IN THIS ISSUE:

The Hague overturn Dutch fur ban
Kopenhagen Fur partner with Paris fashion school
Interview with Martina Bianchini, CEO of Fur Europe
BFTA appoint new CEO
YEFC media training in China
ALC & Saga Furs alliance

IFDDA new chairman & website

The members of the International Fur Dressers & Dyers Association Ltd. (IFDDA), elected a new Chairman at their Annual General Meeting in April, hosted by Kopenhagen Fur.

Roberto Scarpella, from Italian dressing and dyeing company M.I.B., takes the role from previous Chairman Katarzyna Chlebny. She held the office for two years and will continue to support the Association as a Director on the Board. “It has been a great two years organizing the establishment of a new association that takes care of the interests and responsibilities dressers and dyers want to fulfill in a modern society”, says Katarzyna Chlebny. “Dressers and dyers hold a pivotal position in the fur trade. They are aware of the role they have as accountable entrepreneurs with respect to environmental issues.”

The newly elected Board of Directors for the years 2014-2016 consists of Vice-Chairmen Victor Leenders from Marco-Ling Fur Ltd., and Nikos Paspalis from Naoum T. Ditsios, and the following other Directors who are - Katarzyna Chlebny - Kai Haacke from MPV, Roberto Tedini from M.I.B., Bruno Porte from Cipel Baltika, Henry Sun from Schmidt-Poly Furs Ltd., Eric Lau from Marco Cipel China, and William Lam from Claveyson Fur Processing Ltd. William Lam was appointed as the Association’s Treasurer. He shares this responsibility together with Victor Leenders.

CEO Comment

The recent slowdown in fur prices is something many of you have seen before but for me, as a relative newcomer, it is a challenge to ensure we spend our reduced income even more effectively. Thankfully, we have some success to report. I’m pleased we financially supported the farmers in the Netherlands with their successful campaign to reverse the farm ban. I’m also pleased that our American team has successfully changed the description of ‘raccoon dog’ to ‘Asiatic Raccoon’. Meanwhile, our advert in the Economist resulted in some excellent media coverage, as did our Vogue-Remix event in Milan. It’s these kind of political- and fashion-related projects that we must focus on when times are hard, as they help secure our political and fashion future.
Update from Fur Europe

The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs has appealed to the Supreme Court of The Netherlands after the decision of The Hague to reverse the ban on mink farming. The Dutch Fur Breeders’ Association however, is optimistic. News reports in The Netherlands have suggested that the Ministry will not bring forward any new arguments or offer to compensate the fur farmers. Normally, a Supreme Court verdict will fall within 18 months of the previous court decision, but since the Ministry’s appeal creates uncertainty as to whether the ban is in fact out of effect in between the decisions, the Supreme Court decision may arrive faster.

Fur Europe is currently analyzing the results of the European Parliament elections that were held in May. About a quarter of the next EP will be Eurosceptics, but how this will influence the fur sector is still too early to say. Although the new Commission has yet to be decided, Fur Europe expects new Commissioners in charge of DG Enterprise, DG Sanco and DG Environment. Fur Europe will work to rebuild the network with the new commissioners in the coming months, and will communicate an in-depth analysis of the new EU when it has been finally established.

Update from Eurasia region

In April 2014, the REMIX-Eurasia competition received more than 140 drawings from young designers of the IFF Eurasia countries. The finalists have been chosen and will show their garments on a catwalk during the IFF-Eurasia Gala Show in October in Moscow, where the jury will determine the winners, who will be entered into the International REMIX competition.

Inter-regional relations will continue in July 2014 in Kazakhstan with the International Forum: “Development and prospects of fur trade between IFF Eurasia and IFF Asia (China)”. The participants will be able to discuss development problems of fur trade between regions, ways of dealing with smuggling and counterfeiting goods, and general requirements for the quality of fur garments for both regions. The next IFF Eurasia Board meeting will be held during the forum, which will be held in Almaty.

Dutch reversal of fur ban is a win for human rights

In a surprisingly clear and quick verdict a Dutch national court in The Hague have overturned the ban that would have put an end to mink farming in The Netherlands in 2024.

