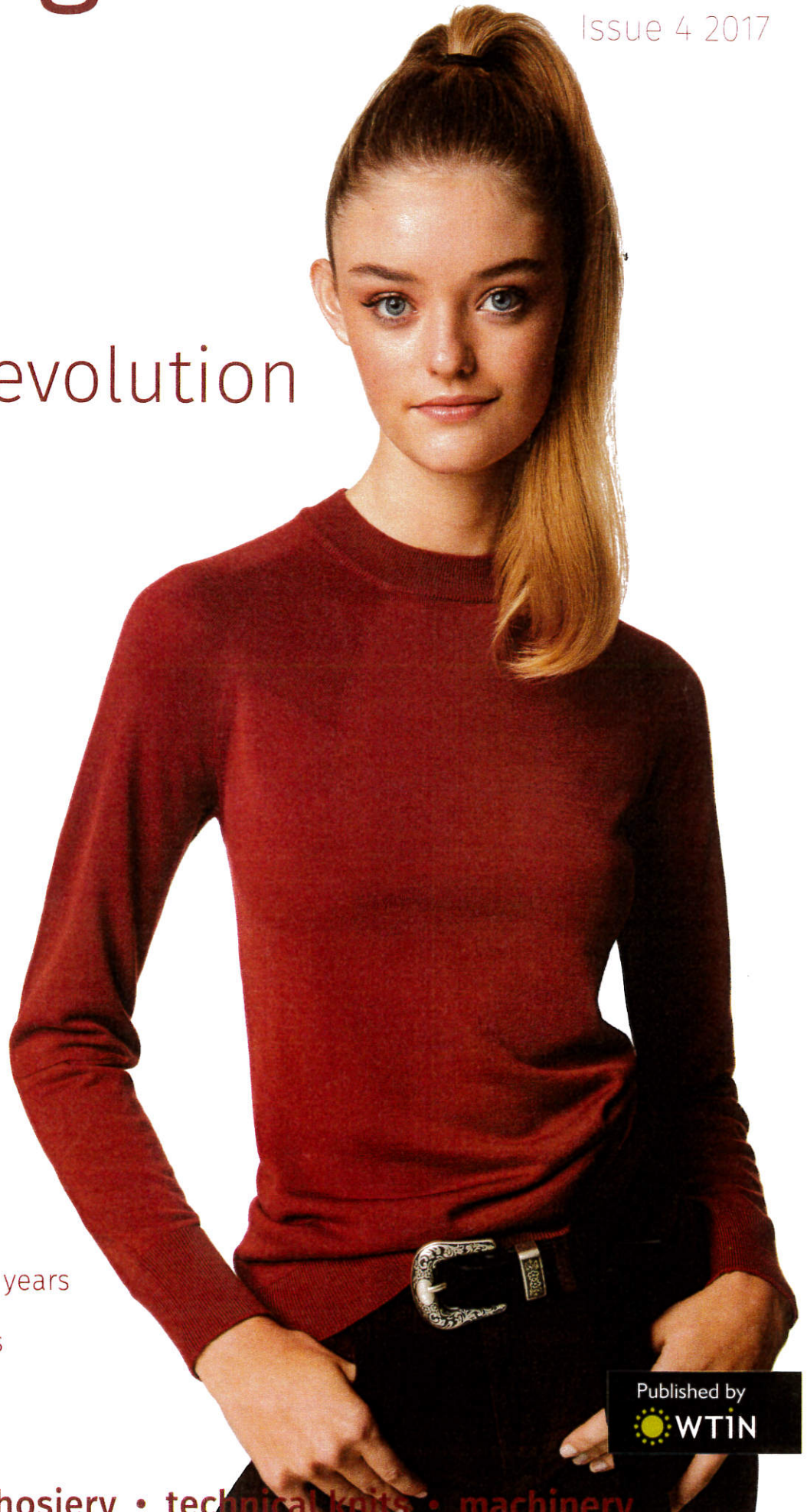


Fashion revolution

New era at Benetton



The technology behind
DEN/IM concept

Pitti Filati report

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Knitted composites focus

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Australian wool production forecast to climb 4.3%

The Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee (AWPFC) has projected that Australian shorn wool production in the 2016/17 season will reach 339 million kg greasy, up 4.3% on 2015/16.

AWPFC said that the increase is largely the result of excellent seasonal conditions in many areas, resulting in higher fleece weights. The strong wool market conditions also appear to be encouraging producers to retain sheep so sheep shorn

levels are also expected to be higher.

The Committee's first forecast of shorn wool production for the coming 2017/18 season is for production to be 340 mkg greasy. This is a 0.4% increase on the 2016/17 forecast, reflecting small increases in the number of sheep shorn and similar average wool cuts per head. It assumes normal seasonal conditions through Autumn and into 2017/18.

The Committee noted that for the 2016/17 season to March, Australian Wool

Testing Authority (AWTA) test data showed a significant increase in the weight of wool tested between 20 and 24 microns and declines in the volumes of 17 and 18 micron wool.

It said that this probably mainly reflects the excellent seasonal conditions. There has also been a significant fall in the volume of 26 to 30 micron wool. The mean fibre diameter for Australia to March was 21 microns, the same as in 2015/16.

New Zealand Merino wool supply boost

By **Keith Nuthall**

A New Zealand government initiative designed to improve the health of the country's key Merino wool sheep breed is seeing success and could boost global supplies of this key knitwear input, according to the New Zealand Merino Company (NZM).

It has been working with the NZ ministry for primary industries within an NZ Sheep Industry Transformation Project. A key goal is reducing footrot disease, which limits Merinos that can be grazed on lush lowland pasture. A project progeny test has enabled project

scientists to determine the genetic resistance of rams to footrot, helping breed sheep of the disease.

If they can live healthily in lowland regions, NZ Merino populations could grow from 2 million to 10 million, said the NZM.

Rubberflex and DeSales in latex rubber thread partnership

Rubberflex Sdn. Bhd. of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and DeSales Trading Company of Burlington, North Carolina, USA have begun a partnership in the distribution of 100% latex rubber thread in the US.

Amy Wong, international sales coordinator at Rubberflex, said: "DeSales offers an excellent channel for our products to reach the elastic narrow fabric, braided rope and related market segments in the Eastern half of the United States. Even some of our container load customers use DeSales as a back-up to maintain a consistent inventory."

DeSales carries a wide range of gauges and end counts, and the company says that specialty gauges & end counts are stocked on request. "Customers can source from DeSales in pallet load quantities, therefore offering the convenience of prompt deliveries in less than container load orders," it said.

Rubberflex, founded in 1986, is currently the world's largest producer of 100% natural latex rubber thread.

DeSales Trading Company, established in 1969, has been a distributor of stock-lot yarns and over time has added first quality yarns to its product mix.

Michael Murray, vice-president at DeSales, said: "The addition of 100% latex rubber thread from Rubberflex is a natural progression in our line of products we offer to market segments we already service."

He added: "The product mix Rubberflex offers – 20 gauge to 110 gauge rubber, silicone & talcum finishes in black & white – presents an opportunity for our customers to source their yarns and rubber thread needs from one central location in the heart of the textile business in the United States – Burlington, North Carolina."