Business Week
25 June - 01 July

EU, USA and Japan remain China's top trading partners

25 June 2007

In spite of numerous anti-dumping tariffs imposed on Chinese-made goods, according to customs statistics China's bilateral trade with its three major trading partners, the EU, the USA and Japan, continued to rise steadily during the first five months of this year (January to May).

The statistics showed that Sino-EU trade increased 29% to reach $129.87 billion, cementing the EU's position as China's largest trading partner, whilst Sino-US bilateral trade increased 18.2% to $115.17 billion, followed by a 15.5% rise in Sino-Japanese trade to $91.24 billion. ASEAN remained China's fourth largest trading partner at $75.29 billion, an increase of 27.5% year-on-year.

Clariant raises prices for functional chemicals

25 June 2007

Swiss specialty chemicals producer Clariant's Functional Chemicals Division will increase global prices for its products containing ethylene oxide, fatty alcohols and fatty acids by 7% to 10%, effective July. Customers will be contacted individually regarding the specifics of the price increases.

Announcing the decision to raise prices, the company stated that adjustments were necessary in order to address raw material cost increases, especially for ethylene, ethylene oxide, fatty alcohol and fatty acid.

Ethylene oxide derivatives and products based on fatty alcohols and fatty acids are applied in a range of industries and segments including the fibre and textile industry, the chemical industry, paints & coatings, detergents, industrial and institutional cleaning and agro chemicals.

Strong Chinese sales boost Yue Yuen profits

25 June 2007

Hong Kong-based manufacturer of athletic and casual footwear Yue Yuen Industrial (Holdings) Limited has posted improved unaudited results for the first six months ended March 31, boosted by strong wholesale and retail sales in Greater China and stable growth in footwear production.

Turnover increased 10.6% year-on-year to reach $1.904.8 billion, whilst profit increased 0.8% to $169.6 million.

Revenue from wholesale and retail operations increased 37% to $189 million, whilst sales from the company's wholesale and retail operations in the Greater China region continued to improve and accounted for approximately 10% of total turnover.

The volume of footwear produced improved 14.9% to 111 million pairs, as a result of strong demand from existing and new customers and the addition of 14 new production lines.

Ideal to launch sustainable zips

25 June 2007

Said to be the second largest zip manufacturer in the world, Ideal Fastener Corporation is to launch a new line of sustainable zips using Unifi Inc.'s

Repreve yarns—a family of polyester yarns made from 100% recycled materials. The new line will be sold under Ideal's Ideal Earth brand, which is designed to provide customers with a solution for a complete eco-package.

Textronics expands heart sensing sportswear line

25 June 2007

The NuMetrex Cardio Shirt for men was designed to provide an alternative to cumbersome heart rate monitoring chest straps that can chafe, slip and loosen during workouts. Constructed of an advanced wicking fabric with special sensory fibres integrated directly into the garment, the shirt is said to allow men to wear a heart rate monitor without knowing it is there. The conductive fabric moves with the body, picking up the heart's pulse and sending it to a compatible watch or cardio machine via a transmitter that is snapped into a pocket on the shirt.

Another new addition, the NuMetrex Heart Sensing Racer Tank, is said offer the same seamless monitoring capabilities as the NuMetrex Heart Sensing Sports Bra, which was introduced in 2005, but features a shelf bra

where the electronic sensing technology is integrated into the fabric to monitor heart rate. It is made of quick drying nylon Lycra with a second-skin fit that offers medium support.

Rayonier names new VP and corporate controller

26 June 2007

US-based cellulose fibre producer Rayonier has promoted current assistant controller, Financial Reporting, Joseph Lannotti to vice president and corporate controller. He joined the company in April 2001.

Mr Iannotti succeeds, and continues to report to, Hans Vanden Noort, who was recently appointed senior vice president and chief financial officer.

Rayonier is involved in three core businesses: performance cellulose fibres, timber and real estate.

