

ANIMAL WELFARE

IN FASHION 2020

THE 'NEW NORMAL'

*Integrating more kindness to animals in a
sustainable fashion future*



June 2020

About FOUR PAWS

FOUR PAWS is the global animal welfare organisation for animals under direct human influence, which reveals animal suffering, rescues animals in need and protects them through our sanctuaries and campaigns. Founded in 1988 in Vienna by Heli Dungler, the organisation advocates for a world where humans treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding.

FOUR PAWS' campaigns and animal welfare projects focus on animals who abused for the fashion industry, companion animals including stray dogs and cats, farm animals, and wild animals – such as bears, big cats, orangutans and elephants – kept in inappropriate conditions, and those animals who suffer in disaster and conflict zones. With offices in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Switzerland, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, Hungary, the UK, the USA and Vietnam, as well as sanctuaries for rescued animals in twelve countries, FOUR PAWS provides rapid help and long-term solutions for animals. www.four-paws.org.au

FOUR PAWS has achieved many lasting improvements for animals used within the textiles industry. In recent years this includes:

- Working with the European bedding industry to lead a successful industry wide transition away from the down of live plucked and force-fed ducks and geese.
- Continued support of the highly successful Fur Free Retailer program, a network of over 1,000 brands and retailers who stand united in their commitment against fur.
- Assisting the development of animal welfare certification systems, such as the Responsible Down Standard and the Responsible Wool standard.
- And most recently, launching the Wear it Kind animal friendly fashion campaign, with actions supported by almost 200,000 people internationally.

Our vision is a world where humans treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding.

About Good On You – report consultation partner

Good On You is a world-leading source of trusted brand ratings, articles and expertise on ethical and sustainable fashion. Good On You maintains a database of thousands of fashion brands, all assessed for their impact on people, the planet and animals. Good On You exists to help make fashion fair and sustainable.

All around the world, people use the Good On You App and web-based Directory to check the ethics of fashion brands. This drives an increasing number of brands to put ethics and sustainability at the heart of their business.

Good On You is part of a global movement of designers, activists and fashion fans who are driving the fashion industry to be more sustainable. Good On You regularly consults with industry and civil society experts to enhance our ratings system and collaborate to promote a more transparent, ethical and sustainable fashion industry.

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Thanks to the team at Good On You, in particular Head of Ratings Kristian Hardiman, for advice on our methodology and providing the framework for assessment of fashion brands' animal welfare impacts.

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ANIMAL WELFARE IN FASHION 2020 **A SNAPSHOT**

While there have been strong efforts made by several fashion brands on animal welfare, **FOUR PAWS** research* has found that **ONLY**:

38% of brands appear to consider animal welfare risks to some degree in their supply chains.

25% of fashion brands have a formal animal welfare policy.

21% of brands use assurance schemes which prioritise animal welfare, to trace at least some of their animal-derived materials.

9% of brands have an animal welfare policy and meet at least 3 of 5 best practice animal welfare principles as set out by **FOUR PAWS**.

What this means is, most brands* lack:

- 🎯 An awareness of animal welfare issues found in common textile supply chains.
- 🎯 Thorough and effective animal welfare policies.
- 🎯 Traceability in animal-based fashion supply chains, and end to end traceability overall.
- 🎯 Transparency to customers about where animal based products come from and the welfare risks for the animals involved.

To achieve better outcomes for animals, brands should:

- 🎯 **Set the intention.** Define a vision for animal welfare in line with the brand's values. Strive to achieve high welfare, and/or reduce animal derived products.
- 🎯 **Research, identify, assess.** Look for robust standards and assurance schemes. – to help ensure robust traceability.
- 🎯 **Take a stand.** Define a policy which addresses all materials of animal origin, and set up a code of conduct.
- 🎯 **Track and communicate.** Keep an eye on implementation and record results, and invest in strong communication internally and externally. Be transparent on animal welfare.
- 🎯 **Seek support.** Download a copy of the **FOUR PAWS** Animal Welfare Policy Development Guidelines in Textiles: www.wearitkind.org/brands or get in touch wearitkind@four-paws.org



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Foreword

When the COVID-19 pandemic brought the fashion industry to a halt, it also delivered an opportunity for industry to take stock and consider its impact on the planet, and all living beings.

Whilst much of the debate on the impacts of the fashion industry to date has focused on its environmental impact and how its workers are treated, people's concern for animals is now growing rapidly. Industry must make the treatment of animals used for fashion a priority and recognise animal protection as an essential third pillar of ethical fashion. That is what the *Wear it Kind* movement is all about.

The pandemic and recent natural disasters, such as the worst bushfire season in Australia's history, has made it easy to see how broken our relationship with the natural world and with animals is. It is now clearer than ever that our behaviour is not just hurting them, we are hurting ourselves too.

From wild animal markets to factory farms, from destroying animals' habitats and ecosystems, to stealing them from the wild, our use and abuse of animals not only causes animals immense suffering, it also poses huge public health risks. And unsurprisingly, animal welfare and the environment are now among the greatest concerns for citizens.

FOUR PAWS research estimates that over two billion animals are used in the global fashion industry every year. As a massive user of animals, the fashion industry must hold itself accountable for including animal welfare in its transition towards sustainability and better responsible business conduct.

This report shows that there is significant room for improvement. The fashion industry now has an opportunity to change lanes and choose a path that is kind, considered and compassionate. It is for this reason why we are so pleased to introduce the FOUR PAWS *Wear it Kind – Animal Welfare in Fashion Report*.

Together with our consultation partner Good On You, we bring analytical rigour and evidence-based research, to highlight the risks of animal-based supply chains in fashion, to animals, brands and retailers. Since its launch in 2015, Good On You has become the world's leading source for fashion brand ratings in the areas of animal welfare, human rights and environmental sustainability. With hundreds of thousands of users, Good On You inspires and empowers a growing movement of people around the world who wish to create positive change through their shopping choices.

FOUR PAWS and Good On You are both working to create a more ethical and animal-friendly fashion future, and we are so pleased to be working alongside each other in this research. We extend thanks to the Good On You team for opening up their methodology and collaborating on this important issue.

We are confident this report will be a useful tool to support and highlight the progress of brands and industry to achieve more kindness to animals. FOUR PAWS remains committed to working with brands and retailers in a collective effort to improve the world for animals, people and the environment.

*Gerald Dick, Chief Programmes Officer
FOUR PAWS International*



Executive Summary

To achieve an animal-friendly future, animal-welfare must be actively acknowledged as an essential third pillar of ethical fashion.



