

NEWS RELEASE

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Environmental Company wins Queen's Award

A Cumbrian businesswoman's flash of inspiration of how to use surplus wool from British hill sheep as a green friendly insulator for buildings has helped her firm, Second Nature UK, win the Queen's Award for Enterprise.

The Penrith based business has won the Queen's Award in the Sustainable Development Category, which recognises environmentally friendly innovations, for its Thermafleece product.

Thermafleece is the brainchild of Second Nature UK's founder and Director Christine Armstrong who launched the product in May 2001 after two years research with Leeds University non woven textile department. The product has gone on to achieve British Board of Agrément (BBA) approval - so compiling fully with the requirements of the Building Regulations for roof and timber-framed wall insulation.

Ms Armstrong concedes she knew little about manufacturing when the idea first hit her. But she was determined in her goal of creating a green friendly product from British wool.

"When I first started this project I was astonished to find out that the only UK wool insulation was imported,' she said. "Not only that but many of the coarser types of sheep's wool like Herdwick and Swaledale may simply be burned because they are unpopular in the textile industry. There was clearly a glaring gap in the market for a British sustainable natural insulation product. Moreover after the nightmare of foot and mouth in Cumbria I really wanted to reinvest in the rural economy."

Ms Armstrong said Thermafleece's green friendly credentials have caught the imagination of clients.

"One of the most significant features of Thermafleece is that it reduces co2 emissions which is a powerful selling point,' she said. "It only takes a fraction of the energy to produce compared with the glass fibre alternative. It is 100 per cent recyclable and can be installed without gloves or protective clothing.

And it is not irritating to the skin, eyes or the respiratory system. Clients such as Somerset County Council - specifically chose Thermafleece for a school building because it is environmentally friendly and a safe material for children.”

Ms Armstrong is keen to use the Queen’s Award to spread the message of caring for the environment.

“We are ambitious for and passionate about Thermafleece,’ she said. “I hope that winning the Queen’s Award will encourage the construction industry to recognize that environmental building materials are able to compete in the commercial world. It is gratifying that a natural sustainable building product has been recognised by the Award’s judges, it is a significant step forward for green materials and we look forward to Second Nature UK continuing to grow from strength to strength. “

NOTES TO EDITORS

A photograph of the Second Nature team can be emailed on request.

For further information please contact Penny Randell at Second Nature UK Ltd on 017684 86285. info@secondnatureuk.com

For more details about the Queen’s Awards log on to: www.queensawards.org.uk

FACTFILE

Home and Philosophy

Second Nature is based in a small hamlet on the edge of the Northern Lake District. This is the heart of hill farming country and was the inspiration for Thermafleece.

It is Second Nature's philosophy to minimize the impact on environment and offer our customers a greener alternative. Thermafleece uses the coloured, coarser wool from the sheep that graze on the upland hills throughout Great Britain. The unique blend of wool from breeds such as Swaledale, Herdwick, Welsh Mountain and Scotch Blackface make an extremely efficient and natural insulating material and can be used in a wide variety of roof, wall and floor construction.

Effective in all climates

Because of its ability to rapidly to absorb and release water vapour, Thermafleece wool insulation can help keep a building cool in summer and warm in winter

Stops the rot!

Thermafleece, being hygroscopic, can absorb and desorb water vapour without compromising its thermal efficiency. It is therefore ideal for use in roofs and timber framed walls designed to avoid a damaging build-up of moisture by allowing water vapour to migrate through the structure

100 per cent recyclable

At the end of its useful life, Thermafleece can be recycled for other environmentally friendly applications. Thermafleece contains no permethrin, pyrethroids or pesticides. Wool is a natural fibre from a fully renewable resource consequently the life cycle of the product has an ideal energy balance.

Awards

In March 2002 Christine won Country Living Magazine Enterprising Rural Women Awards in the Small Rural Business Category.

In September 2002 Christine was the winner of the Women Mean Business Award sponsored by T Mobile and the Sunday Express