

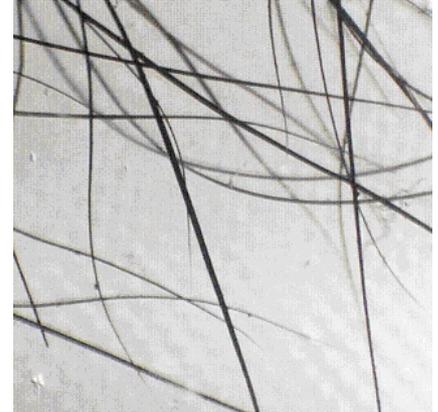
POSSUM

In the last 5 years, possum fibre has taken off as a specialised “luxury” addition to natural fibre blends, especially in New Zealand where introduced Australian brush-tailed possums are regarded as an ecological pest, apparently munching through 20,000 tonnes of vegetation each day. From a niche position, possum-wool fibre blends are now entering the mainstream in a number of areas, and products from a variety of blends are on sale not only in every airport shopping area and most tourist destinations, but also in the high street.

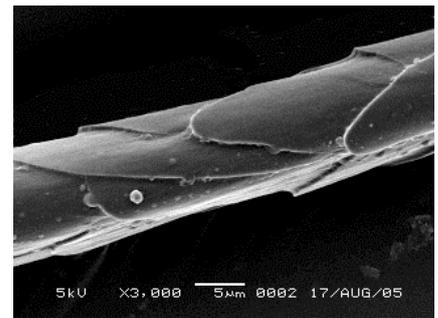
Products from possum-wool blend yarns have attracted such marketing accolades as “feels like cashmere”, “hard wearing”, “light weight”, “warmer than wool in winter and cooler in summer”, “low pilling”, “resilient”, “non-static”, etc.

Possum fibre is relatively short (20 to 30mm) and comprises both down and guard hair. Often the guard hair is darker and appears to be present in greater quantity than it actually is. The down is of the order of 12 to 14 microns in diameter whereas the guard hair tends to be about 5 microns coarser. The guard hair also tapers to a very sharp point of only a few microns in diameter. The fibres are generally very medullated.

Because of its short length, test methods developed for wool have had to be significantly modified. SGS has contributed to the commercial development of this fibre by improving or modifying a number of test methods in order to characterise the fibre for yarn and fabric producers.



Possum Guard Hair (Magnified)



Possum Fibre (Magnified)

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