Globally, over two billion animals are used annually in the wool, fur and leather industries alone, many of which suffer inadequate living conditions, brutal mutilations and chronic stress. Animal welfare risks in fashion supply chains are, however, not an isolated challenge. The production of animal-based textiles often entails significant human rights abuses, and the agricultural production and processing of animal-based textiles leaves one of the largest environmental footprints of any sector in the world.

Until leading fashion brands accept animal welfare as a core responsibility, as well as a core requirement for their suppliers, the fashion industry will not be able to reach true sustainability nor fully realise the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

To raise awareness and recognition of animal welfare problems, and to highlight the link between the treatment of animals, human rights and environmental sustainability in fashion, FOUR PAWS has developed the world's first *Animal Welfare in Fashion Report*

of this kind. This report is based on a study of 77 leading local and global brands. Most brands studied are from the Australian and U.S. fashion markets but included are also brands owned by nine of the world's top 20 publicly listed fashion companies, which have an estimated market value of over US\$550 billion.

The FOUR PAWS Animal Welfare in Fashion Report assesses the extent to which companies are addressing animal welfare risks in their supply chains, with a focus on four key spotlight issues of material consideration – wool, down, exotic leather and fur. While there have been strong and bold efforts made by several brands on animal welfare, FOUR PAWS research has found that most brands lack:

- 1. An awareness of animal welfare issues found in common textile supply chains.**

Only 38% of the fashion brands consider animal welfare risks to some degree in their supply chains and purchasing practices.

2. Thorough and effective animal welfare policies.

Just 25% of fashion brands have formal animal welfare policies in place to help safeguard animals from these risks. And just 31% of brands meet at least one of five best practice principles to ensure strong animal welfare as set out by FOUR PAWS, with only 9% of brands meeting three or more.

3. Traceability in animal-based fashion supply chains, and end-to-end traceability overall.

Approximately 58% of brands with a formal animal welfare policy or statement agree that transparency and traceability (and sustainable, ethical sourcing practices overall) are key to ensuring adequate animal welfare standards are upheld.

A closer look into the brands reveal, however, that there is a real gap between what their formal policies and statements say, and what they actually do. Only 35% are tracing at least some of their animal-based materials, with more than half the brands demonstrating zero evidence of knowing anything about the animal-based textiles they source.

4. Transparency to customers about where animal-based products come from and the welfare risks for the animals involved.

Just 35% of brands can verify some of their claims to customers about the animal-based materials they source through certification schemes. And only 13% of brands implement assurance schemes which prioritise animal welfare i.e. certified wool (RWS versus an organic standard).

A recent report commissioned by the Australian Department of Agriculture, found that 95% of Australians surveyed are concerned about farm animal welfare, with

40% of respondents wanting greater transparency about animal welfare practices and greater consistency of information to help with purchasing decisions¹.

Similarly, a recent YouGov poll found that on average, 75% of people surveyed in Australia and the U.S. were concerned about animal welfare in fashion, with more than half seeing brands as responsible for ensuring animal welfare standards being upheld in their supply chains². In fact, one in three people surveyed in Australia and the U.S. preferred one brand over another when they prioritised animal protection, with at least half wanting fashion brands to be transparent about their animal welfare standards³.

In addition to being one of the world's most important industries in terms of its impact on economic growth and development, the global fashion industry also shapes, and is shaped by, cultural, political, and social contexts. Humans have used fashion to express ourselves for as long as we have worn clothes, and now, belief-driven buying has been reported as a global mainstream phenomenon spanning across generations and income levels⁴. Importantly, industry research itself has revealed that a third of consumers worldwide have now expanded their purchasing decision criteria to incorporate their values and views^{5,6}.

The COVID-19 crisis presents the opportunity for brands to elevate their sustainability goals and accelerate efforts to achieve greater transparency, including in animal-based supply chains. Brands can influence the way animals are cared for within their supply chains by understanding the welfare risks involved, ensuring traceability and implementing effective animal protection policies.

To integrate more kindness for animals in a sustainable fashion future, FOUR PAWS recommends that brands:

1. Cover the basics on animal welfare

- Brands need to develop a robust animal welfare policy, which includes a vision and an implementation plan for how to achieve and monitor good animal welfare and transparency practices.
- Policies should be based on the most up-to-date and independent animal welfare research i.e. *The Five Domains Model and associated Welfare Aims*⁷.
- Policies should be reviewed at least every three years to keep up to date with advances in technology and animal welfare knowledge.

2. Make a credible commitment to animal welfare

- Aim for the best standards in overall animal welfare, beginning with the strict exclusion or phase out of the most controversial and unnecessary practices and farming systems which cause suffering to animals, e.g. FOUR PAWS spotlight issues - mulesing, fur, live-plucked down and exotic leather.
- Implement the best available certification systems to ensure traceability and be able to verify the brand's claims made in relation to animal welfare.
- Implement best practice policy recommendations for key animal-based materials.

- Publish timelines and targets for excluding, reducing, and/or phasing out 'high risk' animal-based materials.
- Join multi-stakeholder initiatives that prioritise animal welfare to keep up to date with industry advances and help to drive industry solutions.
- Invest in and incorporate sustainable animal-free alternatives into the design process.



Image: Shutterstock

3. Address, monitor and report on animal welfare risks in the supply chain

- Recognise that animal-based supply chains have associated environmental and human rights risks, risks that companies may already be prioritising in their sustainability and social responsibility strategies.
- Where possible, work with direct suppliers to gain insight into production and keeping systems of suppliers and farms of animal-derived materials.
- Incorporate animal welfare considerations in decisions by Sustainability / Corporate Social Responsibility / Compliance teams and departments involved in sourcing, purchasing and design.
- Publish annual reporting of the percentage of products containing animal-based versus alternative materials, and the proportion of certified versus unknown / uncertified animal-based materials.

FOUR PAWS works collaboratively and aims to foster a strong dialogue with fashion brands and retailers. We encourage brands to reach out and engage with our organisation on animal welfare issues, policy needs or supply chain queries.

For further information, FOUR PAWS recommends brands download and review a copy of the *FOUR PAWS Animal Welfare Policy Development Guidelines in Textiles* which goes into further detail. These can be found at www.wearitkind.org/brands.

It is only when adequate standards of animal welfare are considered and targeted, can a brand claim to have a complete ethical fashion strategy.

While we have a long way to go to improve conditions for the vast numbers of animals used in fashion, by working together, animal protection organisations, brands, retailers, producers, and shoppers can all create a better world for animals.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 FOUR PAWS and Fashion

FOUR PAWS has a long history in campaigning for the welfare of animals used by the fashion industry. Upon creating FOUR PAWS in 1988 in Vienna, Austria, the very first protests ever organised by FOUR PAWS founder Heli Dangler drew attention to the suffering of fur-bearing animals (shown below). The success of FOUR PAWS in this space helped to turn it into one of the world's largest international animal welfare organisations.



