



Consumers Turn Their Backs on Retailers Selling Fur



consumers
for a fur free society

Beyond the Myths and Propaganda: Facing the Facts



It is time to identify responsibility within the fur trade. Consumers need to recognize those retailers who have made the compassionate decision to forego selling fur.

Still, it remains a retailer's responsibility to examine their role in the intricate relationship among those who kill the animals, those who design garments and accessories made of fur or fur trim, and the system that makes it available to consumers. A retailer must decide how to participate.

Consumers for a Fur Free Society (CFFS) offers itself as a resource to retailers so they can better understand the controversy surrounding the use of animal fur for fashion. CFFS provides informed and reliable responses to what have become common propaganda ploys by the fur industry to desensitize people to a key fact: When we accept the notion that fur is merely a fabric, we contribute to real life animal suffering and death. Born Free USA united with Animal Protection Institute (API) asks that you consider these messages, and take a hard look at the role of a retailer in the fur trade.

The fur industry's goal is to sell fur. Clearly, the fur industry has an incentive to sell its product — fur. The marketing efforts by the fur industry present an emphasis on pitching the concept that fur is merely a fabric. To support this notion, it is necessary that they disassociate the “fabric” from the actual animal that died to provide the fur.

Please consider the reality that fur is not simply a fabric.



Fact: Fur in all shapes, sizes, colors, and patterns is still an animal's coat.

Common Myth: Fur's new styles will make consumers re-think fur in a totally different way.

Because it is "just a small bit of fluffy pink trim" on a jacket cuff or scarf tassel, does not mean it is not the same grisly product of animal suffering and death. Fashion designers who choose to use fur rely on novel ways to incorporate fur into their clothing lines and designs. Fur is now being dyed in bright colors or to mimic exotic animal patterns, braided or beaded to give it a unique texture or exotic look, or shorn down to imitate the feel of velvet fabric. However, the reality remains; the "novel" fur is still the result of animal suffering and death.



Courtesy of Animal Aid



Courtesy of Montgomery County Humane Society

Fact: Neither fur nor fur trim are by-products of the meat industry.

Common Myth: Fur is a by-product and trim is leftovers.

Fur is factory farmed and/or trapped purely for fashion. Some meat is utilized from select fur-bearing animals, most notably rabbit. However, the reality remains that few rabbit skins are obtained from slaughterhouses, which more often dispose of the undesirable pelts of meat-bred rabbits. Intensive meat production techniques are typically incompatible with the production of quality rabbit fur. In addition, rabbits used for meat are typically slaughtered at an age and time of year when their coats are not fully developed (at 10 to 12 weeks) and are unsuitable for fur fashion.

Fur trim is not the “leftovers” from making full-length fur coats. Animals are killed simply to provide trimming effects for fashion.



Courtesy of International Fund for Animal Welfare



Fact: Compassionate, caring people concerned about the environment choose not to wear fur.

Common Myth: Fur fashion is forever.

As more markets embrace the ideologies surrounding ethical consumerism, the tides are shifting as we observe the natural product industry seeing all-time highs, and products such as hybrid cars, free-trade coffee, sweatshop-free clothing, cruelty-free cosmetics, and free-range and organic foods all experiencing measurable success.

Examples such as fur-farming bans across Europe, wide media coverage of undercover investigations revealing the gruesome fur markets of China, recent United States bans on domestic dog and cat fur as well as seal fur, suggest the curtain is beginning to lift, exposing some disheartening truths about fur production and animal suffering, and the roles of those in this market.



Fact: Compassion is always in good taste; fashion is fickle.

Common Myth: Fur is always in style

Fur is controversial, and evokes sadness and anger in many who are exposed to fashion items containing fur or fur trim. Responsibility falls on those who involve themselves in the trade of fur to examine their decision to promote a "style" or "fashion" trend that involves millions of animals suffering and dying to supply fads in fashion.

Fur is beautiful. However, it is beautiful when seen on the sleek bodies of mink, otter, fox, coyote, and the other animals to whom these coats rightfully belong. The fur becomes unattractive with the deaths of those animals, as well as the processing to remove fats and oils, blood, mucus, and other bodily fluids, and the chemical treatments to retard the decay that naturally follows death.



Fact: Synthetic fabrics and faux fur are the answer to cold climate protection.

Common Myth: The warmth of fur makes it a necessity in cold climates.

Synthetic fabrics provide exceptional protection from extreme weather; animal fur is not the only protection from winter's chill.

Fur garments are more often designed for fashion, not warmth. So much fur is sold in the form of trim that the number of animals killed for fur trim is expected to overtake the number of animals killed for full-fur garments. Fur trim contributes very little to warmth.

To maximize fur's ability to warm, fur would be worn on the inside of the garment, as warmth generated by the body is "trapped" next to the skin or underclothing, and then trapped by the outer skin of the fur-bearing animal. Wearing a garment fur-side-out allows heat to escape from the fur.



Fact: Synthetics, cottons, and other plant-based products last as long as, or longer than, fur.

Common Myth: Fur is a naturally durable and long-lasting fiber.

