

PRESS INFORMATION

Fjällräven Wool





FROM MERINO TO BRATTLANDS, RECOVERED TO RECYCLED

Fjällräven explains its use of wool

RENEWABLE AND BIODEGRADABLE. Durable yet soft to the touch. Warming when it's cold, pleasantly cooling when the weather is warm. Odour resistant while effectively wicking away moisture. Wool is a great material and it's no wonder *Fjällräven* is using it throughout their product range.

The use of wool is nothing new for Fjällräven. Natural materials have always been the preferred choice when

developing its products. What is changing, however, is the type and application of wool. Fjällräven is constantly expanding its use of recycled wool, traceable wool as well as recovered wool while continuing its use of Swedish wool. All this is to help Fjällräven meet its goal of being the most sustainable brand in the outdoor industry.

Why wool?

Wool is a highly sophisticated natural fibre and arguably one of nature's most functional materials:



Warming when it's cold, pleasantly cooling when the weather is warm



Durable



Elastic



Renewable & Biodegradable



Odour resistant while effectively wicking away moisture



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Embracing difference

Different wool qualities for different purposes

DIFFERENT SHEEP HAVE different wool. Some are bred for thickness, others for fineness, some for extra durability, others for increased softness. *Fjällräven* gets its wool from a variety of sources to create products that cover a plethora of applications.

The bulk of *Fjällräven*'s wool, both merino and lamb's wool, is traceable. It comes via New Zealand-based *ZQ Wool*. *ZQ* ensures the wool, from hand-selected farms in Australia and New Zealand, is traceable down to a collection of approved farms where the sheep graze. These farms are certified according to a number of criteria: animal welfare (based on the *UN's Five Freedoms of Animals*); environmental, social and economic sustainability; and wool fibre quality. This is truly outstanding wool, ethically, environmentally and functionally.

Recycled wool is next. Known as *Re-Wool* at *Fjällräven*, this recycled wool comes from both pre- and post-consumer sources across the globe, manufactured for *Fjällräven* in Italy. It can be defined as old garments or spill wool from the wool industry that's been colour-sorted, shredded and re-spun to make new garments. It brings appealing colour nuances to *Fjällräven's Re-Wool* sweaters and shirts.

Recovered wool is similar to recycled wool, in so much as it's taking otherwise discarded wool and repurposing it. There is a subtle difference however. This wool hasn't been used to make a garment and is often a 'waste' product

from the meat industry. But *Fjällräven* doesn't see this as waste. It might not have the same quality as other, finer wool, but it is still a useful material, boasting all the same warming, wicking and odour-resistant properties. *Fjällräven* is using it as insulation inside some of their *Jackets* and *Parkas* and also as main ingredient in a moulded backplate for the *Lappland Hike backpack*.

Last, but certainly not least, is *Brattland's wool*. This is the result of a pilot project whereby *Fjällräven* partnered with Swedish farm, *Brattlandsgården*, to raise Swedish sheep to create Swedish wool sweaters. The results have been so successful that *Fjällräven* has now incorporated this project into its wider wool supply mix. This wool is, of course, completely traceable down to the individual farm, which practices a more environmentally-friendly wholistic way of farming.

All the rest – sounds as though this would leave just the dregs of the world's wool. But even *Fjällräven's* regular wool is superb. Sourced from Australia and New Zealand, it's mulesing-free, of outstanding quality and often blended with other materials to increase strength and/or durability, depending on usage. In this bracket, *Fjällräven* has everything from fine, merino wool used in base layers through to thicker, more durable wool used in shirts and sweaters.



ZQ Wool – Traceable wool to farm level, certified and audited.



Re-Wool – pre and post consumer recycled wool, sorted, shredded and recycled to new yarns.



Recovered Wool – carefully selected surplus wool from Gotland.



Brattlands Wool – Swedish wool project with holistic farm Brattlandsgården.



Non Mulesed Wool – mulesing-free high quality wool.



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Traceable Wool – Brattlandsgården

Swedish Wool Project



IN RECENT YEARS Fjällräven has managed to control and guarantee the whole chain of ethically produced down. Now the brand is working on finding similar solutions for wool.

“We know that wool can be produced sustainably, so now we’re hoping to find out if we can take it to the next level,” says *Martin Axelhed*, Fjällräven’s CEO. And the next level means maintaining a fully traceable production chain. Historically, traceability has been difficult, especially when sourcing from distant countries such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. There are challenges in terms of getting to the farm level but also of knowing what kind of requirements to put on the farm.

“We’ve often bought wool through yarn manufacturers or even fabric manufacturers that contact yarn manufacturers, that have contact with spinners and so on. So it’s been challenging to source our wool directly from the farm that produces it,” says *Christiane Dolva*, Fjällräven’s Sustainability Manager. “With the *Swedish Wool project* in collaboration with the *Brattlandsgården* farm we have explored both good requirements on the farm and at every other step of the supply chain.”

