



THE FUR FREE ALLIANCE

REPRESENTING ANIMAL PROTECTION GROUPS WORLDWIDE

Fur Facts

Each year the fur industry kills over 40 million animals for fashion.

Number of Animals to Make a Fur Coat:

**12-15 lynx – 10-15 wolves or coyotes – 15-20 foxes –
60-80 minks – 27-30 racoons – 10-12 beavers – 60-100 squirrels**

Fur Factories:

- Europe is responsible for 70% of the world's factory farmed fur production. The annual global production of fox pelts is about 4.3 million, and mink pelts about 29.5 million.
- Finland is the largest producer of fox skins, with about 2.1 million skins annually.
- Denmark is the largest producer of mink skins with about 12.3 million skins annually.
- The Netherlands produces approximately 3 million mink skins per year, and Finland 2 million.
- A comprehensive 2001 European Union study ('The welfare of animals kept for fur production', compiled by the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare), which reviewed all existing scientific knowledge on the welfare of fur-farmed animals, concluded that the typical fox or mink cage does not provide for the most important basic needs of the animals [**European Commission**. 2001. www.information.com/infurdesk/library.htm].

Already, 6 out of 15 EU Member States have taken steps to restrict, phase-out or ban fur farming:

- Four German states have imposed strict rules on fur farming: Bayern, Hessen, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Schleswig-Holstein. The Bundesrat (The Higher Chamber of the German Parliament) has appealed to the Federal Government to impose strict rules on fur farming throughout Germany. A new law is currently under preparation.
- In Sweden, fox fur farming is only permitted under conditions that meet the biological and behavioural needs of the species, such as opportunity to dig, and the ability to live in a natural, social group. In practice, this has led to a complete cessation of fox farming in Sweden. Currently, a total ban on fur farming is under consideration.
- In the Netherlands, farming of foxes and chinchillas has been banned.
- The UK has banned fur farming on ethical grounds. The ban came into force on January 1, 2003.
- As of 2008, stringent regulations will govern fur farming in Italy. Mink, for example, must be able to swim in water.
- Provinces in Austria have either banned fur farming outright or have imposed such stringent rules that all remaining farms have since been obliged to close.
- In Norway, the Ethical Council of the Ministry of Agriculture has stated that fur farming in its present form is unacceptable from an animal welfare standpoint.
- In Switzerland, stringent legislation prevents intensive cage rearing of animals.

Trapping:

- Each year worldwide, traps injure and kill millions of "nontarget" animals – domestic dogs and cats, rabbits, deer, songbirds, raptors, livestock, and even endangered species.
- The countries that trap the most animals are the United States, Russia and Canada.
- Animals caught in traps suffer excruciating pain. Traps can tear the flesh, cut tendons and ligaments, and break bones.
- Trapped animals are killed by predation, drowning, strangulation, freezing, suffocation, and blows to the head.
- Referred to as "trash" animals, nontarget wildlife often are simply thrown away.
- Injuries from leghold traps are often so severe that the injured limb of a trapped companion animal must be amputated. Conibear traps, however, kill many of their unintended victims.
- Companion animals have been trapped along the edges of railroad tracks, running and hiking trails, streams, airport fences, and campgrounds. They've been caught under porches, in backyards, agricultural fields, and in the middle of cities. They are caught on private property and on public lands, including national forests and municipal parks.
- Trappers are rarely prosecuted when a pet is caught by a trap. Trapping is a largely unregulated activity, and where restrictions do apply, they are poorly enforced. In most cases, trappers do not leave identification on their traps, so trappers cannot be traced or fined for neglecting their traps.

Cat and Dog Fur:

- Beginning in 1997, The Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International started investigating and documenting the international trade in dog and cat fur.
- Investigators witnessed first hand the brutal slaughter of domestic dogs and cats in Asia.
- Millions of cats and dogs, some stray, some pets that were probably stolen, some bred specifically for this purpose, are killed annually. Their fur is used to manufacture clothing, accessories, and trinkets.
- Killing methods are grisly. Dogs—German shepherds, chows, and mixed breeds—are bludgeoned or bled to death. Cats are often strangled with wire nooses.
- It is legal for products made from such fur to be sold in most of Europe.
- Dog and cat fur products are often deliberately mislabelled (legislation does not currently require the species to be defined on labels).
- The United States, Denmark and Italy have already outlawed trade in domestic cat and dog fur, and there are indications that Sweden may soon follow suit.
- The EU Commission, however, has yet to take the decisive action seen in the US and other states. Deliberately-mislabeled cat and dog fur products have been found even in some of the EU's most respectable department stores, made up into hats, gloves, fur trim on coats – even stuffed animal toys for children.
- Inexplicably, EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, David Byrne, continues to drag his feet on ordering a trade ban, despite compelling evidence that consumer fraud is being deliberately perpetrated against the public.

Canadian Seal Hunt:

- It is legal to kill defenceless harp seal pups when their white baby fur coats start to moult at 12 days of age. At this time they have ceased nursing and are learning to swim properly as they wait for the ice to melt. They then migrate to Greenland.
- Next spring, sealers will step onto the seal ice nurseries, off Canada's east coast, with their killing tools – skull-crushing hakapiks (like large ice picks) and rifles.
- 95% of the seals killed, each year, are 12 days to 12 weeks of age.
- In 2001, an international panel of veterinary experts performed a study showing that up to 42% of the seals they studied were likely skinned alive.
- The government has set a target of 975,000 seals to be killed over the next three years.
- The seals are killed for their fur for the fashion industry, their oil promoted by Canada as a health supplement and for their penises – promoted for use as an aphrodisiac in the Far East.

Fur Trim:

- 90% of fur from foxes killed on fur farms is not used for coats but as fur trim... Many people are not aware that the fur collar on their sweater, coat trim or glove linings are made of real fur.
- Some consumers think that fur trim just consists of "leftovers" from the production of a full-length coat. This is a mistaken belief. Animals are bred, killed and skinned specifically for fur trim.

Sources:

Web sites: Fur Free Alliance (www.inFURmation.com); Humane Society of the United States (www.hsus.org); International Fund for Animal Welfare (www.ifaw.org); Respect for Animals (www.respectforanimals.org).
Reports: *The Fur Inquiry*, World Society for the Protection of Animals.

Fur Facts, compiled October 2003, by Ainslie Willock