



After a long pandemic-related dry spell, the Tectextil and Texprocess trade fairs, which are expected to attract more than 1,300 exhibitors from 51 countries in June 2022, are returning to Frankfurt with forward-looking formats.

Textination spoke to companies about their expectations of the fair, the product portfolio and innovations they will be presenting in Frankfurt in a few days' time.

Dr Marina Crnoja-Cosic kicks off the series. The chemist with a doctorate and many years of experience in fibre and application development has headed the New Business Development department of viscose speciality fibre manufacturer **Kelheim Fibres** since July 2020, at the same time strengthening its management team.



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Dr Marina Crnoja-Cosic, what makes your company special and different - compared to competitors?

Kelheim Fibres is the longest producing viscose fibre manufacturer in the world. The fact that we, as a medium-sized company, are able to compete successfully with much larger companies is due to our strong focus on specialisation. We do not rely on the production of large quantities of standard fibres but use our 85 years of experience and our technological expertise to create special fibres that have very specific functionalities - many of which are tailor-made to customer requirements. This makes us the technology leader in

some areas, such as short cut, or the market leader in others, such as tampon fibres.



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Dr Marina Crnoja-Cosic

To be successful with special fibres and to remain so in the future, innovation is a central topic for us. We follow the Open Innovation approach and seek close exchange with all partners along the value chain, but also with scientific institutes. This - and also our own compact but effective organisation - ensures efficiency, speed and agility. New ideas are commercialised faster and through the cooperation of all partners we get results that work not only in our heads but in reality, at all stages of processing and with the end customer.

And finally, we produce exclusively in Germany. This means that our fibres are subject to strict German environmental legislation and at the same time contribute to a stable European supply chain.

How do you define Textile Leadership for your company?

For me, leadership is about leading the way, breaking new ground, inspiring others and 'taking them with us'.

Our guiding principle is to be the driving force behind the best individual solutions for a healthy lifestyle while protecting the environment for future generations.



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This is exactly what we do with our Open Innovation concept: together with our partners, with customers and in networks, we actively search for "unmet needs", unfulfilled consumer needs, and create innovative products that meet these needs. Sustainability is a key focus in this process. Our fibres are made from renewable raw materials and are biodegradable, which puts them right on the pulse of the times. In contrast to purely natural fibres, however, we can specifically functionalise them during the production process. In this way, the consumer receives an environmentally friendly product, but does not have to make any compromises in terms of performance. We already offer a real alternative to petroleum-based products in a variety of different applications - and we are driven to develop further applications in which our fibres can contribute to the benefit of customers and the environment.

Which products/product innovations will you present at the fair?



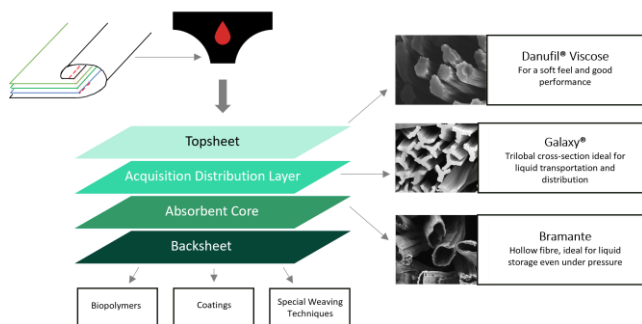
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We have a variety of themes in store: one focus is on wellbeing, a trend that has been gaining more and more fans, and not just since Corona. Textiles should not only protect us from the cold and prying eyes, they should actively increase our well-being. This is what our CELLIANT® Viscose does, for example, the first viscose fibre with an infrared effect sustainably integrated into the fibre. Textiles with CELLIANT® Viscose promote better blood circulation and a better oxygen supply to the cells. This leads to higher performance, faster recovery and better sleep.

The new Zzzleepwear collection from the renowned underwear manufacturer mey makes use of the properties of CELLIANT® Viscose. Incidentally, it is also an example of how the close cooperation of all partners involved accelerates the path from fibre development to the finished end product: There were only a few months between the presentation of the new fibre and the launch of the Zzzleepwear collection.

In addition, we present short-cut fibres that can give papers or wipes the desired properties in a very targeted way. With our short-cut technology we can, for example, produce fibres that provide the necessary strength in tea bags or fibres for flushable wipes, i.e., wipes that can be conveniently disposed of via the toilet without the risk of clogging. In both of these examples, biodegradability is again a key aspect - who wants to drink microplastics in their tea?

Another focus is on hygiene products, and here especially on feminine hygiene. We want to accompany women and respond to their individually different and changing needs. We have been the market leader in



the tampon sector for decades. We use the resulting know-how for a whole range of other AHP, i.e., applications that require increased absorbency. Our fibres provide the basis for comfortable and at the same time biodegradable disposable articles. In addition, and in response to the needs of environmentally conscious consumers, we have now developed fibres for reusable hygiene products.

One example of this is our fibres for fully bio-based menstrual underwear. Here we have perfectly matched various speciality fibres to the different layers of period underwear: Fibres that quickly absorb fluid and wick it away from the body are used as well as fibres that absorb large amounts of fluid and do not release it again even under pressure.

**Kelheim Fibres is the driving force behind
the best individual solutions for a healthy lifestyle
while protecting the environment for future generations..**

Craig Barker, CEO at Kelheim Fibres

Another new development follows the same principle, namely the absorbent pad of the reusable Sumo nappy. Like the nappy itself, this insert consists entirely of bio-based materials and is washable.

In addition to putting together the ideal combination of fibres, we have also developed a new nonwoven construction together with the Berlin-based start-up Sumo and the Saxon Textile Research Institute STFI.



© Valeria Mitelman

With its open structure, it gives our speciality fibres enough space to absorb a lot of liquid, but at the same time it provides the necessary stability to survive many washing cycles undamaged. We have, so to speak, transferred nonwovens from the world of single use to the world of reusables, thus opening up new perspectives. In tests, the performance of this absorbent pad surpasses the alternatives - bio-based and synthetic - available on the market.

From Reusable, the logical path leads on to Recycling. We would also like to promote our cooperation with the Swedish textile recycling company Renewcell at Techtexil. We are working together on the large-scale production of high-quality viscose fibres from Renewcell's 100% textile recycle Circulose®. This makes us a pioneer on the way to a completely closed European loop in which textile waste is turned into new Circulose® fibres.

What goals do you want to achieve with the trade fair presentation?

We want to see how the industry has evolved, what the current and future trends are and how the technical textile sector can respond to the issues of sustainability, circularity and the EU textile strategy - and what contribution our fibres can make to all these issues.

Techtextil is where the entire industry comes together, right across the supply chain. We meet our partners here from both the textile and nonwovens sectors. The scientific landscape is also very well represented. This makes Techtextil an event with a very high level of innovation.

We are specifically looking for partners here who want to follow our path of innovation and commercialisation together with us. And last but not least, we are very much looking forward to meeting our customers, partners, colleagues as well as representatives of science and the press once again in person.

*The interview with Dr Marina Crnoja-Cosic was conducted by Ines Chucholowius,
Managing Partner of Textination GmbH*