Using Sweden as the testing ground had its obvious geographical benefits for Fjällräven. But it has also posed

problems: the wool industry has been outsourced for a long time. However Fjällräven has managed to source high-quality Swedish wool.

Fjällräven’s Swedish wool comes from *Jämtlandsfår*, a Swedish breed adapted to the cool, challenging climate of central Sweden. The wool is incredibly fine, lustrous and, like all wool, resists dirt and odour, and regulates body temperature. The sheep are raised at Brattlandsgården, a holistic management farm just outside Åre in the Swedish mountains. The untreated wool is spun and the products are knitted in Sweden.

Two and a half years in the making, the first sweaters from Fjällräven’s Swedish Wool project were available to buy in November 2017. Instigated to see if Fjällräven could make wool sweaters in Sweden with Swedish wool, the project shed light on more than just the challenges of wool traceability. Fjällräven has learned a lot about wool quality, holistic farming benefits and craftsmanship and could take the learnings and transfer them to their global wool supply chain.

As the amount of wool that can be produced at Brattlandsgården is very limited the next step towards better traceability on a larger scale is *ZQ Wool*.



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Traceable Wool - ZQ

Traceable wool to farm level, certified and audited



NEW ZEALAND-BASED ZQ WOOL is basically a wool broker. They accredit and work with farms across New Zealand, Australia and South America and ensure wool supply, quality and integrity for a variety of brands across the globe. But above all else, ZQ Wool's main goals are about ensuring animal welfare, and environmental and economic sustainability.

ZQ Wool takes *The Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare* as its baseline. But it then goes a step further. For example, dogs and horses used for herding must also be covered by the five freedoms and the herding itself must not cause any stress to the sheep. Mulesing is not allowed. ZQ Wool also stipulates that farms exposed to heavy rainfall, unseasonal snowstorms and droughts that can cause significant stress to the sheep must have contingency plans in place to lower potential stress. Shelter must be provided for the sheep in cold, wet, windy weather, at lambing times and after shearing.

“Regular sheep farming involves large herds grazing intensively on small areas of grass. This can degrade the land and lead to erosion and the inability of the ground to absorb CO₂,” explains *Christiane*. “Wholistic management, on the other hand, like the farmers working with ZQ Wool do, not only minimises the negative aspects of sheep farming by using fewer chemical fertilisers and

pesticides, but it also improves grass and soil quality. Sheep are frequently moved around to give the grass and soil a chance to regenerate. If done correctly, healthy soil and grass mean carbon is captured, rather than remaining in the atmosphere.”

The final aspect is economical sustainability. A company, brand, project or initiative has to be viable. The people working there need to be treated and paid fairly. Brands need to see the value and the company needs to be self-sustaining.

“A project might be great for the environment but not sustainable financially or physically for the people working there. This balance is sometimes forgotten”, says *Christiane Dolva*.

It's this balance, the transparency and the quality of the wool that attracted Fjällräven to ZQ Wool. Fjällräven gets a certificate from ZQ Wool with all the names of the farms where the different types of wool come from, this includes a tracking number going all the way back to the farm. The farmers also know their buyer and they know that Fjällräven commits to their wool and treat it with respect.

“We all share the same vision and love for wool. And, of course, a love for the sheep and land they live on,” says *Johanna*, one of Fjällräven's designers.



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Re-Wool

Waste Not, Want Not



WE RECYCLE OUR plastic bottles, cans and glass bottles so why can't we recycle our wool too? Actually, we can and wool manufacturers in northern Italy have been doing so for hundreds of years. But it wasn't until relatively recently that they started calling it recycling.

As Fjällräven is always looking for ways to reduce the environmental footprint, recycled wool sounded like something they should look into. It was actually *Thomas Håkansson*, one of their designers, who took the initiative.

"I thought it was interesting, so I brought it up with the team and everyone thought it was a good idea. We have really strict quality criteria, so we had to ensure the fibres were good enough. But once that was confirmed it made perfect sense to go ahead."

Fjällräven is currently working with three different players in the *Prato* textile industry, although seeing as all the companies are family owned by brothers, uncles and cousins from the same family it feels as though the brand is just working with one big family.

This means it's been easier than usual to coordinate the production process. The first link in the chain is the wool supplier. His job is to collect all the wool to be recycled.

"This recycled wool comes from different sources," explains *Sarah Isaksson*, another one of Fjällräven's designers. "It can be leftover wool from sweaters, leftover yarn still

on the cones and even offcuts from suits. It's all collected together, colour sorted and shredded." This is when the next step in the process takes place and the next member of the family comes in.

"They basically have a recipe for making each colour, a bit like with paint. So they know how much red, purple, green and so on from the recycled wool that needs to be blended to make the new shade. They have a lot of control over it and can reproduce virtually the same shade season after season," says *Peter Larsson*, one of Fjällräven's product developers.

