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124 detained in big cloth-recycling ring

By Lu Feiran | 2011-12-6 | NEWSPAPER EDITION

A huge production and sales network of illegally recycled clothing and bedding with operations in eight cities and provinces, including Shanghai, has been broken up by the police.

Centered in Gansu Province, the network involved more than 8.4 million yuan (US\$1.3 million), reported the Western Business Daily yesterday.

The police's action started in late September. Over the past two and a half months, 124 suspects were detained and more than 10,000 tons of quilts and clothes made of reused cotton were seized, officials said.

China has banned recycling cotton and fiber material into new production because such material damages people's health. Long-term usage of products made of recycled cotton can cause lung cancer, among other health problems.

The police first got clues from a case in Lanzhou, the capital city of Gansu. On May 24, police there busted a warehouse stocking 1,290 quilts made of recycled cotton, and a suspect surnamed Liao was detained.

Liao confessed that he has been processing recycled cotton for more than two years. Police found eight machines and more than three tons of raw material hidden in the workshop, which was originally a pig farm. Up to the time Liao was caught, he had sold more than 1.4 million yuan worth of merchandise, said the newspaper.

Liao said that common quilts sold in the market cost more than 120 yuan each, while the quilts produced by his firm cost 40 yuan each. Liao said he stocked the cotton material from Shanghai and Zhejiang and Hebei provinces and sold the quilts to construction sites in such western areas as Ningxia, Qinghai and Tibet.

Through Liao's case, another recycled cotton processing hideout was found in Huining County in Gansu. On September 29, police raided that hideout, arresting more than 40 people, including workers and owners. Machines, raw material and cotton products were seized, valued at more than 5 million yuan.

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