Today, as well as advocating and caring for animals impacted by many forms of human use, from agriculture to entertainment, FOUR PAWS also campaigns for the protection and welfare of animals used in fashion, with a key focus on animals used for their fur, down feathers, wool, and leather.

FOUR PAWS engage extensively on a range of industry recognised standards, such as the Responsible Down Standard, Traceable Down Standard and Responsible Wool Standard, and is also currently involved in discussions aimed at developing the Responsible Leather Standard.

FOUR PAWS has a wealth of experience and expertise that is valued and respected across the NGO, scientific and fashion sectors. Some of FOUR PAWS' involvement with other animal textile initiatives include:

- Being the national representative of the global Fur Free Retailer program in Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and South Africa – the world's leading program to connect fur-free retailers to shoppers seeking ethical goods, with FOUR PAWS being member of the international Fur Free Alliance - an international coalition of more than 50 animal protection organizations working together to end the exploitation and killing of animals for fur.
- A party to the multi-stakeholder Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile (AGT), which aims to ensure responsible business conduct, including preventing animal welfare violations in global textile value chains.
- A member of the Species Survival Network, an international coalition committed to the promotion, enhancement and strict enforcement of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Collaborative relationships with key actors including the fashion industry, animal textile producers and trade associations, NGOs, a multitude of other animal protection organisations, and several coalitions working together on issues of specific animal-derived materials, namely fur.

1.2 Animals in Fashion: The New Frontier

Aside from campaigning against the use of fur in fashion, in many markets, 'ethical fashion' is a relatively new concept for the average consumer, and a notion that does not always consider animal welfare. In fact, animal-based textiles are often mistakenly considered as simply 'sustainable', and often compared only to synthetic alternatives.

However, in reality the creation of, and the process for animal-based textiles to become long-lasting and readily accepting of different dyes, to give them qualities such as softness, gloss, and wrinkle and stain resistance, requires an abundance of toxic chemicals that no longer make them biodegradable^{8,9,10}.

Landfill also does not provide the right conditions for animal-based fibres to biodegrade¹¹. Instead, the fibres can leak chemicals such as ammonia into the ground, affecting waterways and other vulnerable environments¹². This poses considerable environmental concern, as fashion is the second largest contributor to global landfill¹³.

The production of animal-based textiles also often entails significant human rights and environmental abuses, with the agricultural production and processing of animal-based textiles leaving one of the largest environmental footprints of any sector in the world^{14,15,16}.

In an effort to raise awareness of the link between the treatment of animals, human rights and environmental sustainability in fashion, FOUR PAWS launched the *Wear it Kind* campaign with a vision that no animal is treated cruelly for the sake of fashion. This world first report on animal welfare in fashion is designed to support our work and to assist fashion brands and retailers to transition to kinder business practices. The report assesses the extent to which leading brands in primarily the Australian and U.S. fashion markets, alongside a number of brands from other parts of the world are addressing animal welfare risks in their supply chains, and provides recommendations for the next steps needed to improve animal welfare.

Section 2: Baseline Report Methodology

2.1 Brand selection

From a sample of 200 local and global brands leading the Australian and U.S. fashion markets, 77 were chosen to be reviewed in this report. We focused on leading brands as these are the companies that we believe have the greatest ability to influence their supply chains, seek transparency and push the whole fashion industry towards better animal welfare standards. We aim to broaden this study to European and Asia Pacific brands in the next iteration.

The initial sample pool of fashion brands was produced from an array of independent sources identifying brands as market leaders, including the Fashion United Global Top 100 fashion brands, the Forbes Global 2000 largest public companies for 2019, Lyst Index top fashion brands, Australian stock exchange, the Baptist World Aid *Ethical Fashion Report*, and the Oxfam *Made in Poverty - the True Price of Fashion* report on living wages.

The use of animal-based textiles by the fashion brand was an underlying criterion for a fashion brand to be included in this report. Exclusions from the final sample of brands included accessories-only brands, and leading brands operating exclusively in fashion markets outside of Australia and the U.S., such as Brazil, India and China.

2.2 Review methodology

In undertaking the baseline assessment, FOUR PAWS has worked with Good On You as a consultation partner, the world's leading source for fashion brand ratings. Good On You's brand ratings assess the impact of brands in three areas – animals, labor rights and the environment.

For each key area, Good On You considers the material issues identified as the most important by industry experts as well as from its own research. In 2019, FOUR PAWS was consulted for our expertise with the development of their animal welfare criteria. The Good On You brand rating system¹⁷ aggregates data from many external rankings, certifications, and standards systems, as well as publicly available information on a company to assess a brand's performance against each material issue.

Our baseline assessment has been conducted using the Good On You brand rating system for assessing how fashion brands perform with respect to animal welfare, including whether brands:

- Consider animal welfare issues in their supply chains and purchasing practices.
- Trace the animal-based materials they source.
- Adopt sustainable sourcing strategies that look beyond animal-based materials and consider or use plant-derived alternatives.
- Translate what the brand communicates into action.



FOUR PAWS animal welfare principles - textiles

FOUR PAWS believes that adequate animal welfare standards in fashion supply chains cannot be achieved without a formal animal welfare policy, that is both aligned with best practice and meets the five minimum animal welfare principles outlined below:

1. *Animals should not be killed solely for the purposes of textiles*

With an increasing prevalence of high welfare and plant-based textile alternatives available, killing animals solely for the purposes of clothing is unnecessary and cruel.

2. *Wild animals should not be used for the purposes of textiles*

Wild animals cannot be farmed in a way that meets their basic physical and mental needs. Meanwhile, animals hunted or caught from the wild leads to direct and indirect suffering caused during the capture and slaughter process, including the impact of their absence on the welfare of their offspring, and wild populations overall.

3. *Any company using domesticated animal products must ensure adequate husbandry is provided*

Animal welfare policies should be developed in consideration of the *Five Domains Model*¹⁸, and according to the *Five Provisions and Aligned Animal Welfare Aims*¹⁹ designed to assess and encapsulate both the physical and mental needs of animals.

4. *Traceability and transparency are vital to ensure adequate animal welfare standards are upheld, as well as sustainable and ethical sourcing overall*

Domesticated animal-based textiles (i.e wool, down, leather) should not be used unless supply chains can be credibly verified and documentation can be traced and recorded from the point of birth of the animal, to the point of sale of the finished product.