Tween Brands makes promotions

26 June 2007

Ohio-based sportswear retailer for seven- to 14-year-olds Tween Brands, Inc. has promoted Paul Carbone to senior vice president and chief financial officer, reporting to president and chief operating officer Kenneth Stevens.

Mr Carbone joined the company in September 2006 as senior vice president – Finance and was named principal accounting officer and principal financial officer in November 2006. Prior to joining Tween Brands he held various financial executive positions with Limited Brands, Inc. from July 2000 to August 2006.

The company has also promoted Kurt Gatterdam to vice president, treasurer, reporting to Mr Carbone. Mr Gatterdam joined the company in 2002 as treasury manager. He was promoted to director, Treasury and Risk Management in 2004 and to vice president, Treasury and Risk Management in 2006.

US sporting goods sales growth slows

26 June 2007

In its Monthly Retail Trade Survey, the US Census Bureau reported that preliminary sales from sporting goods stores totalled $2.86 billion for April, up 1.6% from $2.82 billion in April 2006.

Sales for the first four months of 2007 reached $10.64 billion, up 5.5% compared with the first four months of 2006, at which point sales were up 12.5% over the previous year.

Sales for full-year 2006 were $35.04 billion, up 12.9% over 2005, a record high and the strongest growth reported for ten years.

Lenzing opens new office in Coimbatore

26 June 2007

Austrian producer of cellulose fibres Lenzing AG has officially opened a new branch of Lenzing Fibers in Coimbatore, one of India's most important textile centres, which will employ a professional team of marketing experts, technicians and merchandisers to support Indian textile processors and international brands that source product in the South East Asian country.

Since the 1970s, India's textile exports have increased 270 times and brands such as Gap, Banana Republic, and Nike have established sourcing offices in India and make use of the traditional Indian textile market for the production of their goods.

Eschler launches new eco line with Repreve and Sorona

26 June 2007

Switzerland-based knitwear manufacturer Christian Eschler AG is launching a new line made of renewable resources and recyclable polyester yarns using Unifi's recycled Repreve polyester yarns and DuPont's Sorona.

Commenting on the new line, Philip Schär, general sales and marketing manager, said, "Our line—manufactured from recycled polyester yarns and from yarns based on renewable resources—has been kept deliberately small, but we see great future potential for this line, which is to be extended over the next few months. This will happen in close collaboration with our key customers, who are replacing their conventional Eschler materials with eco-friendly versions."

Lectra continues its world tour

26 June 2007

Following the success of various events held in China, Tunisia, Northern Europe and Thailand, French developer of integrated technology solutions Lectra now plans to showcase its latest developments at tour events in India and France.

The next events for fashion will take place in Bangalore, India, in September and in Bordeaux, France, in October and November.

Globe to sell World Industries

26 June 2007

Australian designer and developer of surf, skateboarding and snow apparel, footwear and hardgoods Globe International has entered into an agreement to sell its World Industries brand to US-based business i.e. distribution, the current global licensing agent for the World Industries brand, for $8 million.

Calvin Klein to open free-standing retail stores

26 June 2007

As a result of continued growth at retail of both the women's and men's sportswear lines sold under the Calvin Klein white label, Calvin Klein, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation plans to launch five free-standing Calvin Klein-branded specialty retail stores in the United States featuring apparel, footwear and accessories.

Each concept store will average approximately 10,000 square feet and will bring together merchandise categories currently available under the Calvin Klein white label line of men's and women's apparel and accessories. Planned assortments will include men's and women's sportswear, suit separates, jeanswear, underwear, outerwear, footwear, eyewear, watches, and fragrance, men's tailored clothing, shirting, belts and ties; and women's dresses, and accessories.

True Religion to launch swimwear with InGear

26 June 2007

US-based apparel designer and manufacturer True Religion Apparel, Inc. has signed a licensing agreement with one of the largest suppliers of swim, resort and casual lifestyle fashions InGear Swimwear, LLC for a new line of swimwear for women, men, and children. Under the agreement, InGear will design, produce and distribute True Religion branded swimwear at department stores and specialty stores across the USA.