Animal skin, once removed, will rot, unless it is dried and treated with toxic chemicals. Even then, it must be kept cool, must be guarded, as organic tissue, against insects, and of course it still will wear if rubbed against objects. Eventually all the care in the world won't prevent it from delayed deterioration.

Synthetic fur has been proven in tests to be warmer than real fur, lasting longer, and resisting wear better. Even wool and feathers, not being attached to skin, last longer.



Courtesy of FurBearersDefenders.com



Courtesy of Mark Martel/The Rapture Center

Fact: The fur industry is a threat to our environment, specifically to Northern American animal species (such as eagles, lynx, bobcat, red wolf).

Common Myth: Fur is a natural product and environmentally friendly.

It takes nearly three times more energy to produce a fur coat from trapped animals than to produce a synthetic fur, according to a study by Gregory H. Smith, a transportation research engineer at the University of Michigan.

Environmentally harmful products including chromium and formaldehyde are used in the processing of real fur garments to keep them from rotting. In 1991, six New Jersey fur processors were fined more than \$2 million for releasing toxic waste into the environment. Far from being “natural, renewal resources,” real fur products consume more of our precious and irreplaceable energy resources than do those made from synthetic materials.

Fur farming has also threatened Northern America’s wildlife by introducing non-native species, resulting in the systemic environmental effects of land destruction, animal population reductions, and genetic swapping, to name but a few.

Trapping offers a host of unique environmental costs such as reducing several “fur-bearing” species in North America. Additionally, traplines are notoriously indiscriminate — other “non-target” animals (such as bald eagles or lynx pictured above) often become captured in traps.



H. Mieth/Life Magazine © 1941 - 1943 Time Inc.

Fact: Historically, the fur trade played a role in the development of the early North American economy. Tradition never justifies abuse.

Common Myth: The fur trade is a proud North American tradition.

The fur trade was once a part of North American economy, spurred by the European market and Native American trading with European trappers and traders. Many heritages once acceptable are now seen as reminders of more brutal eras. Tradition never justifies abuse, and the real question always comes back to the abuse animals endure as a result of the fur trade.



Courtesy of CAFT UK



Courtesy of CAFT UK



Fact: Trapping does not sustain human populations.

Common Myth: Fur purchases support thousands of people living on the land.

Modern-day trapping cannot compete with alternate means for fur production. Nothing has hurt the aboriginal trapper, or the rural trapper, in areas where reasonably paying jobs are few and far between, more than the fur industry itself. Such trappers cannot compete with fur farms. Fur farmers produce a steady supply, geared to demand, of furs of carefully bred animals, all of the same size, color, and fur density. This is important to the fur industry, which seeks uniformity. Farms regulate production in accordance with market demands.

State wildlife agencies report that income from trapping is either extremely low or non-existent; in fact, when time, equipment, and transportation are calculated into the cost, most trappers actually lose money.



Fact: “Fur farms” are not humane alternatives to trapping, but euphemisms used by the fur industry to describe the confinement facilities for caged fur-bearing animals.

Common Myth: Fur farm conditions have resulted in domestic animals very well suited to the farm environment.

Over thirty million animals worldwide are raised in cages and killed each year for their fur. Confinement of naturally wild animals causes numerous physical and behavior abnormalities. These caged animals are eventually killed by inhumane methods such as gassing, neck breaking, anal electrocution, or injection with poisons.

Courtesy of PeTA



Fact: Currently, no federal laws provide protection for the millions of animals in fur farms.

Common Myth: Fur farming is a highly regulated industry.

The fur farm industry is completely self-regulated.

Courtesy of HSUS/Clemwood Jackson



Courtesy of HSUS/Karremann/Despojo



Fact: Fur from endangered or protected species still makes it to the market and bans are difficult to enforce. Domestic dog and cat fur bans in the United States are as recent as 2000 and label loopholes make enforcement tricky.

Common Myth: Furs used in the trade are abundant. Government controls ensure NO endangered species are ever used.

Furs made from endangered species exist in this market. There are laws against it, but enforcement is extremely difficult, often absent.

Fur garments priced under \$150 are not subject to current fur-labeling laws, so the source of the animal fur used in these garments may not be listed. Many consumers therefore assume that any fur trim is faux because there is no indication of an animal source. (One horrific example of the dangers of this loophole is the import of domestic dog and cat fur making its way into the U.S. market, and assumed to be, respectively, coyote and rabbit fur.)

In 2007 media stories of dog fur discovered as being part of designer clothing lines, and real fur being sold as “faux” by retailers, made headlines.



Fact: When you commit to a fur-free policy and display the “Fur Free Fox” logo, you send a message to millions of conscientious consumers that you care about animal suffering and that you do not support it.

The Consumers for a Fur Free Society program makes simple the task of communicating your company’s ethical business choices to consumers who desire style and quality with compassion. CFFS is dedicated to helping retailers and consumers make choices for a more humane world.

The Consumers for a Fur Free Society has the backing of the Fur Free Alliance, a coalition of 35 leading animal and environmental protection organizations worldwide, representing more than 10 million members and supporters in the United States alone.

Take advantage of this innovative program by becoming one of the leading retailers to join the CFFS program today.

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