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Buyer Alert: Dye-free Denim Yarns; March 14, 2014 by Eben Nicastro



White Oak selvedge with recycled food-tray-black poly in weft

Cone Denim continues to grow its EarthSpun recycled polyester yarn program, which is an essential element to the mill's broad initiative for eco-conscious denim solutions at the fiber and fabric levels. Manufactured by neighboring North Carolina spinner Patrick Yarns, EarthSpun yarns are made from domestically sourced, post-consumer plastic bottles and packaging.

All yarn color comes from source materials, which are sorted by tone, making additional dyeing unnecessary. Used primarily in the wefts of 75/25 and 65/35 cotton/polyester twills, these yarns impart subtle tints to premium denim surfaces. Along with Cone Denim's popular beer-bottle-browns (derived from plastic sporting-event bottles), soda-pop-greens and microwavable food-tray-blacks, buyers are showing keen interest in the water-cooler-blue, ketchup-red, mustard-yellow and X-ray-grey options.

Merging its modern eco approach with its heritage denim knowhow, Cone is now running these sustainable yarns across selvedge looms at its White Oak plant, which has been in operation since 1905. The sprung hardwood floors of the North Carolina mill, on which these shuttle looms operate, help preserve the inherently

inconsistent character and texture of these new selvages.

Recycled ketchup-red and mustard-yellow PET weft yarns, Cone Denim.



Recycled beer-bottle-brown PET weft yarns.



Cone Denim soda-pop-green recycled PET weft denim range



Sustainability at Retail:

Building upon its successful Water<Less initiative which reduces up to 96% of wastewater during denim production, Levi's uses EarthSpun yarns within its Waste<Less line. While the S/S 13 collection repurposed a healthy 3.5 million bottles, this is just the beginning. Cone reports that Americans are throwing away up to 2 million plastic bottles every 10 minutes; the industry has much room to grow.