5. *Any use of animals within commercial systems brings inherent risks to their welfare, and efforts should be made to reduce the use of animal-based textiles*

The animal-friendliest choice is the use of sustainable and responsibly sourced animal-free textile alternatives.

FOUR PAWS also strongly advocate for the implementation of robust animal welfare assurance schemes where they are available. These systems help companies verify their claims made in relation to animal welfare and demonstrate to customers the values and practices brands choose to associate with.

A focus of the report therefore is the extent to which leading fashion brands meet the above animal welfare principles and the extent to which these are followed through into action.

Section 3: Spotlight animal welfare issues

Wild and domesticated animals are suffering for fashion around the world, including within the global fur trade, worth US\$40 billion²⁰, and the leather goods market, worth over US\$200 billion²¹ per year. This corresponds to over two billion animals used directly in fashion every year from the wool, leather and fur trades alone.

In this report, FOUR PAWS has chosen to highlight four key animal welfare issues that are achievable for brands to commit to, and if solved or ended, would lead to large scale improvements in animal welfare around the globe. These are mulesing in the Australian wool industry, live plucking across the down industry, exotic leather and fur.

3.1 Wool and mulesing

The breeding of merino sheep for their wool, has led to the standard practice of selectively breeding for increasingly wrinkled skin, essentially a sheep with excess skin. This excess skin makes sheep susceptible to a number of welfare issues, particularly flystrike as this wrinkled skin becomes prone to retaining moisture, urine, and faeces, the perfect conditions for fly larvae to grow and subsequently feed on the sheep's skin and flesh. Flystrike is incredibly painful and can lead to horrific suffering²².

In response to flystrike, a quick and cheap technique called mulesing was developed in the 1920's in Australia. Mulesing involves a lamb from 2-12 weeks of age having strips of the skin most susceptible to flystrike cut off by sharp shears, leaving the area free of wrinkles and wool as scar tissue once the wound heals²³. Mulesing causes intense pain, suffering, fear, and stress for the lambs.

Importantly however, mulesing alone does not provide adequate protection against flystrike^{24,25,26}.

Australia is the world's largest exporter of wool, supplying 90% of the world's fine apparel wool²⁷. Despite mulesing being illegal in other countries, in Australia it is completely legal to perform even without anaesthetic provided to the animals. Mulesing continues to be commonly practiced in Australia despite the existence of several pain-free ways of managing flystrike, including transitioning to naturally flystrike resistant sheep, which can also result in higher profits for producers.

To date, over 150 brands have made a stand against, or committed to ending sales of mulesed wool.

3.2 Down

3.2.1 Live-plucking of geese

Down is often sourced using the brutal practice of live plucking, a procedure which involves geese being physically restrained while their feathers and down are torn from their skin while live^{28,29}. Live-plucking is stressful for geese, and when in such a state can also injure, and crush each other, suffer rough handling and as a result, severe injury³⁰.



Image: FOUR PAWS

Animal injuries from plucking include skin tearing and flesh wounds, as well as wing and leg fractures³¹. The animal's bleeding wounds are then roughly sewn shut without anaesthetic^{32,33}. Live-plucking can be repeated every five weeks, when new down and feathers are torn out and existing wounds are ripped open^{34,35}.

3.2.2 Force-feeding of ducks and geese

Down obtained from non-live plucked animals can still involve extreme cruelty, as ducks and geese who will be slaughtered for meat and used for their down can be subject to force-feeding for foie gras (greasy liver) production^{36,37}.

During force-feeding, a tube is pushed down the animal's throat to pump a large amount of feed directly into the animal's stomach. This is repeated three to four times a day for up to three weeks, and these birds are often kept in filthy cages during the entire force-feeding period. The procedure results in the animal's liver swelling ten times bigger than normal, causing severe health problems with some animals dying during the process.

Mortality during the force-feeding period is typically 10-20 times higher compared to birds who are not force-fed³⁸. It is generally accepted that force-fed birds will die from the effects of force-feeding, particularly from failed liver function³⁹. The ducks and geese who do survive this process are then subject to brutal slaughter methods.

3.3 Exotic Leather

Millions of wild animals are killed for their skin every year to produce exotic leather, either bred and killed on farms, or caught in the wild. According to Dr Clifford Warwick, a reptile biologist, medical scientist and member of the Bioveterinary group in

London, crocodile biology and behaviour are not suited to a captive life⁴⁰.

On a crocodile farm, 90% of injuries that crocodiles suffer are directly related to their environment⁴¹. Farmed crocodiles develop wounds from fighting and develop abnormalities and deformities because they cannot walk or swim⁴². Farmed alligators are subject to the same welfare issues, which often include the lack of available dry spaces that leave many reptiles stranded in dirty water resulting in infected wounds and skin rashes.⁴³

The slaughter of crocodiles and alligators is also a serious animal welfare issue, largely due to their thick skulls^{44,45}. Slaughter methods include the use of machetes, axes, baseball bats or mallets being used to try and smash a crocodile's skull. This is found especially in countries with little to zero enforceable animal welfare standards, leaving the animals to suffer slow and painful deaths^{46,47}.

Other exotic leather sources include kangaroo, python, ostrich and stingray, animals who are also subject to a range of welfare issues from the farming to slaughter process. Conservation issues for wild animals are prevalent problems as well. For instance, the legal trade in some wild species, like reticulated pythons, provides a very useful cover for the even more profitable illegal trade in wild snakes, contributing to the continuing decimation of threatened snake populations⁴⁸.

3.4 Fur

The fur free movement has made remarkable progress in recent decades, with over 1100 fashion labels including Chanel, Prada, H&M, Michael Kors, Gucci, and Armani having committed to fur-free policies, while fur

farming and even the sale of fur itself is being outlawed across major capital cities and fashion events worldwide. Despite this, millions of foxes, minks, rabbits, seals, cats, dogs, raccoon dogs, coyotes and chinchillas continue to be kept in horrific conditions and brutally slaughtered for their fur every year. Fur remains a large industry with major markets in China, Russia and South Korea, and is also visible in many countries, including Australia and the U.S.

Throughout fur farming, significant animal welfare violations take place from breeding to slaughter. The emphasis on fur farms has been to select for traits associated with pelt colour and quality, body size and litter size⁴⁹. Traits related to welfare and fearfulness have not been systematically considered in breeding programmes⁵⁰. The animals used in the industry are wide roaming predators, with often highly developed senses for smell, are and always will be inherently unsuitable to a farmed environment.

