 400 participants from almost 40 countries attended the 37th International Cotton Conference Bremen from March 20 to 22. On site and online, guests were able to attend eleven sessions with almost 70 speakers and find out about the latest research findings and innovative practical applications in the cotton industry.



This year, the Bremen Parliament served as venue for the International Cotton Conference Bremen for the first time.



Jean Paul Haessig, President of the Bremen Cotton Exchange, welcomes the participants.

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In the bright ballroom of the building with a view of the historic ensemble of Bremen’s market square, **the President of the Bremen Parliament, Antje Grotheer**, welcomed the international participants at the start of the conference.

„For a few days, Bremen was once again the centre of the cotton world. Presentations at a high professional level, exciting discussions and in-depth insights into industry-wide progress once again made it clear that the Bremen conference is an essential module for exchange within the cotton community. This was demonstrated by the lively debates surrounding the current legislative proposals with regard to sustainability and transparency with consequences for the entire industry,“ said **Jean-Paul Haessig, President of the Bremen Cotton Exchange**.

„The joint organization of the International Cotton Conference by the Bremen Fibre Institute and the Bremen Cotton Exchange is an excellent example of how science and practice can complement and benefit from each other. The diverse and top-class conference programme as well as the many expert meetings on the fringes of the conference speak a clear language again this year,“ added **Prof Dr Axel Herrmann for the Faserinstitut Bremen (FIBRE)**.



Prof Dr Axel Herrmann, Director and CEO Faserinstitut Bremen e. V. (FIBRE)



Highlights of the conference: the keynotes

The keynote sessions that opened the day were among the highlights. **Colin Iles, Executive Manager Cotton & Sugar at Viterra**, got the participants in the right mood with his enlightening and entertaining overview of current developments on the commodity markets and their impact on cotton.



Colin Iles



Veronica Bates Kassatly

Analyst Veronica Bates Kassatly provided plenty of material for discussion by focusing on the upcoming legislative regulations and their serious consequences for the entire industry. This was supplemented by practical recommendations from **Commerzbank** representatives **Manuel Höchemer** and **Lennert van Mens**. They showed how companies in the European Union can navigate new regulations on sustainability reporting.



The keynotes on Thursday as well offered a select mix of inspiring insights and exciting facts from the world of cotton and beyond. **Nicolas Rubio** reported on his experience in European politics in his role as **Agricultural Counsellor at the United States Embassy in Berlin**. **Hubertus Lohner, Airbus Operations in Bremen** and Head of the ECOMAT Technology Centre, presented ways in which the use of natural fibres can contribute to the decarbonization of the mobility sector - especially in aircraft construction.

Panel discussion with focus on Vietnam

Under the headline ‚Region in Focus‘, the session focusing on the Vietnamese cotton and textile industry highlighted the dynamic industry in the Asian country. Thuy Vi Nguyen from the Vietnamese Cotton and Spinning Association VCOSA, Yen Tracy Mai, President and CEO Long Van Yarn Ltd and Graham Soley, USDA analyst, paved



V.l.t.r.: Terry Townsend (Session Chair), Yen Tracy Mai, Thuy Vi Nguyen und Graham Soley

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the way for a lively discussion among the representatives and experts of the Vietnamese textile industry.

Sustainability as a cross-cutting issue

The topic of sustainability is now interwoven with the various areas in the supply chain, so that it no longer stands out as a single topic, but rather must be considered everywhere as a cross-cutting issue. As a result, practically all sessions on topics along the cotton supply chain included aspects of the now so broadly diversified area of sustainability.

The research work of Filipe Natalio, for example, with the aim of understanding the underlying mechanisms of natural organisms in order to produce biological materials such as cotton with special sustainable properties, deserves special mention. But there were also exciting presentations with intensive discussions on other sustainability-related keywords. These included, for example, the presentations 'Environmental impact of cotton cultivation systems' by Jens Soth, Helvetas, and 'Textiles on the way to a circular economy' by Stefan Schlichter, Augsburg University of Applied Sciences. The conference also addressed issues relating to traceability and transparency as well as the impact of climate change and fair incomes on the lives of cotton farmers.

Focus on recycling

The topic of recycling played a special role during this conference. This session which demonstrated exemplary cooperation between research and practice, focused on the quality of cotton fibres in the recycling process. During the discussion, it became clear what opportunities, but also challenges, exist in the recycling of this natural fibre.





Session ‚Recycling‘ in the Tower Room of the Bremen Cotton Exchange

The topic of recycling was also on the agenda of the Spinning & Textile Seminar in the run-up to the conference. The four organizers, the Bremen Cotton Exchange, the Bremen Fibre Institute (FIBRE), the International Textile Manufacturers’ Federation (ITMF) and the German Industrial Association for Yarns and Textiles (IVGT), had once again invited participants on Tuesday. Under the title ‚Use and challenges of fibres in textile recycling systems‘, speakers from the textile industry shed light on the recycling value chain from the sorting of used clothing to the new product from a practical perspective.

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Conference still accessible online for participants

All sessions of the conference were recorded and are available on the talque platform. Every participant of the conference has been given access and can use the platform to look up missed sessions and contact speakers or participants.

The presentations will soon be available on the Bremen Cotton Exchange website.

News and programme details are still available on the conference website: www.cotton-conference-bremen.de

Find more photos of the event on this website:

<https://baumwollboerse.de/en/competencies/international-cotton-conference/photos/>

The 38th International Cotton Conference Bremen will take place in 2026. The date is yet to be announced.

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About the Bremen Cotton Exchange

- Founded in 1872 to strengthen the interests of the cotton trade and consumption in Germany, the Bremen Cotton Exchange has now been in the cotton business for more than 150 years. As an international court of arbitration, the Bremen Cotton Exchange always stands for neutrality.
- We offer various services to our members. Clear and neutral data and analyses are a part of this.
- As the ICA Bremen, together with the International Cotton Association in Liverpool and in cooperation with the Fibre Institute Bremen, we provide the International Quality Testing and Research Centre in Bremen. The Hanseatic city has now become the international centre for cotton testing and research, quality training and certification.
- We represent our members in all the important international bodies in the cotton world.

About the Fibre Institute Bremen e. V. (FIBRE)

- In its more than 60-years history, the Institute has developed from a cotton testing laboratory into a successful research institute in the fields of future-oriented fibres, technical textiles and fibre composites at the University of Bremen. It deals with basic scientific and application-oriented questions along the entire process chain from fibre production to the manufacturing of fibre composite components and more for the aircraft industry.
- FIBRE’s central international importance in cotton is shown by its work on the international harmonisation of cotton testing [e.g., round tests in cooperation with the ICAC and USDA-AMS], its work in central committees [ICAC Committee on Standardised Instrument Testing of Cotton (CSITC), ITMF Cotton Testing.

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