

THE FUR TRADE

VICTORY! In the UK, farming animals to kill them for their fur was banned and finally phased out in 2002. Fur farming still goes on around the world and fur garments can still legally be sold in shops in the UK.

So why do tens of millions of fur-bearing animals die every year...

There are two simple answers: profits and vanity. People who kill animals and make coats out of their skins make money out of it, and people who wear the coats think they look glamorous. The fur trade tries to advertise fur as 'natural' to hide the horrific and unnatural way that the animals are imprisoned on fur farms, or trapped in the wild, and then killed.

... just to make fur coats?



ANIMAL AID INFORMATION SHEET



Fur farming

Worldwide, more than 40 million animals are killed for their fur – 85% are bred and killed on fur farms and the rest are trapped in the wild. This figure does not include the thousands of millions of rabbits killed for the fur trade. The most commonly bred animals on fur farms are mink and fox, but the industry also breeds and kills polecats, raccoons and chinchillas. It is estimated that two million cats and dogs are also killed for their fur. There are 6,500 fur farms in the EU. Europe is responsible for 70% of global mink fur production, and 63% of fox fur production. The countries that farm the most animals for their fur are Denmark, China and Finland.

The conditions

On fur farms, animals are imprisoned in tiny wire-mesh cages for their entire lives until they are killed. For species such as mink and fox, these conditions are especially appalling, as they are wild animals and would naturally travel many miles each day. Being caged in huge sheds, where thousands of other animals are also imprisoned, drives them insane with anxiety and fear. Repetitive movements, such as head-bobbing and circling, are therefore common.

Methods of killing

Animals on fur farms are killed by electrocution (through the use of electrodes in the mouth and anus), gassing, lethal injection or neck breaking. These crude methods are employed to ensure that the pelts (the animals' skins and fur) are not damaged.



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Millions of wild animals are killed in traps for their fur every single year. The main countries involved are Russia, the USA and Canada.



Fur trapping

The most commonly-used trap is the barbaric steel-jawed leghold trap. When set by the trapper, the spring-loaded jaws are opened to their fullest extent and secured with a metal clip. When an animal steps on it, the clip is released and the device snaps shut with incredible force. The intention is to catch the animal's leg, but they can also be caught across their back, neck or head. The trapped animal will be in agony, unable to escape, for hours or even days, until the trapper comes back to suffocate or beat them to death.

Leghold traps do not discriminate. They catch any animal who treads on them. Trappers call these non-target animals 'trash'. The contraptions are now banned in 88 countries, including the UK, and in several states across the USA. However, fur is still imported to the UK from animals who have been killed by leghold traps in other countries.

Fur trade arguments

Supporters of the fur industry often claim that trapping is a tool of wildlife management and conservation. This is untrue. Many species of wild cats such as ocelots, margays, lynx and Geoffrey's cat are being driven to the verge of extinction by hunting and trapping. There are only 4,000 - 7,000 snow leopards left in the world. Sea otters were driven to the very edge of extinction and, despite protection, their numbers remain very low. The sea mink paid the ultimate price for having a beautiful fur coat – extinction.

Fur farmers try to insist that the animals are looked after very well and that they do not suffer when they are killed. Yet undercover footage shows time and again that the animals are going insane from their confinement, endlessly weaving and pacing in their desperation to be free. When they are killed, it often takes a few attempts to break the animals' necks, as they try to squirm their way out of their executioner's grip; or, if they are electrocuted, the terror as the electrodes are shoved into their mouth and anus is clear. When they cry out and their bodies convulse, there can be no doubt that these animals are dying in agony.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Boycott shops selling fur. Write to, or email, the manager explaining the reason for your action – and let Animal Aid know about it so that we can send out an action alert for other people to do the same.**
- **Do not buy clothes, toys, gloves, etc. with fur trim.**
- **Write to your MEP (Member of the European Parliament) asking him or her to support a ban on the import of all fur – including cat and dog fur – and a ban on fur farming in Europe.**
- **Join Animal Aid's youth group, Youth4Animals, and help campaign against the fur trade.**

