

PETA LAUNCHES UNJUSTIFIED BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN AGAINST BENETTON

Animal welfare group improperly targets Benetton brand to give visibility to its campaign against mulesing

Ponzano, 15 December 2004. The animal welfare organization PETA has launched an unjustified and defamatory boycott campaign against Benetton Group to give international visibility to its own initiatives against *mulesing**, a practice carried out on young sheep by some farmers in Australia, with which Benetton has no involvement.

UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.

PETA has undertaken this campaign to coerce Benetton into a boycott of all Australian wool. On several occasions the company has explained to PETA that it acquires mixes of wool of diverse origin, from a number of specialist trading companies on the international market. Benetton, additionally, purchases a significant quantity of wool from Argentina, where this problem does not exist.

The company has repeatedly stated it has no sheep breeding activities in Australia, nor does it have any direct or indirect relations with Australian sheep breeders.

Benetton has always paid strong attention to the respect of ethical and social values in its manufacturing organisation, its retail network and in its communication campaigns, with themes often including the animal kingdom (for example, the latest campaign in Autumn 2004, "James & Other Apes"). Benetton has repeatedly informed PETA that it has taken this issue into serious consideration and doing all that is in its power to contribute to finding a tangible and cooperative solution.

In particular, Benetton has contacted the organisations representing the Australian wool producers for information about "mulesing" and has received assurances that significant resources are being invested and research is being carried out to find alternatives to this practice and that these solutions will be introduced as soon as possible.

Despite these undertakings, PETA has decided to improperly use the prominence of the Benetton brand, associating it - in a self-serving and speculative manner for which the association will be called upon to respond - to crude images that have nothing whatsoever to do with the Group's activities of clothing manufacturing and distribution.

**mulesing is a practice carried out to protect young merino sheep from blowfly, whose flesh-eating maggots inflict wounds often leading to death.*

For further information: +39 0422 519036

www.benettongroup.com/press

For information about the communication campaign "James and other Apes": www.benettongroup.com/apes

For information about "mulesing": www.woolisbest.com