Some of the most consistently observed welfare issues on fur farms across Europe and China (two of the world's major producers of fur) have been found to be:

- The lack of open space or overcrowding, or isolation in restrictive and barren cages that do not allow the animal to live the way they usually would in the wild.
- Dirty cages that lead to animal suffering, including physical and mental illness, deformities, and untreated wounds and infections.
- Anxiety, pathological behaviours, high infant mortality, self-mutilation and infanticide.
- Abnormal behaviours in the animals due to stress, fear of humans and injuries due to handling processes.

Subjected to such cruel conditions, it should come as little surprise that infant mortality is relatively high in farmed mink compared with most farmed species⁵¹.

For those animals trapped in the wild, horrific use of steel-jaw leghold traps, body-gripping traps, underwater traps and wire neck snares inflict extreme pain and suffering to animals.

There are also serious concerns about the labelling of fur, with an investigation as recently as 2019 in Australia revealing that garments labelled as 'faux fur' were sourced from dog or raccoon dog fur. But the mislabelling of fur products is not unique to Australia.

A study of over 600 textile items containing real animal fur being sold in the European Union (EU) by ten Fur Free Alliance member states revealed that 68% of the products did not comply with the EU's labelling requirements⁵². The highest rate of non-compliance was found to be at the lower-priced end of the market, where shoppers often equate cheaper prices with faux fur.



Image: FOUR PAWS

3.5 Animal welfare in fashion and the UN SDGs

The global fashion industry is worth US\$3 trillion, or 2% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) annually⁵³. Fashion is the world's third largest manufacturing industry, behind only the automotive and electronics industries⁵⁴.

But fashion is not just an increasingly important sector to the global economy, it also has the potential to shape the progress of global growth and development⁵⁵. It is important therefore that any consideration of the fashion industry's future growth and trajectory recognises the direct impact of fashion on the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals^{56,57}.

Although the role or contribution of animals in achieving the SDGs has not been made explicit by the United Nations, there are areas in the sustainable development framework where animals play a significant role⁵⁸.

Human interactions with animals, and the growth and intensification of the animal sector also significantly contribute to⁵⁹:

- environmental challenges that exacerbate our global climate crisis - gaseous emissions, water scarcity, soil pollution, land degradation and ecosystem damage;
- issues regarding animal welfare - animal abuse and the negative impacts borne out of intensive selection and production; and
- animal and public health - zoonotic diseases and the inappropriate use of antimicrobials.

Also, a recent pilot study on the link between animal welfare and the attainment of the UN SDGs found several results that warrant closer consideration in this report⁶⁰:

1. Although variations exist between the SDGs in their links to animal welfare, links were identified nonetheless for all SDGs - emphasising the importance of considering animal welfare in any discussion of the UN SDGs, including fashion.
2. The welfare aspects linked with the SDGs in the study were almost exclusively related to animal health and productivity - suggesting that higher animal welfare can also lead to financial benefits.
3. For SDGs 1, 8, 12, 14 and 15 (which are SDGs relevant to the fashion industry), there is a high mutual enabling i.e. working to achieve the SDGs is highly compatible with working to improve animal welfare and vice versa - suggesting that regardless of how it is approached, a more sustainable future for fashion companies involves attaining high standards of animal welfare in their supply chains.
4. SDGs 12 and 14 have the strongest links to animal welfare, with 12 - *Responsible Consumption and Production* being the most relevant for the fashion industry - recognising that fashion companies play a significant role in improving animal welfare, and should be prioritised as part of their sustainable development strategy and goals.

Therefore, until leading fashion brands make animal welfare a core responsibility, as well as a core requirement for their suppliers, the fashion industry will not be able to reach true sustainability for the future nor fully realise the UN SDGs.

3.5.1 SDG 6, 12, 14: Using animals in fashion contributes to water scarcity

On commercial farms, breeding, feeding and raising animals for their fur, feathers, skin, hide or leather requires the extensive use of water for irrigation⁶¹. The global average water footprint of raising cattle for leather, for example, is estimated at 17,093 litres (approx. 4,516 gallons) of water per kg (2.205 lbs) of leather⁶². Even as by-products of the food industry, the water-intensive and highly polluting processes that follow serve to further contribute to global water stress.

Leather tanning, and the scouring and washing of animal fibres such as wool and down in order to prepare them for dyeing and garment manufacturing for example, use a heavy load of toxic chemicals which contributes to water pollution, eutrophication and the degeneration of coral reefs^{63,64}.

The waste produced from these processes, which increasingly occur in developing countries, are rarely treated before being dumped into local rivers, eliminating clean water for communities and farmers dependent on the river, while causing massive populations of fish to perish⁶⁵.

Considering half the world's population is already experiencing severe water scarcity at least one month per year⁶⁶, and by 2050, at least one in four people are likely to live in a country affected by chronic or recurring shortages of fresh water⁶⁷, the impacts of water-related issues to the cost of raw materials is a significant risk to brands that will only become of greater significance with a worsening climate crisis.

Animal-based fashion supply chains are particularly vulnerable as water is used intensively from farming and fibre production

to yarn preparation, dyeing and finishing⁶⁸, and investors are increasingly looking to understand how well companies are preparing themselves for future price shocks triggered by water-related risks⁶⁹.

3.5.2 SDG 1, 8: Using animals in fashion can involve child labour and other labour rights violations

Poverty is one of the greatest drivers for child labour and for adult garment workers to work within unsafe and unfair work environments.

Fashion companies are increasingly recognising their responsibility not to perpetuate the poverty of garment workers in the manufacturing stage of their supply chains. Child labour, however, tends to occur most frequently at earlier stages of production where brands have little or no visibility, such as on farms and tanneries⁷⁰.

In Bangladesh, one of the world's major leather tanning countries, children as young as seven work in highly toxic environments, exploited without even the most basic protections⁷¹.

With most animal-based textiles sourced and processed in developing countries, the risk of child labour and other labour rights violations in the production of animal-based fashion items can leave leading fashion brands reputationally exposed.

3.5.3 SDG 1, 12, 15: Using animals in fashion contributes to our global climate crisis

Loss of biodiversity

The world is facing the dramatic loss of biodiversity because of human activity⁷², including predictions that almost 25% of the world's species will be threatened by extinction⁷³. Yet, the fashion industry is projected to use 35% more land for fibre production by 2030 — an extra 115 million hectares (over 284 million acres)⁷⁴.

A large proportion of biodiversity loss occurs due to habitat change resulting from the clearing of land for grazing cattle, sheep and other animals who are used for producing meat, leather and wool, with 20% of pastures considered as degraded through overgrazing, compaction and erosion⁷⁵. At the same time, the industrial farming of meat and dairy, which are crucial to the supply of leather for the fashion industry, are produced in ways that can largely or completely ignore animal welfare⁷⁶.