InGear will unveil the True Religion Brand Swim in July 2007 at the Swimwear Association of Florida Swim Show in Miami, with initial shipments set to begin in November.

USA makes arrests over 950 shipments of counterfeit goods

27 June 2007

Following a 19-month investigation organised by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection, 29 people have been arrested in three separate complaints concerning conspiracy to smuggle over 950 shipments of merchandise into the United States principally from China through the ports in New Jersey, Texas, California, and New York, and/or conspiracy to traffic in counterfeit goods.

The first complaint involves two schemes to smuggle over 900 shipments of counterfeit and authentic merchandise including counterfeit Coach, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs, and Balenciaga handbags, Rolex watches, and Nike footwear, during which counterfeit merchandise worth, if authentic, in excess of $650 million was seized.

The second complaint charges nine defendants with two schemes to smuggle counterfeit merchandise including Nike sneakers, North Face jackets, Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Chanel, and Fendi handbags, and True Religion jeans. Law enforcement officers seized containers of counterfeit merchandise worth, if authentic, more than $11 million in one smuggling scheme, and 22 containers with over $25 million of counterfeit in the other.

The third complaint charges defendants with conspiring to import counterfeit goods, including Coach handbags, into the United States and to traffic in those goods.

Sultex hosts pre-ITMA press conference

27 June 2007

Swiss weaving machine manufacturer Sultex hosted a press conference on June 9 to preview products that will appear at textile machinery exhibition ITMA, which will take place in Munich on September 13-20.

This included high-performance weaving systems such as rapier weaving machine Sulzer Textil G6500 RSP, projectile weaving machine Sulzer Textil P7300HP and air-jet weaving machine Sulzer Textil L5500.

Wearable Technologies at ispo Sport & Style

27 June 2007

A 250m² platform for Wearable Technologies is expected to attract substantial interest at ispo Sport & Style, on July 8-10 in Munich.

Visitors will be able to view 'intelligent' products related to iPods and other electronic devices, and will be given a comprehensive analysis of body functions in sports using movement sensors. The use of solar cells and RFID will also be covered.

The European Space Agency (ESA) will present new products including a protective suit for firemen, which features an integrated cooling system, originally developed to protect astronauts against direct sunrays. At the other extreme, it will also showcase its aerogel jacket, which protects researchers at the Concordia Station in the Antarctic against temperatures of minus 50º.

Two panel discussions will also take place at the Wearable Technologies booth; one on the use of movement sensors in sports and healthcare for recording movement and vital parameters and the second on wearable technologies for the 50+ age group.

Parallel to the fair, the first Wearable Technologies Congress will take place at the New Munich Trade Fair Centre on July 9, covering new trends and market opportunities for retailers in the sector. Speakers will include Schreiner Logidata, Sport2000 and Quiksilver.

AATCC to hold Textile Testing Workshop

27 June 2007

The American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC) will host an Introduction to Textile Testing Workshop at its Technical Center in North Carolina on October 25-26, which will provide an overview of the tests needed to run a textile laboratory. The event is aimed at those responsible for product evaluation, specifications and quality control of fibres, yarns, fabrics, garments and carpets.

Some 25 AATCC procedures for evaluating colourfastness and physical properties will be demonstrated and discussed as well as sessions on basic colour theory and fibre identification. Participants will be given hands-on exercises and will learn how to use the association's Gray Scales for Staining and Color Change, Chromatic Transference Scale and Xenon Reference Fabric.

Second Spanish TNF store opens

27 June 2007

Outdoor apparel and equipment company The North Face opened its second Spanish store on June 25, bringing its European tally to 29.

The Benasque store offers 74m² of retail space and will include the Adventure Travel Collection, which ranges from lightweight and packable travel bags to T-shirts, and the Flight Series Endurance Collection.

The company plans to open a further ten stores across Europe in the next year.

