

# PRESS RELEASE

Kelheim, 27.03.2024



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## Innovation partners Kelheim Fibres and Gebr. Otto present concept for sustainable period underwear

At Techtextil, taking place in Frankfurt at the end of April 2024, companies Kelheim Fibres and Gebr. Otto will showcase their joint concept aimed at making period underwear more sustainable and high-performing. Exhibiting at the BW-i joint stand and the IVGT joint stand, both located in Hall 12.1, the innovation partners will present their solution for period underwear made from biobased materials, distinguished by outstanding performance metrics. The various specialty viscose fibres used in this solution are sourced from Kelheim, while Gebr. Otto expertly spins them into the appropriate compositions.

On average, a woman consumes about 15,000 hygiene products in her lifetime, primarily disposable items that generate significant waste. Their plastic components take up to 500 years to decompose, breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces over time. The trend toward making female hygiene products, both disposable and reusable, more sustainable has been growing in recent years. This category includes not only biodegradable disposables but also washable period panties offered by established lingerie manufacturers and innovative startups.

### **Enhancing sustainability and performance of reusable products**

This is where fibre manufacturer Kelheim Fibres and yarn spinner Gebr. Otto step in, aiming to make period underwear as comfortable, high-performing, and sustainable as possible.

The solution is akin to solving a puzzle, considering that period underwear is constructed from multiple layers with different functions. For instance, the topsheet must quickly absorb and divert liquid away from the body, while the subsequent acquisition-distribution layer (ADL) ensures rapid and optimal distribution of the liquid within the absorbent core, which then encapsulates the liquid, preventing potential leakage.

### **Pooling expertise**

With the optimal combination of Kelheim's specialty fibres and Otto's perfectly matched yarn types, the two innovation partners have solved this puzzle. The result is a prototype that outperforms

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conventional solutions in terms of liquid absorption speed, capacity, and rewet values. "Based on the requirements and test results Kelheim has determined for the various layers, we develop our yarn blends," explains Andreas Merkel, Managing Director of Gebr. Otto. "We can promptly supply the desired yarns for short-term requests, including special inquiries from lingerie brands."

## **Inherently sustainable**

The collaborative innovation between Kelheim Fibres and Gebr. Otto is a significant gain for the sustainability of period underwear. Not only do both companies utilize efficient state-of-the-art technology, but Kelheim's biobased viscose fibres also contribute to the eco-friendliness of the product. Moreover, the partnership between these two German traditional companies enables an exceptionally short supply chain. Dr. Marina Crnoja-Cosic, Director of New Business Development at Kelheim Fibres, emphasizes: "Short supply chains are not only environmentally friendly but also crucial for compliance with supply chain laws and product responsibility. Regional partnerships like the one with Gebr. Otto ensure that our supply chain is transparent and efficient, ultimately leading to a more sustainable future."

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## Pictures:



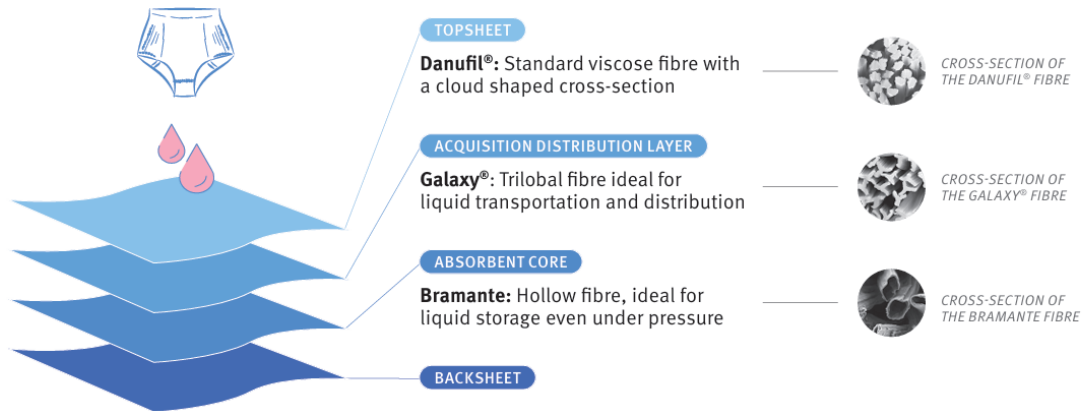
Gebr. Otto has been based in Dietenheim since 1901 and is dedicated to both processing natural fibres and developing innovative textile solutions.