The fashion industry also contributes to the loss of biodiversity through its use of exotic leather. Here, wild animals such as crocodiles are subject to farming conditions that cannot meet their welfare needs, primarily to supply the luxury leather goods market, while only a very small proportion of their meat supplies a niche secondary market. And the use of exotic

leather in fashion incentivises the illegal poaching and trafficking of animals from wild populations. In a report by the International Trade Center for example, it is estimated that the extent of illegally traded python skins is equal to the extent of legal trade⁷⁷. Even when these animals are farmed legally for fashion, brands must recognise that there are inherent animal welfare risks posed to them in commercial farming systems⁷⁸.

The loss of biodiversity also occurs as a result of non-targeted species, which may include threatened or endangered species, being killed as a result of trapping for fur⁷⁹.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

It is estimated that deforestation accounts for around 6-17% of global GHG emissions, with land use change to accommodate grazing animals producing leather and wool being a major driver⁸⁰. The fashion industry also contributes to 8% of the world's GHG emissions, with the climate impact from producing animal-based fashion items a major contributor to this figure⁸¹.

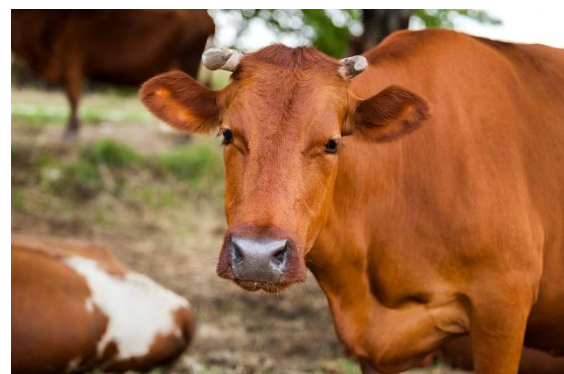


Image: Unsplash

Section 4: Why fashion brands are a central part of the solution

In addition to being one of the world's most important industries in terms of its impact on economic growth and development, the global fashion industry also shapes, and is shaped by, cultural, political and social contexts.

Humans have used fashion as a means to express ourselves for as long as we have worn clothes⁸², and now, belief-driven buying is a global mainstream phenomenon spanning across generations and income levels⁸³. Importantly, data since 2016 has revealed that a third of consumers worldwide have expanded their purchasing decisions to incorporate principled values and views⁸⁴.

Fashion can inspire change and transform the world on so many levels, yet it also has a dark side. The industry is rife with animal, environmental and human rights abuses on a global scale. The greatest barrier to ending such abuse is traceability in fashion companies' supply chains.

While references to animal welfare in international standards and principles are scarce, knowledge about and concern for the welfare of animals is rapidly expanding⁸⁵. Increasingly, various institutions are developing materials to guide the fashion and textiles industries to operate with kindness to animals in mind.

The British Retail Consortium for example, has developed the Voluntary Guideline on Veganism in Fashion for retailers and brands, while the Sustainable Apparel Coalition has created the Higg Brand Tool, which aims to provide a holistic picture of value chain

sustainability and measures a range of impacts – including animal welfare.

More recently Animal Welfare Factsheets were developed under the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Textiles and Garments (AGT). The goal of these factsheets is to inform companies about the animal welfare aspects of key animal derived materials.

The learnings gained by the scientific community and animal protection organisations are a large driver of growing public concern, moving consumers to further consider animal welfare within their purchasing decisions⁸⁶.

Animal welfare issues and business risks can arise within any animal-based supply chain. In fact, the raw materials and processing stages are the parts of the supply chain that are not only least visible to brands and customers but also where animal welfare, human rights and environmental abuses are most prevalent. Consumers care about issues like these and expect brands to uphold an adequate level of animal welfare.

A recent report commissioned by the federal Department of Agriculture in Australia for example, found that 95% of Australians surveyed are concerned about farm animal welfare, with 40% of respondents wanting greater transparency about animal welfare practices and greater consistency of information to help with decision-making⁸⁷.

Similarly, a survey by the US Center for Food Integrity found that more than half of American respondents believe transparency about animal welfare practices builds trust⁸⁸.

This sentiment was reflected in a recent YouGov poll, commissioned by FOUR PAWS, which found that 80% of Australians surveyed were concerned about animal welfare in fashion, with more than half of Australians seeing brands as responsible for ensuring animal welfare standards being upheld in their supply chains.

In fact, one in three preferred one brand over another when they prioritised animal protection, while more than half want greater transparency by fashion brands when it comes to animal welfare.

Similarly, for Americans who are aware of animal cruelty issues in the fashion industry, 87% said they are concerned about the welfare and treatment of animals in at least one area of the industry, with fur being the highest.

Brands can influence the way animals are cared for within their supply chains by understanding the welfare risks involved, ensuring traceability and implementing effective animal protection policies.

Below we discuss the findings of our research that demonstrate where brands can take ownership of the animal welfare risks in their supply chains.



Image: FOUR PAWS

4.1 Overview of results

The findings of our baseline assessment make clear that most brands lack:

1. An awareness of animal welfare issues, which present supply chain risks tied to the environmental and human rights challenges faced by brands.
2. Thorough and effective animal welfare policies.
3. Traceability in animal-based fashion supply chains, and end-to-end traceability overall.
4. Transparency to customers about where animal-based products come from and the welfare risks for the animals involved.

4.1.1 Summary of results

Table 1: Overall brand performance when it comes to animal welfare

Performance areas		Total
Brands with a formal policy or statement on animal welfare		38%
	Brands with a formal policy	25%
	Brands with a statement	13%
Brands tracing at least one animal-based textile		35%
Brands that have joined a multi-stakeholder initiative on animal welfare		30%
	Leather	20%
	Wool	13%
	Fur	14%
Brands that have committed to reducing and/or phasing out at least one animal derived material		6%

Table 2: Traceability of animal-based textiles in leading brand supply chains

Textiles	Total
Brands using certified non-mulesed wool	11%
Brands using certified down	14%
Brands using partially traceable domestic leather	16%

Table 3: Brands whose formal animal welfare policies and statements communicate the animal welfare principles as outlined by FOUR PAWS

Animal welfare principle	Proportion of brands with a formal policy or statement only	Proportion of brands in the total sample
Animals should not be killed for the purposes of textiles	67%	21%
Wild animals should not be used for the purposes of textiles	8%	2.6%
Any company using domesticated animal products must ensure adequate animal welfare standards are upheld, as well as sustainable and ethical sourcing	42%	13%
Traceability and transparency is vital to ensure adequate animal welfare standards are upheld, as well as sustainable and ethical sourcing overall	58%	18%

4.2 Do brands consider animal welfare in their supply chains and purchasing practices?

Out of the 77 fashion brands sampled and researched by FOUR PAWS, almost half belong to publicly listed companies with a combined market value of US\$630 billion – over 25% of the total value of the global fashion market⁸⁹.