Payless named exclusive US retailer for Dexter

27 June 2007

Said to be the largest specialty family footwear retailer in the Western hemisphere Payless ShoeSource, Inc. has signed a multi-year agreement with women's and men's footwear supplier H.H. Brown Shoe Company, Inc., making Payless the exclusive retailer for the Dexter brand of footwear and accessories in the United States and the rest of the Western hemisphere. H.H. Brown will continue to design, develop and sell Dexter performance bowling and golf shoes, as well as the exclusive hand-sewn Dexter 1957 Collection.

Payless plans to launch the new Dexter line first with a men's collection in select Payless stores for the 2007 holiday season followed by full men's and women's collections launched in all stores in spring 2008.

Basell to acquire Huntsman

27 June 2007

Netherlands-based polypropylene and advanced polyolefin products producer Basell has signed an agreement to acquire chemicals and pigments manufacturer Huntsman Corporation, in a transaction valued at approximately $9.6 billion, including the assumption of debt.

Under the terms of the agreement, Basell will acquire all of the outstanding common stock of Huntsman for $25.25 per share in cash. The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions and the approval of Huntsman shareholders.

Revenues rise 9% at Nike

27 June 2007

Nike, Inc. has reported significantly improved financial results for the fourth quarter and 2007 fiscal year, ended May 31.

For the fourth quarter, revenues increased 9% to $4.4 billion compared with $4 billion for the same period last year. Net income increased 32% to $437.9 million from $332.8 million in the comparable quarter of the prior year. Revenues also grew 9% for the full fiscal year to reach $16.3 billion compared with $15 billion in fiscal 2006, whilst net income increased 7% to $1.5 billion versus $1.4 billion.

Other business revenues, which include Cole Haan Holdings Incorporated, Converse Inc., Exeter Brands Group LLC, Hurley International LLC, Nike Bauer Hockey Inc., and Nike Golf grew 9% to reach $649.7 million in the fourth quarter and by 16% to $2.3 billion for the full

year.

The company also reported worldwide futures orders for athletic footwear and apparel, scheduled for delivery from June 2007 through November 2007, totalling $7.7 billion, 12% higher than the same period last year. By region, futures orders for the USA increased 7%, Europe (which includes the Middle East and Africa) improved 12% percent; Asia Pacific grew 19%; and the Americas increased 15%.

Pakistan raises textile export target

28 June 2007

According to Pakistan's Textile Minister Mushtaq Ali Cheema, the country's 2007-08 target for textile exports is over $13 billion, up 20% compared with $11 billion this year.

Textile exports for the first eleven months of the year (May 2006 to July 2007) increased 6% to total $9.8 billion compared with $9.3 billion in the prior-year period with almost all sectors, with the exception of raw cotton, cotton cloth, and nightwear, recording marginal growth.

Readymade garment exports grew 5.35% to $1.3 billion during the period from $1.2 billion in the same period last year and knitwear increased 12.9% to $1.8 billion from $1.6 billion. Cotton yarn was up 4.2%, while non-cotton yarn rose an impressive 82.6%.

Fashion and function cross over in swimwear market

28 June 2007

A new review of the global beach and swimwear sectors released by market research company Reportlinker.com studies the crossover that is taking place between the sports and fashion industries, which appear to be borrowing ideas from one another to offer greater appeal to consumers.

The report, which also provides industry forecasts to 2013, describes the swimwear market as resilient, despite issues such as an imbalance of wealth across the globe and cultural or religious barriers to certain types of swimwear. The retail market for swimwear and beachwear was reportedly worth $12.88 billion in 2006, while in terms of volume 1.04 billion pieces were sold. Market share was 49% for women, 25% for men and 26% for children.

KMA launches tagging programme in Hong Kong

28 June 2007

Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) label manufacturer KMA Global Solutions International, Inc. has announced that its new Hong Kong branch, which opened in May, has entered into its first major agreement to supply its patented NextTag sew-in source tagging solutions to the vendors of one of the largest apparel agents in Hong Kong, in an estimated $5 million deal.

Vendors from across Asia will now be able to purchase more than 70 million of its solutions for garments that will be shipped to stores in North America and Europe.

The tags are embedded in products or affixed to packaging during manufacture and can be used for all types of apparel including swimsuits, intimate apparel and jeans.