"They rip the wool fibres apart before they can spin them into new ones. This results in slightly shorter fibres than virgin wool. So we blend the recycled wool fibres with polyester or virgin wool to ensure their integrity," explains *Sarah*.

"But they've been using this technique for hundreds of years in *Prato*, so they're really good at it. The quality is great; it's durable and really soft." There are some positive effects of this technique too. The colours of our Re-Wool sweaters are so much deeper and nuanced than for our other wool garments, that aren't made from blended wool fibres. But the real winner here is the environment. Recycling wool is far less energy and resource intensive than using virgin wool.



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Recovered Wool

Where wool goes to get a new life



OVER 1000 TONNES of wool are thrown out or destroyed in Sweden each year. This was something that the founders of *Ullkontoret* on the island of *Gotland* wanted to do something about. Now, *Fjällräven* has bought several tonnes of their washed wool – wool that would otherwise have been wasted.

The story of *Ullkontoret* started when *Jenny Andersson*, originally an architect, and partner *Hans Bultzius*, a builder, found a farm, ten minutes east of *Visby* on the island of *Gotland*. Here was the chance to create something new, and as they were both interested in wool as a material, they thought that they should try to do something with the huge quantities of wool that are thrown away each year, not in the least on *Gotland* where sheep farming dominates rural areas.

“We first thought about using wool as a building material together with clay bricks. But the oils in the wool can seep out through the walls if it isn’t washed...so we started looking at ways to wash wool,” says *Hans* and adds:

“However, we then decided that wool is too valuable to be used as a building material. What a waste! It would be like making rag mats out of fine *Cashmere*. The best use for it is in clothing.”

“Sweden didn’t have any kind of tradition of using wool in the ways we were keen to try. The few wool laundries in existence were tiny, and were only used for handicrafts

etc., so we started to make trips abroad and found a laundry that was about the size we were thinking of – in Spain,” says *Jenny*. In 2013 they bought the machines and shipped them home to *Gotland*. Three years later, they were in business.

The wool from *Gotland*, which is courser than merino wool from New Zealand and Australia, has generally been seen as a by-product of the meat industry. About 100 tonnes of wool is produced on *Gotland*; in Sweden as a whole at least 1200 tonnes are produced. It could be as much as 1800–2000 tonnes each year, but barely 20% of this gets used. So about 80% is thrown away, burnt or buried. At the same time, millions of kronor worth of wool is imported.

But now this discarded wool has found a purpose – together with their suppliers *Fjällräven* developed solutions to use this recovered wool as padding in some of their jackets and even as a backplate for one of their backpacks.

But the development goes on and the learning curve is steep. The quality is improving every year.

“This sleek, shiny, grey *Gotland* wool could be a beautiful scarf. And this fluffy, stretchy, white wool could be padding in a jacket for *Fjällräven*”, says *Jenny* as she runs her fingers over the different types of wool. “The possibilities are endless.”



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Fjällräven

ABOUT THE BRAND

FJÄLLRÄVEN IS ONE of Sweden's most classic outdoor companies and also one of the leading suppliers of outdoor clothing and equipment in Scandinavia. The company was founded by *Åke Nordin* in the small northern town of *Örnsköldsvik* in 1960 and has always been run with a passion to make it easier for people to spend time outdoors.

Fjällräven's outdoor clothing, backpacks, tents and sleeping bags are functional and durable products that are appreciated by outdoor enthusiasts all over the world. Some have become true classics over the years, such as the *Kånken* backpack from 1978 that today is one of Fjällräven's most sold products. Other examples are the *Greenland Jacket*, Fjällräven's first jacket from 1968, and the *Expedition Down Jacket* from 1974.

It is no exaggeration to say that Fjällräven has been a part of shaping Swedish outdoor life. Together with the *Swedish Tourist Association* and the *Swedish Outdoor Association*, Fjällräven's innovative tents, sleeping bags, backpacks and outdoor clothing contributed towards more and more Swedes starting to spend time in the outdoors during the 1960s and 1970s.

Today, Fjällräven's products are sold in over 70 countries, both in its own brand stores in *China, Hong Kong, Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden* and the *USA* and through retailers. The company also opened its own online store in 2013.

As a company, Fjällräven makes every effort to act responsibly towards people, wildlife and the environment and to encourage people to take an active interest in outdoor life. *Fjällräven Classic* and the *winter event Fjällräven Polar* are the company's two biggest events that are organized with the aim of increasing interest in and spreading knowledge of the environment and outdoor activities all over the globe.

Fjällräven is part of the *Fenix Outdoor Group* along with sister companies *Tierra, Primus, Hanwag, Brunton, Royal Robbins, Naturkompaniet, Friluftsland, Partioaitta* and *Globetrotter*.



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