



# News Release

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## **Textile Exchange launches new Responsible Leather Round Table to begin work on first ever global farm-to-product leather supply chain assessment tool.**

*July 18, 2018* — Textile Exchange is building on its well-respected animal welfare programs with the launch of the **Responsible Leather Round Table (RLRT)**, a platform for stakeholder collaboration, with the goal to identify and drive best practices in the leather value chain. The RLRT was developed in response to demand from brands and retailers looking to address impacts associated with their sourcing of leather.

*“As we manage to trace the source of our hides and skins to the meat producer, we need to be able to determine if they share our values in their operations, with sound animal husbandry, humane animal treatment and slaughtering practices. We decided to join the Responsible Leather Round Table as we believe this group has the right skills and it is uniquely positioned to represent the leather industry in creating a platform in which existing policies and best practices of the food industry can be organized in a unified common-denominator, creating a tool that could eventually be used to verify compliance.”*

**John Graebin, Sr. Director of Materials at Deckers Brands**

One of the primary activities of the RLRT will be the development of the **Responsible Leather Assessment (RLA)** tool. The RLA will provide a framework for brands to evaluate the responsibility of their full leather supply chain; the tool will recognize and leverage the many existing standards, programs and tools, many that address regional or single stage impacts only. The RLA will be applicable only to bovine (cattle) leather in its first version, and Textile Exchange is working with the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) to better understand and address issues at the beginning of the supply chain.

### **Global Forum on Responsible Leather**

The RLRT will be hosting its first ever global event in Kilkenny, Ireland on October 11-12<sup>th</sup>. This event, which overlaps with the GRSB’s Global Conference on Sustainable Beef, will be an exciting opportunity to bring together two different industry sectors to explore the potential for shared impact. Learn more about the event and register here:

[www.TextileExchange.org/RLRT](http://www.TextileExchange.org/RLRT).

Through the establishment of the Responsible Leather Round Table (RLRT), Textile Exchange has brought together close to 400 stakeholders from all parts of the industry, including brands, farmers and suppliers, as well as NGOs, international organizations and special interest groups. The RLRT is committed to an open, multi-stakeholder process with representation from all interested parties.

*“Leather is a beautiful, versatile and sustainable product if made under the right circumstances for people, animals and the environment. But how do you know as a brand or as a consumer that the leather you buy is okay? The RLRT is bringing all value chain stakeholders at the table and will develop a Responsible Leather Assessment tool, adding value to good initiatives like [LWG](#), [ZDHC](#), [Tannery of the Future](#), [Leather Naturally](#) and others that drive best practices in the leather industry. I invite you to become part of this.”*

**Egbert Dikkers, Director Sustainability at Smit & zoon**

To participate in the RLRT, as well as contribute to the development of the Responsible Leather Assessment tool, contact [ResponsibleLeather@TextileExchange.org](mailto:ResponsibleLeather@TextileExchange.org). Visit [ResponsibleLeather.org](https://www.ResponsibleLeather.org) for more information. Official membership to the RLRT was opened in June, with several companies already signed on including Mulberry, VF Corp., REI, H&M, Patagonia, Kathmandu, IKEA, Deckers Brands, Charles Keith, Kingfisher, The Lollipop Tree, Inc., Scottish Leather Group, Smit & zoon, European Outdoor Group, Nepcon, the New Zealand Leather and Shoe Research Association (LASRA), PALI Group/Vitelco, Proudly Made in Africa, Native Energy, and the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef.

#### **ABOUT TEXTILE EXCHANGE**

Founded 15 years ago, Textile Exchange is a global non-profit with more than 260 members that represent leading brands, retailers and suppliers in the textile industry. The organization works to create leaders in the sustainable fiber and materials sector by providing learning opportunities, tools, insight, standards, data, measurement and benchmarking—and by building a community that can collectively accomplish what no individual or company can do alone. To learn more about Textile Exchange and our animal welfare work, visit: [www.TextileExchange.org](https://www.TextileExchange.org) and follow us on Twitter at @TextileExchange and @TEStandards.

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