

ICA and BBB to create new Centre of Excellence

The International Cotton Association (ICA) and the Bremer Baumwollboerse (BBB) have reached an historic agreement to combine their specific expertise around quality testing, training and research to create a new international quality testing and research centre.

"The ICA Bremen International Quality Testing and Research Centre" will be a centre of excellence for all quality related matters. Operating from the BBB's laboratory facility in Germany, the new centre will build on the BBB's existing international reputation for cotton/fibre research and testing, whilst also capitalising on the ICA's global reputation and reach.

Mr Kai Hughes, ICA Managing Director will assume overall responsibility for managing the new venture. Assisting in the development will be Dr Axel Drieling from the Bremen Faserinstitut, Mr Karsten Froese from the BBB and Dr Robert Jiang from the ICA. The day to day running of the centre will be under the direction of Axel and Karsten, whilst administration and marketing will be conducted from the ICA office in Liverpool.

Speaking ahead of today's announcement, Mr Ray Butler, ICA President said: *"This is a significant step forward for both the ICA and Bremer Baumwollboerse. It provides a unique opportunity to combine the skills and expertise of both organisations to produce a really world class laboratory that can lead the way in areas of testing, research, quality training and accreditation. This new venture underlines our joint commitment and enables us to effectively pool our resources to develop a centre of excellence."*

Mr Jens Lukaczik, BBB President added: *"This co-operation between the two associations is a novelty in our industry and will be a milestone in our joint aspiration to lift cotton quality testing and research to the next level. We have gone a long way and worked together in a spirit of partnership and trust in order to realise this project. This bodes well for the future and we are both agreed that the centre will be of immense benefit to the global cotton community."*

It is envisaged that the new centre will be fully operational in October 2011. Further announcements will be made once the detailed arrangements have been finalised.