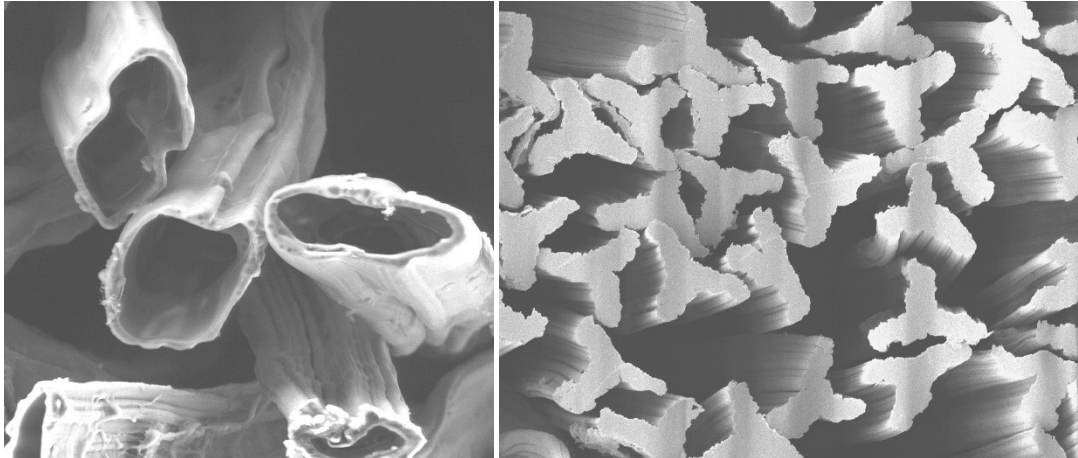
The state-of-the-art spinning machines at Gebr. Otto predominantly process natural fibres.

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Schematic representation of the liner developed by Kelheim and Gebr. Otto for period underwear.



The special functionalities of Kelheim Fibres' viscose specialty fibres are, for example, achieved through their unique cross-sections.

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## About Gebrüder Otto

The company Gebrüder Otto, based in the Upper Swabian town of Dietenheim, is a leading provider of textile solutions across Europe. Traditionally, the company focuses on high-quality yarns and threads made from cotton, produced in its own spinning, twisting, and dyeing mills. In addition, Otto offers a continuously expanding, customized portfolio of technical and medical yarns and textiles at its two locations in Balzheim and Dietenheim. Gebrüder Otto places particular emphasis on sustainability, forward-looking solutions, and 100% customer orientation. Own brands such as Piumafil and Recot<sup>2</sup> underline this claim, as well as numerous awards and certifications. Founded in 1901, Gebrüder Otto remains a family-owned company to this day. With around 160 employees, Otto has a turnover of approximately 30 million euros in 2023.

[www.otto-garne.com](http://www.otto-garne.com)

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## About Kelheim Fibres

Kelheim Fibres GmbH is a world-leading manufacturer of viscose speciality fibres.

Innovative products, flexible technologies and an exceptional focus on sustainability form the foundation of the company's success.

Our speciality fibres are used in most diverse applications from fashion, hygiene and medical products to nonwovens and speciality papers.

All our fibres are made from 100% wood pulp from PEFC or FSC<sup>TM</sup> certified sources (FSC<sup>TM</sup> C009583).

They are fully biodegradable and offer an environmentally sound alternative to petroleum-based materials in a broad range of different end products – while maintaining or even enhancing the functional performance of the product.

The production takes place exclusively in Germany and complies with the strict German environmental legislation. Our closed-loop philosophy and an energy-efficient way to operate our plants help to save valuable resources. Kelheim Fibres is the first viscose manufacturer worldwide with an EMAS-validated environmental management system.

[www.kelheim-fibres.com](http://www.kelheim-fibres.com)

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