

# FARMING FASHION

## Wool

Processors are important bridges that connect raw material and finished product, as well as having the opportunity to match-make producers and designers and to facilitate the three-way conversations that are vital in supporting strong and transparent collaborations. Spinning mills process wool and other natural fibres into yarn for knit and weave. The following lists of questions appear in *Farming Fashion: Wool* in the section on Processing. These lists have been written as a starting point for farmers and designers interested in working with mills to process fibre for garments.

### How Do Farmers Brief Mills?

Prompts and questions to help structure a conversation between farmers and spinning mills. Knowing what the end goal for the fleece is will determine which mills to approach.

### What to consider in advance:

- Was your fleece sorted at the time of shearing to remove second cuts, dirt, vegetation, matted areas and spray?
- What volume of fleece do you have to process after sorting?
- Can you confirm the fleece has not been sprayed with pesticides in the last 4 months?
- Has it been stored appropriately to keep it dry and clean and free of moth?
- Is the staple length at least 5cm?
- What is your desired end product and who is your market?
- Do you know if it is woollen or worsted spun yarn that you want, or need to produce?
- Is the yarn for knitting or weaving? If knitting, is it for hand or machine knitting? If the latter, what kind of machine?
- Do you know what gauge or weight to spin to? How many plies?
- Are you willing for your fibre to be blended with another, to improve quality or handle?
- Does the mill have a minimum order quantity and what is their average lead time?
- If you are working with a designer or brand, what is their timeline and is this realistic?
- Do you need the yarn supplied in balls, *skeins* or cones?

### Make sure to discuss with the mill:

- Can you send or take in a fleece sample for review before committing to send your whole clip?
- How do they advise your fleece be processed? Does this match with your expectation?
- Will they charge for storing your fleece or finished yarn?
- What fibre do they keep in inventory for blending purposes? Is it traceable to farm?
- What is their current lead time? This may vary from what is stated on their website.
- What yield in finished yarn should you expect to receive.
- What will they charge for processing and what will be the final unit cost?