The fur ban, which was passed by the Dutch Senate in December 2012, was based on the argument that fur is “an unnecessary luxury product” but did not offer the Dutch fur farmers any compensation for the ban taking away their livelihood. This is contrary to the European Human Rights Convention.

“The message from The Netherlands is clearly that those few politicians in Europe who want to ban fur, need to think twice. I hope the message from the Dutch court will convince them that instead of banning an industry that performs incredibly well on both animal welfare standards and export income, they should help further developing the industry,” says Kenneth Ingman, Chairman of Fur Europe.

The Netherlands is the world’s third largest mink producing country with an annual production of 5 million skins. A calculation from audit company KPMG estimates the compensation for shutting down Dutch mink farming amounts to 1.2 billion Euro.

Young Entrepreneurs Fur Committee Hold Media Training in China

In April 2014, the Young Entrepreneurs Fur Committee in China held the first media training in Beijing, with great support from the China Office of IFF. Around 50 people attended the training, representing various fields of the fur industry chain, including retailers, people from the leather and fur trading market, leaders of farming associations and executives from auction houses Kopenhagen Fur and Saga Furs. The major purposes of this training was to allow representatives to categorise and understand the importance of transparency, and then demonstrate how to actively transmit this information to the consumers and the public with various practices and trainings.

The training experts utilised a large number of vivid and practical examples of misinformation to explain how to communicate with media and the key points and skills that an industry spokesman should acquire and keep in mind. They also dramatically improved the trainees’ capability of coping with emergencies and complicated circumstances by simulated interviews and press conferences.
Interview with Martina Bianchini, CEO of Fur Europe

Martina Bianchini, a Public- and Government Affairs professional, has been appointed new Chief Executive Officer of the European fur industry. The appointment coincides with the merging of the European Fur Breeders’ Association (EFFBA) and the European members of the IFF into the new European organisation Fur Europe. Martina brings more than 20 years of experience in two multinational companies - agricultural supplier Monsanto and the Dow Chemical Company. As business delegate to the EU, UN, OECD and other international organisations, she has demonstrated leadership to create policy frameworks that foster innovation and competitiveness across the chain of commerce and life cycles of products, while taking into consideration different stakeholder points of view.

Please tell me a little about your background.

My educational background is in Earth Sciences and in Environmental Toxicology. I studied in the US and lived there for almost 10 years. I find it very useful to have a background in chemicals and agriculture as this skill set is entirely transferable to the fur sector – I am very happy to take WelFur, a program which is underpinned by science and develop it into flagship program for the industry.

What attracted you to the job?

I love the look and feel of fur – there is simply nothing else like it. That is what attracted me to the role, and also the chance to put my corporate and scientific knowledge to good use. I’m excited about the idea to bring the entire supply chain together and meet all of their needs. Supply chain engagement is a source of innovation and identifying opportunities that are hidden or that you would not see otherwise. I am also excited to help them work together to create a more united and strong industry.

You’ve been in the role for just over a month - is it what you expected?

Mostly, yes… It is working out exactly how it was presented to me and there have been no surprises. The fur sector makes for an interesting challenge, but the fur business model is very different from what I’m used to. In the chemicals sector, if prices drop or something needs adjusting, when you work in manufacturing, you can simply stop a production line and adjust it very quickly. But with the fur sector, the product is obviously a live animal, meaning you can’t stop production when there is high volatility in the market. The people in this sector are very nice and it is a pleasure to work with them. In this regard, it exceeded my expectations.

What are Fur Europe’s current projects?

My first job as CEO of Fur Europe is to get the organization formalised. At this moment in time, Fur Europe doesn’t officially i.e. legally exist yet. I will be helping with the final negotiations and formalization of the statutes. Once that is done, I will be working with the Board on priorities. Europe is a challenging region, as it represents more than 50% of the global fur trade and industry’s farming sector. This is why EFFBA and IFF decided to join forces and create a new organization to have more political leverage. Each part of the supply chain has different needs, so one of my first tasks will be listening to all of these needs and interpreting them into a list of priorities, to help achieve the objectives the Fur Europe Board set.