Slow UK sales growth continues

28 June 2007

According to the latest Distributive Trades Survey from the Confederation of British Industry, sales growth in the UK retail industry for the first half of June has been less than expected for the second month running and is significantly below April's three-year high.

The survey showed that for 37% of retailers year-on-year sales were up in the period, while 20% claimed they were down. This balance of +17 is in line with the long-term average, but is the lowest since November last year. Retailers expect a similar growth rate in July and, although the volume of orders has slowed a little, it remains above average.

The poorer weather during June contributed to an annual rate of decline for clothing sales that has only been seen once before in the survey's 24-year history; the balance of -52% was previously recorded in July 2005. Clothing, textiles and footwear wholesalers have reported the weakest sales balance (-75%) since July 2001 (-88%).

The survey, which was conducted between May 30 and June 13, involved 146 businesses representing 20,000 outlets and 40% of retail jobs.

Celanese increases emulsions prices in Europe

28 June 2007

Texas-based polymer emulsions company Celanese Corporation is to increase the price of all its vinyl-based emulsions sold in Europe by up to €100 per tonne, effective on or after July 1, or as contracts allow.

Product applications for these emulsions include textiles, engineered fabrics, adhesives, coatings, glass fibres and paper.

Eschler to make its debut at OutDoor

28 June 2007

Swiss knitwear company Christian Eschler AG will exhibit at OutDoor 07 in Friedrichshafen, Germany, for the first time on July 19-22, where it will showcase its winter 2008-09 collection.

The company will also launch a new line of yarns manufactured from recycled synthetic fibres and from renewable, agriculturally produced raw materials at the show as well as presenting its ceramic printing technology as featured in Swiss clothing manufacturer Mammut's 'Extreme Qogir' jacket.

Formosa Taffeta performs second bluesign screening

28 June 2007

Taiwan-based fabric and yarn producer Formosa Taffeta Co., Ltd. recently underwent a second bluesign screening. It was the first company in Asia to perform a bluesign screening having first brought its first 'bluesign approved fabric' products to market in 2001.

The aim of the second screening was to extend its approved product range items made from cotton and laminated and coated fabrics to its approved polyester and polyamide products.

The bluesign screening includes a detailed on-site evaluation of the environment, resource and workplace situation of the textile manufacturing sites according to the five principles of the bluesign standard: productivity, consumer safety, air emission, water emission and occupational health and safety. All chemicals, dyestuffs and auxiliaries used are checked on-site. At the re-screening, bluesign technologies AG said the EHSconditions were excellent, particularly its waste water treatment, which was described as "state-of-the-art".

Crailar Fiber to develop bast fibre technology with ARC

28 June 2007

Canada-based Crailar Fiber Technologies (CFT), a subsidiary of environmentally-friendly fibre and fabric producer Naturally Advanced Technologies, Inc., has entered into a agreement with the Alberta Research Council (ARC) for the development of bast fibre technology. Bast fibres are taken from plants such as jute, hemp and ramie.

Under the agreement, CFT has the option of an exclusive worldwide licence to use the new intellectual property developed by the Alberta Research Council on bast fibres including the development of a sustainable, organic moisture management fibre for both winter and summer performance apparel applications, currently referred to as Crailar X-Series, a high performance fibre that does not use harmful petroleum-based products.

The company will pay ARC a quarterly sum to support the collaboration and royalties on any sales.

PPR secures 33% stake in Puma

28 June 2007

Following the expiry of the initial acceptance period of French luxury goods group PPR's offer for German sportswear brand Puma, PPR now holds a 33.2% stake (5,321,764 shares) in Puma.

The additional acceptance period, which started on June 28 and ends on July 11, will provide Puma shareholders with a final opportunity to tender their Puma shares at €330 per share.

With approximately 78,000 employees in 75 countries PPR's brands include Gucci, Bottega Veneta, Yves Saint Laurent, Balenciaga, Boucheron, Sergio Rossi, Alexander McQueen and Stella McCartney.