Research shows that despite large companies doing more to benefit human welfare – specifically of garment workers in developing countries – animal welfare is a relatively new concept for big fashion brands, with companies still reviewing their options regarding this subject⁹⁰.

This is reflected by our findings that only 38% of the 77 fashion brands consider animal

welfare risks to some degree in their supply chains and purchasing practices and just 25% of the fashion brands have formal animal welfare policies in place to help safeguard against these risks.

4.2.1 How well do brands’ animal welfare policies or statements align with best practice?

Just 31% of brands meet at least one of the five principles needed to ensure strong animal welfare as outlined by FOUR PAWS⁹¹, and not one brand meets all five principles.

Just 9% of brands meet three or more principles. Of these, 100% have formal animal welfare policies in place. Contrastingly, for the brands that do not meet any minimum animal welfare requirements, 98% do not have formal animal welfare policies in place.

Our findings suggest that in general, formal animal welfare policies are important because they drive fashion brands to identify and adopt best practice to ensure the highest animal welfare standards are upheld in their supply chains.

More than half the brands we surveyed with an awareness of some animal welfare risks in their supply chains recognise and publicly communicate their belief that traceability and transparency are vital to ensuring adequate animal welfare standards are upheld.

Traceability and transparency are prioritised differently, however, between publicly listed and privately-owned companies. Privately owned companies are twice as likely to have zero traceability and transparency in their supply chains.

4.2.2 Do any fashion brands currently champion animal welfare initiatives in their supply chains?

Multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) are sector-specific frameworks for engagement involving the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, such as governments⁹². They seek to address areas of mutual concern – in global fashion supply chains, these may be to address animal welfare, environmental sustainability and human rights.

MSIs facilitate dialogue across stakeholder groups, promote cross-sector learning, and develop standards for business conduct⁹³. Examples of MSIs dealing specifically with animal-based supply chains include the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile ([IMVO Textile Covenant, The Netherlands](#)), Leather Working Group, RWS International Working Group, and the Textile Exchange Responsible Leather Roundtable.

Engagement in multi-stakeholder initiatives prioritising animal welfare help brands to compare their behaviour to that of their peers which, in turn, helps to drive progress⁹⁴. They provide a forum or platform for brands to exchange knowledge about suppliers, challenges and failures, and successes⁹⁵.

Brands participating in such initiatives facilitate shared learning, enabling uncertainties to be eliminated and best practice to be leveraged⁹⁶. It also creates better training and capacity building programmes to support brands' suppliers to buy into progress towards these goals⁹⁷.

Our findings reveal that fashion brands are twice as likely to be part of at least one animal welfare initiative when they consider animal welfare to some degree in their supply chains. A policy based on best practice not only increases the participation rate but also the breadth of animal welfare initiatives engaged by brands.

In other words, when brands know about one animal welfare issue/risk in the supply chain, the more they want to know about others, pushing brands to prioritise and increase the traceability and transparency within their supply chains.

This overlap of participation across initiatives provides benefits for brands coming together to lead the sustainable fashion agenda, collaborate on innovative textile solutions, share information, optimise supply chain solutions, coordinate an industry-wide approach, and achieve verifiable and certifiable whole sector change.

Almost two thirds (~ 63%) of brands that champion animal welfare initiatives are North American fashion brands, while just 21% and 17% are brands leading the Global and Australian fashion markets respectively.

The proportion of brands engaging in these initiatives are outlined below in order of highest to lowest:

Animal textiles addressed by MSIs	Total % of brands engaged
Leather	20%
Fur	14%
Wool	13%

4.3 Measuring traceability: do brands translate what they communicate into action?

Of the 38% of brands with a formal animal welfare policy or general statement, approximately 67% have publicly communicated their belief that animals should not be killed solely for the purpose of textiles, while 58% have publicly communicated their belief that transparency and traceability (and sustainable, ethical sourcing practices overall) are key to ensuring adequate animal welfare standards are upheld.

A closer look into the brands, however, reveal that there is a real gap between what their formal policies and statements say, and what they actually do. In fact, even among those that have a formal policy in place, fashion brands are currently doing very little to trace the animal-based materials in their supply chains.

Below, we look at some of the major animal-based textiles currently used in the fashion industry, and measure just how much brands really know about what they are sourcing and selling to their customers.

4.3.1 Do brands trace the animal-based materials they source?

Wool

An overwhelming 96% of fashion brands use wool in their supply chains. Although only 29% of brands communicate to their customers that they source wool from non-mulesed sheep, and just 12% can guarantee this claim through fully traceable certification schemes such as Responsible Wool Standard and ZQ Merino.

Meanwhile, two-thirds of brands (~ 66%) are sourcing wool from mulesed sheep (including 10% that have a formal animal welfare policy or statement), with 56% demonstrating zero evidence of knowing anything about the wool they source and sell to their customers.

Down

Thanks to the work of FOUR PAWS uncovering animal cruelty in down supply chains of some of the world's most reputable active outdoor lifestyle brands, the use of down in fashion is well ahead of wool and leather for upholding high animal welfare standards^{98, 99}.

This is reflected in the fact that 60% of brands sourcing down currently have a formal animal welfare policy or statement in place, with 48% sourcing fully certified traceable down through the Responsible Down Standard

(RDS). Yet our findings reveal there is further progress to be made.

Despite the known animal welfare risks concerning the sourcing of down and the available and robust certification schemes to assure against these risks, more than half (~ 52%) of the fashion brands using down still do not trace their down, 38% of which are brands with formal animal welfare policies or statements already in place.

Exotic Leather

Approximately 10% of fashion brands source exotic leathers in their supply chains, specifically, crocodile, alligator and python skins. While fashion brands insist that the sourcing of high quality exotic leathers necessitates the highest standards of animal welfare for these animals, the reality is that brands sourcing exotic leathers do not demonstrate, nor can they verify, this claim to customers.

None of the brands sourcing exotic leathers have a formal animal welfare policy in place. Without a policy, brands cannot proactively address the animal welfare issues in their supply chains, nor can they communicate their expectations for suppliers to prevent the inhumane practices that exist for these animals.

While only 25% of the brands can trace some of their crocodile skins to the source, they are not transparent over how they trace this leather. Evidence suggests the primary driver for traceability here is for brands to secure access to the market's best quality skins, rather than to seek higher animal welfare standards (of which the animal welfare movement will never be satisfied with due to the extreme inherent cruelty involved with exotic skin production).

