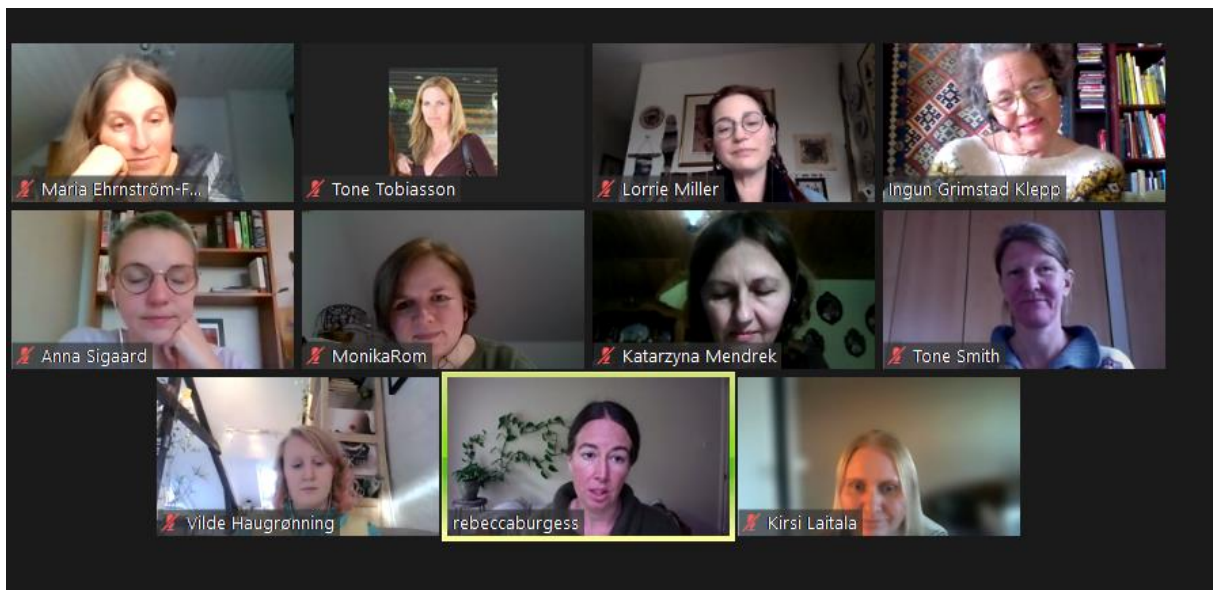


Newsletter # 2 2021

Dear WOOLUME-friends,

Some of us are hard at work with a big deliverable for WOOLUME, namely the book about local wool for Palgrave Macmillan. Here we are discussing the book, right before Jan came online (sorry, Jan!). It is quite an international 'gang', and we have the first deadline for the chapters tomorrow, which is the first official European Wool Day. So Happy European Wool Day everyone! The first draft is due at the beginning of May, so these are busy times! The short history below, by Katarzyna, we hope will be included in the book!



Tufting and the intriguing story of female entrepreneurship/Tufting was a woman by Katarzyna Kobiela-Mendrek, leader of WP3

Just before Easter, the first trials on production of rugs from yarns produced by Selbu spinning mill from Polish mountain sheep wool were started. The trials were performed in Sztuka Beskidzka, a local carpet manufacturer, with the use of the tufting technique. The name tufting comes from English and means "decorating with tufts", so it can refer to any technique that results in a pile textile. However, in textiles engineering tufting rugs are distinguished from structures such as knotted, Axminster, Wilton, Double plush and others rugs obtained in a weaving process. The

difference is more or less the same as between embroidering and weaving. Basically, tufting involves stitching coloured yarn into the backing fabric so that a loop or cut pile is formed on one surface. It is like a straight stitch produced on a sewing machine, but sown with a loose needle thread and without a bobbin thread.

Tufting was invented by **Catherin Evans Whitener** from Dalton, Georgia (USA). The story began in 1892 when 12-year-old Catherin decided to recreate an old candlewick bedspread, her cousin's family heirloom. After many attempts and months of arduous work, her efforts were crowned with success. It is not clear how the original bedspread was produced; whether it was decorated with white embroidery or was a wire plush remains a mystery. The girl was not familiar with the technique and made the bedspread in her own way, that is by pulling bunches of yarn into the fabric. This is how the tufting technique was created. However, the story does not end here. The bedspread, which was a wedding gift for her brother, turned out to be extremely popular, so orders for more copies cropped up and Catherin started making money. Unable to meet the demand after some time, she asked her neighbours for help and finally set up a manufactory. Local women were learning and working with her, sometimes to leave and set up their own workshops. The local female-led business grew as bedspreads, mats and bathrobes have brought fame to Dalton. In the late 1930s, large companies adopted tufting only to quickly mechanise the process and dominate the market. In the 1950s, tufting machines were getting wider and the products bigger; large carpets, including fitted ones, were produced for a relatively low price because of synthetic fibres used in the process. What is more, the industry was one of the factors which changed the local employment market. Tufting moved from a female handicraft producing small light products to factories operated mostly by men. Dalton thrived on tufting; prior to the Silicon Valley boom, it was the city with the most millionaires per capita in the United States. It is sometimes called the Carpet Capital of the World, at least in the US – the rest of the world might not be aware of the fact.