Profits slide at Timberland

28 June 2007

US-based designer of footwear, apparel and accessories The Timberland Company has posted significantly lower operating profits of $13.6 million for the first quarter, down from $40.1 million in the prior-year period.

Net income also fell to $9.3 million from $26.1 million in the same prior-year period as a result of restructuring costs, whilst revenue fell 3.9% due to a decline in sales in it boots and children's footwear segments, which were partially offset by gains in SmartWool and Timberland Pro.

Commenting on the results, president and CEO, Jeffrey Swartz, stated, "While near-term hurdles remain, we are committed to our strategy for the long-term growth of the Timberland brand and enterprise. We continue to broaden our portfolio with acquisitions such as SmartWool, GoLite, Howies and Ipath so that we can reach more consumers than ever before."

Hanesbrands to cut over 5,000 jobs

28 June 2007

Having already announced the closure of three sewing facilities in May, US-based producer of innerwear, outerwear and hosiery Hanesbrands Inc. has announced that it will close nine further plants in four countries and will cut approximately 5,300 jobs. The closures are part of a multi-year consolidation strategy implemented by the firm when it was spun off as an independent company in September 2006.

The company will close plants and operations in Canada, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, the United States and Puerto Rico, and will move production to lower-cost operations in Central America and Asia. In addition, approximately 350 management and administrative positions will be eliminated, the majority of which are based in the USA.

In Canada, the company's intimate apparel fabric cutting plant in Montreal will cease production, affecting approximately 50 employees and production will shift to Asia. In the Dominican Republic, the company will close sewing plants in Santo Domingo and Santiago, shifting production to company sewing plants in Central America and Thailand. These closures will affect approximately 2,500 employees. In Mexico, production will cease at sewing or fabric cutting plants for knit products and intimate apparel in Cadereyta de Montes, Madero, Merida and Nueva Rosita, affecting 2,200 employees and production will be shifted to Central America and elsewhere in Mexico. In Puerto Rico, the company will close its innerwear fabric cutting plant in Vega Baja, employing approximately 150, and move production to company cutting plants in Central America and Thailand. In the USA, intimate apparel fabric lamination and sewing in Statesville, N.C., with 70 employees, will cease operations and shift to Central America.

Lower military boot sales hit results at McRae Industries

28 June 2007

Lower sales in its military boot segment negatively affected third quarter results at US-based producer of military, western, and work footwear and bar code products McRae Industries, Inc.

Consolidated net revenues for the third quarter slipped to $16.2 million from $17.1 million in the third quarter of fiscal 2006, due to the reduced sales of bar code products and military combat boots to the US government, although this was partially offset by increased sales of western and work boot products.

Net revenues for the military boot business totalled $5.1 million compared with $5.9 million, due to lower military combat boot requirements related to the completion of a former contract with the US government in September 2006.

On a more positive note, net revenues for the western and work boot business increased to $8.9 million from $8 million, primarily attributable to strong demand for John Deere branded footwear products, which more than offset the decline in the fashion segment of the western boot market.

Consolidated net revenues for the first nine months also declined year-on-year, falling 9% to $50.from $56.1 million. This decline was again attributed to the reduced requirements for military combat boots for the government and weaker than anticipated sales of bar code products.

For the nine-month period, net revenues for the military boot business totalled $12.4 million compared with $17 million, and net revenues for the western and work boot business climbed to $29.5 million from $28.3 million.

Grupo Ferrominero and Calitri Denim establish JV

29 June 2007

Mexican conglomerate Grupo Ferrominero (GFM) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding, through its subsidiary GFM Textiles (GFMT), with Naples-based Calitri Denim Industry (CDI), part of the MCM Italian Group, to establish a joint venture, GFMT Italy, under which GFMT will hold an 80% stake and CDI will hold a 20% interest.

Under the terms of the agreement, from July GFMT Italy will expand its denim fabric supply with fabric designed and produced in Italy, as well as with fabric designed in Italy and produced in Mexico, taking advantage of the competitive advantages of both countries.