Moreover, like the solitary predatory species kept for fur production¹⁰⁰, solitary species such as crocodiles and alligators do not have the genetic constituency, and hence the behavioural and physiological capability, to adapt to group keeping in small enclosures¹⁰¹. These species lack these pre-requisites for domestication, and hence will never be able to be kept in farms relatively stress-free¹⁰².

Fur

Fur has been the subject of key animal welfare campaigns in fashion since the 1970s. Combined with the global headlines in recent years by fashion designers pledging to go fur-free, it is no surprise that only 8% of brands are still sourcing animal furs in their supply chains, none of which have a formal animal welfare policy in place.

Fur in fashion however remains a significant issue, particularly the mislabelling of garments consisting of real fur, which are sold in the Australian and US fashion markets as faux fur or with no information on the label at all¹⁰³. This highlights the necessity for traceability and transparency in the supply chain for any fashion brand, even brands that use only faux fur.

Leather

Every year, over half a billion slaughtered cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, and even lambs and calves end up being used directly in fashion for footwear, clothing and accessories¹⁰⁴.

Despite 84% of brands sourcing leather in their fashion supply chains, just 26% of brands sourcing leather have a formal animal welfare policy or statement, and only 20% have some level of robust traceability measures in place.

Traceability in leather is a major risk for leading fashion brands, considering the welfare abuses these animals are subject to. Global farming practices involve serious welfare issues throughout an animal's life cycle from birth to slaughter, including often violent and brutal treatment, most of which is legal and standard practice.

4.4 Do brands adopt sustainable sourcing strategies that look beyond animal-based materials?

By adopting sourcing strategies that substitute animal-based materials with sustainably sourced alternatives, brands can dramatically decrease their environmental impact and animal welfare risks in their supply chains. It also encourages brands to innovate, expand their expertise on sustainable fabrics, technologies and dyeing processes, and experiment with design.

Despite the exciting opportunities to be leveraged, just 1% of brands are currently innovating or seeking innovations in sustainable alternatives to replace at least one animal-based material, and only 6% of brands have committed to reducing or eliminating at least one animal-based material in their supply chains.

There are significant environmental benefits to using recycled animal-based materials, which reduces the number of animals subject to inhumane conditions and practices. Yet only 2% of brands currently incorporate recycled animal-based materials in their products. These comprise a very small percentage of brands' products, and in most cases, have not yet resulted in the brand's reduced reliance on non-recycled animal-based materials.

4.5 Conclusion

In recent years, fashion companies have made environmental sustainability and human rights a strategic priority for their businesses. In an effort to meaningfully address these issues, supply chain traceability and transparency have become of utmost importance, not just because of legal requirements or investors and shareholders demanding it, but because customers are becoming increasingly concerned with the provenance of the products they purchase.

Despite these developments, risks based on animal welfare in fashion supply chains are a relatively new concept. Animal-based supply chains, however, often entail animal welfare violations alongside human rights and environmental abuses, and in the agricultural production and processing stages, leave one of the largest environmental footprints of any sector in the world.

The COVID-19 crisis presents the opportunity for brands to elevate their sustainability goals and accelerate efforts to achieve greater transparency, including in animal-based supply chains. Brands can influence the way animals are cared for within their supply chains by understanding the welfare risks involved, ensuring traceability and implementing effective animal protection policies.

FOUR PAWS acknowledges that for leading fashion companies with global supply chain networks, traceability and transparency can

require significant investments in resources and time. The challenge cannot be expected to be solved overnight, but there are steps fashion companies can take today to address the animal welfare risks in their supply chains.

It is only when adequate standards of animal welfare are considered and targeted, can a brand claim to have a complete ethical fashion strategy.

FOUR PAWS works collaboratively and aims to foster a strong dialogue with fashion brands and retailers. We encourage brands to reach out and engage with our organisation on any animal welfare issue, policy need or animal derived material supply chain.

While we have a long way to go to improve conditions for the vast numbers of animals used in fashion, by working together, animal protection organisations, brands, retailers, producers and shoppers can all create a better world for animals.



Image: FOUR PAWS

Section 5: Recommendations for brands



To integrate more kindness for animals in a sustainable fashion future, FOUR PAWS recommends that brands:

Cover the basics on animal welfare

- Brands need to develop a robust animal welfare policy, which includes a vision and an implementation plan for how to achieve and monitor good animal welfare and transparency practices.
- Policies should be based on the most up-to-date and independent animal welfare research i.e *The Five Domains Model and associated Welfare Aims*¹⁰⁵.
- Policies should be reviewed at least every three years to keep up-to-date with advances in technology and animal welfare knowledge.

Make a credible commitment to animal welfare

- Aim for the best standards in overall animal welfare, beginning with the strict exclusion or phase out of the most controversial and unnecessary practices and farming systems which cause suffering to animals.
- Implement the best available certification systems to ensure traceability and be able to verify the brand's claims made in relation to animal welfare.
- Implement best practice policy recommendations for key animal-based materials.

Publish timelines and targets for excluding, reducing and/or phasing out 'high risk' animal-based materials.

- Join multi-stakeholder initiatives that prioritise animal welfare to keep up to date with industry advances and help to drive industry solutions.

Address, monitor and report on animal welfare risks in the supply chain

- Recognise that animal-based supply chains have associated environmental and human rights risks, risks that companies may already be prioritising in their sustainability and social responsibility strategies.
- Incorporate animal welfare considerations in decisions by Sustainability / Corporate Social Responsibility / Compliance teams and departments involved in sourcing, purchasing and design.
- Publish annual reporting of the percentage of products containing animal-based versus alternative materials, and the proportion of certified versus unknown / uncertified animal-based materials.

For more information, brands can refer to the FOUR PAWS:

- [*Animal Welfare Policy Development Guidelines for Brands and Retailers*](#)
- [*Better Wool - A guide for brands and retailers on transitioning away from mulesed sheep wool*](#)

Appendix - Animal welfare in fashion and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The following UN SDG targets establish the relationship between the environmental and human impacts of animal-based textiles in fashion and the imperative for fashion brands to transition towards sustainable non-animal-based alternatives.

Goal	Descriptor	Target	Descriptor
1	No poverty	1.4	By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
		1.5	By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
6	Clean water and sanitation	6.3	By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally ^{cvii}
		6.4	By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity ^{cvii}
8	Decent work and economic growth	8.4	Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead ^{cviii}
		8.5	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
		8.7	Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
		8.8	Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

12	Responsible production and consumption	12.4	By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment ^{cx}
14	Life below water	14.1	By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution ^{cx}
15	Life on land	15.5	Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species ^{cx}
		15.7	Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products

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