Are you confident that you are the right person for the job?

Yes. Fur Europe is a huge job to take on, but I strongly believe that if you see a problem as a problem, it will be just that. But if you see a problem as an opportunity, you will be optimistic about it and will be able to move into the solution space. I always try to live my life like that and I will project this attitude into the fur sector to help create the enabling policy and market environments for it to thrive and grow into the future. Of course, there are many possible futures and my goal will be to help the sector to move into the direction of sustainable development.
CHIC Fair 2014

At this year’s China International Clothing & Accessories Fair (CHIC), the IFF China Office strongly supported the Young Entrepreneur’s Fur Committee (YEFC) to set up a stand, which showcased the possibilities of fur design and fashion through fur garments, hats and bags. It offered informational materials including key messages on fur, heritage, environment, farming information, and that fur benefits the economy and freedom of choice.

The IFF’s Fur Futures project was also introduced to the media. IFF China office and YEFC organised a media event and invited seven journalists, two young designers and three entrepreneurs from YEFC to come to the fair. They sat together to discuss how the Chinese fur industry can help young designers to love fur. The entrepreneurs introduced how fur industry benefits local economy and employment by their own experiences. In particular, the designers told media of their positive experiences of visiting fur farms in Denmark and Canada and how the advanced management at farms made them confident to continue fur design. The event helped journalists to have an in-depth understanding on the fur industry and the Fur Futures project. After the event, they expressed willingness to participate in future activities organized by IFF China Office.

NAFA & HAF host young Greek design contest

NAFA and the Hellenic Association of Furriers announced the winners of their co-sponsored design competition on 28 March, during the Fur Excellence in Athens Fair. The competition offers students at universities and design schools throughout Greece an introduction to NAFA fur products and the opportunity to have one of their designs manufactured and reviewed by a panel of esteemed judges from the worlds of fur and fashion.

A large crowd of buyers, manufacturers and media gathered for the prize-giving ceremony, with Thessaloniki student Lina Apostoliou’s garment manufactured by Idea Moda Fur winning the top prize. The top three prize winners will receive an all-expenses paid trip to Toronto, Canada for a week long workshop at Studio NAFA, where they will have the opportunity to learn more about the fur trade, fur trends and design techniques.

MEMBERS NEWS

British Fur Trade Association announces new CEO

The British Fur Trade Association (BFTA) are pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Mike Moser as its new Chief Executive.

The BFTA’s previous chief executive, Mr. Robert Morgan, has retired after 18 years in the role.

BFTA Chairman Philippe Debourcieu said: ‘Robert has been a great asset to the BFTA and we are sorry to lose him and wish him every success possible for the future, however we are delighted to welcome Mike on board.’

Mike will continue his role with the IFF alongside his work with the BFTA.

American Legend Cooperative and Saga Furs enter into long-term strategic alliance

In March 2014, American Legend Cooperative and Fur Harvesters Auctions Inc. collaborated with Saga Furs for the first time, bringing high quality wild furs and American mink to the Finnish auction house.

Based on the success of the March auction, American Legend Cooperative and Saga Furs have announced that they have entered into a long-term strategic alliance, selling together at joint auctions in Helsinki, Seattle and other parts of the world.

This alliance enables each company to focus on their core competencies and efficiencies to better serve their producers and clients. Both companies agree that this collaboration is mutually beneficial and provides added value to their customers and suppliers through enhanced marketing efforts and sharing of resources and ideas.

Each company will maintain its autonomy and identity as they pursue new opportunities.

Kopenhagen Fur partners with Paris fashion school

Kopenhagen Fur has established cooperation with the Parisian university Atelier Chardon Savard. This opens an opportunity for selected French design students to learn how to work with fur. It was celebrated with a signing ceremony at the French embassy in Copenhagen.

After their successful business partnerships in Asia, Kopenhagen Fur are keen to establish important connections within Europe. The agreement also opens new opportunities for the university, whose students will gain the chance to work with fur and learn new techniques.

For more information or to send us news: furtimes@iftf.com. www. wearefur.com