Lija remains in Profit’s top 100 fastest growing companies list

29 June 2007

Golf and sportswear brand Lija is listed among the top 100 fastest-growing Canadian companies in Profit magazine for the third consecutive year.

The only apparel brand to make the 2007 list, it appeared in 83rd place based on a reported 763% revenue increase over five years.

TNF expands presence in Belgium

29 June 2007

California-based outdoor apparel, footwear and equipment company The North Face has opened its third store in Belgium, its 30th European store.

The Hasselt store covers 194m² of retail space and will feature a wide selection of goods including the Adventure Travel Collection and the Flight Series Endurance Collection.

Its first Belgian store was launched in Antwerp last autumn and the second opened in Leuven in May.

Senior promotion at Buckeye

29 June 2007

Tennessee-based specialty fibres and nonwoven materials manufacturer Buckeye Technologies Inc. has promoted Steven Dean, currently vice president and chief financial officer, to senior vice president and chief financial officer, effective July 1.

Having joined the company in 1999, Mr Dean was elected vice president and controller in February 2006, and was appointed vice president and chief financial officer in July last year.

Report on the global apparel market released

29 June 2007

Dublin-based research company Research and Markets has presented a new report on the structure, size, growth rate and market trends within the global apparel market, ‘Global Apparel Market: Segment Analysis’.

The report examines the changing dynamics as the market continues to grow and multi-national corporations extend their reach into emerging markets, resulting in consolidation amongst retailers, burgeoning private brands and increased outsourcing.

The study covers menswear, womenswear, teenswear, childrenswear, intimate apparel, handbags and accessories, footwear and activewear.

New innovations from Windtex Vagotex at Techtextil

29 June 2007

Italian membrane producer Windtex Vagotex launched two new products at the recent Techtextil fair in Frankfurt, Germany.

The first was a new bi-component, bi-elastic Windtex membrane made from Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) using nanotechnology, for sports apparel and workwear. The second was a Gold Windtex membrane which combines standard Windtex qualities such as breathability, warmth and water resistance, with a more fashion-centred design and colour theme.

Spalding signs Greg Oden and Gilbert Arenas

29 June 2007

Massachusetts-based basketball equipment supplier Spalding, a division of Russell Corporation, has signed NBA draft prospect Greg Oden (Ohio State) and Washington Wizards guard Gilbert Arenas to endorse its basketballs and backboards lines.

Terms of the multi-year deals were not disclosed.

USA sues Toyobo over defective bullet-proof vests

29 June 2007

The USA has filed a False Claims Act lawsuit against Toyobo Co. Ltd. of Japan and its American subsidiary, Toyobo America Inc., concerning the manufacture and sale of defective Zylon bullet-proof vests to law enforcement agencies.

From 1999 to 2005, Toyobo manufactured and marketed Zylon, a high-tensile strength polymer fibre, for use in ballistic applications; however, Toyobo was aware of significant manufacturing and degradation problems that were inherent in both its fibre and in its manufacturing process. The government's complaint alleges that Toyobo never had control of its manufacturing process, was manufacturing Zylon with serious defects that resulted in lower fibre strength, and knew that Zylon degraded much faster than was disclosed.

"The knowing provision of defective material for use in the bullet-proof vests worn by our federal agents and other law enforcement officers is more than just a fraud on the US Treasury," stated Peter Keisler, assistant attorney general for the Civil Division. "Toyobo's conduct here put the lives of hundreds of thousands of law enforcement officers at risk."

AAFA to release restricted substances list

29 June 2007

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)

unveiled its inaugural restricted substances list (RSL), covering home textiles, apparel and footwear to more than 100 industry experts and compliance professionals at the AAFA Environmental Issues Seminar on June 27. The list, with an introductory guide, will be available to the public at the AAFA website from July 9.

Developed with the support of AAFA's RSL Task Force and reviewed by a Peer Review group, the list currently covers chemicals and other substances whose presence in a product is restricted through a government regulation or law. Future versions are expected to include chemicals and substances whose presence, while not regulated by a government authority, are still restricted in practice.