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Wool and fibre industry in New Zealand

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Overview

New Zealand's distinctive environment and farming practices have enabled wool growers to develop a range of unique systems that meet a wide variety of end-user demands.

Fibres range from strong wool (more than 32 micron in diameter) primarily used for premium carpets and rugs, to some of the finest wool in the world.

New Zealand wool is highly valued for its whiteness – contributing to rich and vibrant colour – uniformity, soundness, and relative freedom from dark fibres and vegetable matter contamination.

These qualities translate into carpets, interior textiles, and bedding and apparel products that exploit wool's natural functionality and properties to produce stunning aesthetic and performance characteristics. Fine Merino wool is used in a range of market segments from active outdoor wear to designer fashion.

Alongside product quality, New Zealand has developed an international reputation for innovation in marketing, new product development and manufacturing processes.

It also has the most efficient scouring industry in the world and exports scouring technology to other wool-producing and processing countries.

Fast facts

- New Zealand produces 14 percent of the world's wool and exports 89 percent of its wool production to over 50 countries.
- The leading importing countries for New Zealand wool in 2007/2008 were Australia, China, Italy, United Kingdom, India, the United States, Belgium, and Germany.



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- New Zealand fibres are used in a wide range of final products including floor coverings, bedding, and luxury and outdoor apparel.
- New Zealand produces about 45 percent of the world's international trade in carpet wool, which is exported both as fibre, as wool carpet yarn and as carpet.
- New Zealand is the world's major supplier of strong wool for interior textile uses.
- Wool bedding has been shown to promote a deeper, more restful sleep and mid-micron (24-28 micron) wool is well suited to bedding products.
- The soft-next-to-skin quality of Merino fibre makes it suitable for hosiery, luxury suiting fabrics, outdoor apparel and fashion products, and infant and childrenswear.

International innovations

Maxwellrodgers

Growing numbers of luxury hotels around the world are featuring Maxwellrodgers' natural fibre bed throws as signature items in their rooms. Among others, The Venetian in Las Vegas, the Royal Hawaiian on Waikiki and the Fairmont Le Chateau Montebello in Quebec have all selected the New Zealand bedthrows. The throws are woven from pure New Zealand Merino wool and are often customised to meet the needs of each individual client.

Wools of New Zealand

Wools of New Zealand provides specialist products and professional services to the international wool carpet value chain. It is a premium brand identifying products (mainly carpets/rugs) that meet demanding quality standards. It is an established identity used by over 150 companies globally. Its brand values encompass premium quality, innovation, exclusivity and environmental sustainability.

The New Zealand Merino Company

The New Zealand Merino Company (NZM) has developed Zque, a brand which combines the pure, natural performance of New Zealand Merino with the first traceable Merino fibre value chain. This allows brands to link back to the farms that supplied their fibre. The brand also ensures best practice in animal health and welfare, environmental care and social sustainability.

WoolYarns

WoolYarns has developed extensively refined merino possum yarns. The company is custom producing yarns to the specific requirements of a number of leading European fashion houses including Hermes, Armani and Chanel. The ultra-refined New Zealand yarns allow for the production of garments that are finer and lighter than ever before.



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[AgResearch](#)

AgResearch provides an increasingly wide range of textile capabilities. Its new lightweight, 100 percent wool fabric is the first wool textile in the world that is fully machine washable without chemical treatment. The organisation is also active in the environmental aspects of textile production and is working on recycling solutions and reducing environmental impact. AgResearch has also developed new solutions in areas such as insect-resistant treatments and dyeing technology.

[The Escorial Company Ltd](#)

Specialist fibre marketing organisation The Escorial Company Ltd has recently signed an agreement with the United States specialist clothing company Brooks Brothers for their SaxXon brand range of men's jerseys and vests. The United States group will market SaxXon internationally through its network of stores worldwide.

[New Zealand Wool Services International](#)

Glacial™ Wool is a clean, bright New Zealand wool developed through a patented scouring process. Glacial wool is for high-end fashion carpets and rugs where achieving subtle pastel shades and vibrant bright colours is in demand. Glacial is available exclusively through New Zealand Wool Services International.

International collaborations

[Wools of New Zealand](#)

Wools of New Zealand (WNZ) has a strategic alliance with Printos (part of Videojet Technologies), makers of sophisticated digital printing heads. WNZ teamed up with Printos to introduce this technology to wool carpet manufacturers who have struggled to achieve high quality printed wool carpets through traditional printing technology. This breakthrough technology ensures the inks penetrate deeply into the surface pile giving rich, deep colour previously not achievable.

Sustainability achievements

[Untouched World](#)

Untouched World™ was the first fashion company in the world to be given permission by UNESCO to carry the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN DESD) logo on its labelling. Over 95 percent of the company's products are made in New Zealand and Untouched World™ has an ethical manufacturing policy for all of its manufacturers. It currently uses 100 percent certified organic Merino, 100 percent certified organic cotton and denim, and sustainably-sourced bamboo.

[Icebreaker](#)

Each Icebreaker Merino garment carries a unique Baacode, which allows customers to trace the origins of their garment from the living conditions of the merino sheep to the production process.

This information was prepared by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. Visit newzealand.com/business for more information about New Zealand and its export industries.



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[The New Zealand Merino Company](#)

Over the past 12 years The New Zealand Merino Company (NZM) has rejuvenated the global Merino industry, creating a model that offers a sustainable future and is seen as a benchmark by other industries. NZM partners with companies who are committed to sustainability. Their innovative forward contract model not only links brands that use Merino fibre with the growers that produce it but also establishes long term contracts at prices that are sustainable for all supply chain partners.

[WoolYarns](#)

WoolYarns produces organic and "eco label" yarns to the Environmental Choice New Zealand standard.

Industry contacts

[Meat and Wool New Zealand](#)

Meat and Wool New Zealand is a farmer-funded representative organisation formed to contribute to increasing the global competitiveness of New Zealand meat and wool farmers and industries.

[The New Zealand Merino Company](#)

The New Zealand Merino Company (NZM) combines the production of New Zealand's merino growers with considerable marketing, research and innovation, and supply chain expertise to drive demand for wool and enhance the premium positioning of the world's leading apparel brands. NZM is a joint venture wool services company owned by New Zealand Merino growers and PGG Wrightson Ltd, New Zealand's largest agribusiness.

[Wools of New Zealand](#)

Wools of New Zealand provides specialist products and professional services to the international wool carpet value chain.

[Textiles New Zealand](#)

Textiles New Zealand works with textiles, carpet, footwear and apparel companies to build a sustainable industry competing in the international marketplace.

[AgResearch](#)

AgResearch is a pastoral sector research and development organisation. In the contract textiles sector it has particular expertise in carpets and wool-based textiles.

[New Zealand Trade and Enterprise](#)

New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) is the New Zealand government's economic development agency and works with the wool and fibre industries to build up its capability and increase its international connections.



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Investment New Zealand

A specialist unit within NZTE, Investment New Zealand is New Zealand's investment promotion agency and assists corporate investors to relocate their businesses to New Zealand, establish greenfield operations, and invest and work with New Zealand companies. It also matches strategic sectors like wool and fibre to international investors to help fill gaps in New Zealand's value chain.