



# Automating for success

ITMA Daily News interviews **Therese Premler-Andersson**, secretary general of the Textile Machinery Association of Sweden (TMAS)

## How many Swedish textile companies are exhibiting at ITMA 2019?

We have nine companies exhibiting this year, as follows:

- **ACG Kinna Automatic AB:** Textile machinery for the fully automated production of home textiles. Location: Hall 3, Stand D23.
- **Baldwin Technology AB:** Solutions for finishing, water/chemical management and filtration. Location: Hall 2, Stand A204.
- **Eltex of Sweden AB:** Weft and yarn supervision. Location: Hall 4, Stand B102.
- **ES Automatem Solution AB:** Automated machines for home textiles production. Location: Hall 3, Stand C250.
- **Eton Systems AB:** Fully automated material handling systems. Location: Hall 2, Stand A214.
- **IRO AB:** Yarn feeding equipment. Location: Hall 4, Stand A206b.
- **Optivac:** Vacuum extraction machinery. Location: Hall 2, Stand A102.
- **Svegea of Sweden AB:** Wide range of collarette cutters, slitting machines and bias cutting machines. Location: Hall 3, Stand D250.
- **Texo AB:** Weaving looms for paper machine clothing and industrial technical fabrics. Location: Hall 5, Stand A101.

## What are you and your member companies hoping to get from ITMA 2019?

Our main objective, like the majority of

exhibitors, is to meet with customers old and new, as well as agents, distributors and partners, in order to provide live demonstrations of the latest innovations from TMAS members.

Networking within the textile technology community and checking out new trends and developments from other companies is also very important.

ITMA is the biggest show for textile machinery manufacturers worldwide, bringing together the entire textile community from every part of the supply chain – it's not referred to as the 'Textile Machinery Olympics' for nothing! As such, it's the perfect platform and face-to-face meetings remain essential in this industry.

## What trends have you noticed in the textile market recently?

It's an exciting time for the Swedish textile industry, as well as globally. I believe there is a paradigm shift taking place around business models, which is linked to the fashion industry and is significantly influencing the textile industry. Ongoing innovations are involving digitisation and technology development with the potential to boost social, economic and ecological responsibility, as well as sales and distribution.

What machinery manufacturers need to be providing now is flexible automation, allowing for smaller batches, customisation,

automatic movement, and the integration of processes and machines. Our textile manufacturing partners need us to help them fully exploit the opportunities provided by such concepts as 3D scanning and 3D printing, full computerisation, and the upcoming rise of artificial intelligence. The efficient reuse of materials and sustainability is another area in which strong supply chain partnerships and networks are required.

Another trend is that of new business models, which is already happening in the textile and garment industries to a certain extent, and we also expect to impact on the machinery side going forward. Instead of owning a machine, the customer may decide to license and pay for use based on output – by metre, kilogram or whatever. Other industries are already at the point where this is being implemented, and with the high capital and depreciation costs involved in investments, I think we will see this also coming into our industry.

## How are Swedish textile companies gearing up for Industry 4.0 and digitalisation?

Automatic production and the robotic handling of goods are areas where we have seen big developments over the past few years. Swedish companies such as Eton Systems, ACG Kinna Automatic, and ES Automatem are truly among the leaders in automation for garment and home textiles production.

Here at ITMA 2019, for example, ACG Kinna is providing live demonstrations of its new robotic pillow filling system, which is really something to see. It has the ability to fill and finish around 3,840 pillows per eight-hour shift, resulting in significant savings in both labour and energy for busy home textile businesses.

The latest Eton Systems concepts for fully automated work flows in finished garments and textile-based products are another example of where the industry is heading. Eton is demonstrating a complete material handling solution with advanced software, providing real-time information covering every aspect of the process.

These systems are a natural fit with the major Industry 4.0 networked manufacturing plants that are now being constructed worldwide for sectors such as the garment and home textiles manufacturing and automotive industries.

As far as sensors are concerned, Eltex of Sweden is achieving considerable success with its yarn fault detection and tension monitoring systems across a range of sectors, including the tufting of carpets, the creeling of woven materials, and even the production of woven reinforcements for the composites industry. Unlike scanning inspection systems, Eltex is monitoring each individual yarn position in real time, and as a consequence has concentrated on the further miniaturisation of its sensors, as is currently being demonstrated.

At successive ITMA shows, IRO AB has also consistently introduced new milestones in the field of yarn feeding technology for weaving machines, and ITMA 2019 is no exception.

In terms of resource savings, ITMA 2019 sees the launch of the TexCoat G4 – the next generation of Baldwin Technology's non-contact precision application system for fabric finishing. This enables a



continuously high-quality and productive textile finishing process with zero chemistry waste and minimised water and energy consumption.

It's also notable that several long-established technologies continue to find new applications in niche technical textile markets. Svegea, for instance, is applying its bias cutting systems – traditionally employed in garment production – for the production of new components in the aerospace and automotive sectors.

## How is the Swedish textile and textile machinery market currently performing? Is it growing, if so, at what pace?

Over the past 10 years, the Swedish textile industry has achieved growth both domestically and in exports, yet we are a small country compared to many others. Consequently, up to 97% of Swedish textile machinery has been exported for the last couple of decades.

The Swedish textile machinery industry and our members have had some strong years and 2018 also turned out to be a good year. Now we face more uncertainty, although 2019 has been good so far.

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