

# HOW IS NORTH AMERICA'S FUR INDUSTRY REGULATED

Fur farming in the US “is regulated by local, State, national, and sometimes international humane regulations”<sup>(1)</sup>, and by industry codes of practice. The production of wild furs is likewise regulated by state and federal government authorities.

The status of farmed mink and fox as domesticated animals is recognized in US federal law (US Code Title 7, Chapter 7, § 433) and, in common with all livestock, domesticated furbearers such as mink and fox come under the jurisdiction of state departments of agriculture, not the federal government. Since there are human health concerns, the federal government does oversee in the regulation of the slaughter of food animals, e.g. the Animal Welfare Act.

Statutes and codes are developed by legislators, veterinarians, farmers and concerned citizen groups, based on research and recommendations published by recognized scientific and veterinary bodies. While much of this work, particularly in the areas of disease control and nutrition, is carried out with industry funding, the fur industry also interprets and incorporates into its practices information from reports of independent experts in disease control, animal welfare and euthanasia, notably the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Meanwhile, any furbearing animals taken from the wild, for any reason, come under the jurisdiction of state departments of natural resources or state fish and wildlife agencies. In developing statutes and codes for the taking of wild animals, advice is also sought from wildlife managers, biologists, hunters and trappers.

In the animal welfare department, state statutes cover everything from mistreatment and neglect, to intentional cruelty, and reports are investigated by the appropriate local and/or state agency, oftentimes both. Under current anti-cruelty statutes, anyone

(1) Industry & Trade Summary : Fur Skins, US International Trade Commission Publication 3666, p17, January 2004.



who mistreats an animal faces investigation, prosecution, fines, jail time and even the loss of his animal(s). (More information on state

animal cruelty laws can be found at: the Humane Society of the United States, the American Society from the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Michigan State University College of Law, and Pet-Abuse.com. Or visit the Library of Congress for general state government information.)

State statutes also ensure the humane euthanasia of furbearers, since they are not food animals.

The North American fur trade is a responsible industry based on the sustainable use of renewable resources. This is a principle that is promoted by conservation organizations around the world, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

This means that the furs used come only from abundant species. And when you buy fur you are supporting people on the land, with a direct interest in protecting vital wildlife habitat.

Recent agreements between the European Union and major fur-producing countries (USA, Canada, Russia) ensure that wild furs are taken in accordance with scientifically verified and internationally accepted humane standards.

The accurate identification of fur products for consumers is assured by the Fur Products Labelling Act (USA) and the Competition Act (Canada). (Visit the website of the Federal Trade Commission for detailed information on labeling requirements in the US, and an FCUSA compilation of rules and regulations relating to labeling for more resources specific to fur, both in the US and internationally.)

Taxes are collected at the local, state and federal levels on income earned at all stages of fur production, from farming to retail. This ensures that government agencies are able to properly oversee and regulate fur clothing production (just as is done with all natural fiber production) in accordance with local, state and federal laws, and with international treaties.

Other relevant regulations include statutes that:

Protect the environment: Local and national governments enforce laws such as the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. (Visit FCUSA's compilation of [resources relating to water use, and manure and nutrient management plans](#) in the US.) Local county zoning ordinances determine where agricultural pursuits, including fur farms, may or may not be situated;

- *Protect the consumer:* [Textile Fiber Products Identification Act](#), the [Wool Products Labeling Act](#) and the [Fur Products Labeling Act](#);

- *Ensure science-based sustainable wildlife management:* the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

- *Ensure humane farming practices:* Recommendations in the 2007 report [AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia](#) are incorporated into humane laws at the state and local level, and into industry codes of practice.

For information on fur farming regulations in Europe, visit [Farming regulations](#) at the International Fur Trade Federation (IFTF). For a global perspective on management programs for wild furbearers, visit the IFTF's section on [Wild fur](#).

**This flyer is available at [www.furcommission.com/resource/Resources/Regulation.pdf](http://www.furcommission.com/resource/Resources/Regulation.pdf)**

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