

Naturally Advanced: Hanes sign 10-year buying deal

By Christina Williams
Editor, Sustainable Business Oregon



Naturally Advanced Technologies signed a 10-year fiber purchasing agreement with Hanesbrands Inc. for its flax Crailar fibers.

Naturally Advanced Technologies Inc. announced Thursday that Hanesbrands Inc. signed a 10-year supply agreement that will commercialize the company's flax-based fiber.

It's the first commercialization agreement for Naturally Advanced, which started working on the flax-based fiber last year. Hanes started testing the fiber, called Crailar Flax, in December. The relationship with Hanes began earlier last year with Hanes' Naturally Advanced Crailar Hemp fiber.

The company processes flax, removing the binding agents that contribute to its stiff texture. The result is a strong but soft fiber similar to cotton.

Naturally Advanced is led by Portland-based CEO Ken Barker, a former Adidas executive. "This agreement is a strong validation of our Crailar technology and its ability to perform within the Hanesbrand family," Barker said in a press release. He added that he expects shipping to begin next month.

Naturally Advanced and Hanesbrands are working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on a research project in South Carolina to cultivate and evaluate various kinds of flax for use in Crailar fiber.

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