Today, tufting is mainly used to produce rugs and carpets but also artificial lawns. Like Wilton and face-to-face techniques, tufting allows to create loop, cut or mixed pile with different heights. What is worth mentioning, tufting is much more efficient than other techniques. Fitted carpets are produced on wide industrial machines, while patterned carpets – with the use of mechanical and pneumatic tufting guns, which allow for flexibility when it comes to pattern creation and arrangement of loops and flocks with possible combinations. Whoever operates the gun may become an artist, a creator of colourful reliefs on the flat surface of the underlying fabric.

News from Andrzej Gawłowski, leader of WP4

In the framework of the WP 4 task, preliminary field tests on the use of waste sheep wool as an ecological nitrogen fertilizer were carried out. For this purpose, four test plots were designated for sowing winter wheat. In three plots, waste sheep wool cut into short pieces in varying amounts was mixed with the soil, while the fourth plot (without the addition of wool) was used for comparative purposes. In the second decade of November, after sowing the field with winter wheat (Kilimanjaro variety), soil samples were collected from the test plots for nitrogen content tests. The test (as expected) demonstrated higher values of easily assimilated forms of nitrogen (NO_3^- , NH_4^+). In early spring (at the turn of March and April), when the vegetation starts, the growth and tillering of winter wheat will be constantly monitored. Moreover, collecting soil samples (at the beginning of April) for repeat tests for nitrogen content is planned. Also, in early spring, a test plot using waste sheep wool for potato cultivation (Bellarosa variety) is planned to be prepared. Additionally, the use of wool as a nitrogen fertilizer in horticulture is planned. For this purpose, the greenhouse cultivation of tomatoes was selected. The soil under the cover (plastic tunnel) will also be mixed with the cut waste wool on

the cultivated area designated for this purpose, while the remaining acreage will serve as a control plot.

Conferences

Two abstracts for the **ICNF conference** (17-19 May 2021) have been accepted: *Coarse Sheep Wool as a Precious Raw Material for Production of Rug Yarns* and *Concentration of Selected Metals in (Polish) Sheep Wool*. Woolume will also send an abstract to the Virtu-Wool conference. Jan writes: "Before Easter I received an invitation to prepare a chapter for the book *Sheep Farming*. Probably we use this opportunity too." In addition, Ingun and Tone talked at the **Nomadnoos & Friend Symposium** (theme knitting). It was taped, so it will be available for registration and sharing, as WOOLUME was mentioned. The **IWTO Congress**, will, by the way, take place at the exact same time as the ICNF conference. May 19th also marks the upstart of the **#AmazingGrazing** project in Norway.

News from Norway

Vilde and Anna are working on the report for WP2.1, which they aim to have finished by end of May. They have had a couple of very interesting interviews with companies that make wool products for acoustic purposes. "Here we have learned, among other things, that wool is preferred over synthetic materials both for aesthetic reasons and due to durability. The producers choose the type of wool according to what is offered on the market. Today, these are primarily finer wools such as merino, but they are open to use coarser wool if it becomes available for purchase." From January to March, Selbu Spinning Mill tested dyeing of a sample of rowings from the whitish Polish Mountain sheep wool. It dyes quite nice. Selbu is also preparing a new spinning test, and has started to prepare a small sample of wool for this. We have also started a plan for a short video on the sorting of wool, and did some video tests during a wool seminar in March. The video is an alternative to a sorting course, due to the corona pandemic. See the latest samples under:



EU Horizon application

The call is out, and there are two of 2021 calls that are interesting for wool: **HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-08: Improving understanding of and engagement in bio-based systems with training and skills development Specific conditions** and **HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01-09: Revitalisation of European local communities with innovative bio-based business models and social innovation Specific conditions**. What emerged during a recent week-long conference on Sustainable Innovation was that the EU has decided to open up for Geographical Indicators for other products than food and drink (think Champagne and Parma ham). For example, local wool or textile products. French linen was mentioned, but our new best friend, an Italian PhD researcher in the UK, told us that local wool would be perfect. She also said Norway had suggested this be tied to sustainability, with a traffic-light system. We are loving this more and more. With our new Finnish and Irish (and Portuguese and Estonian, Italian and Swiss and Swedish and Danish friends – I hope I didn't forget anyone??) this could be pure magic.