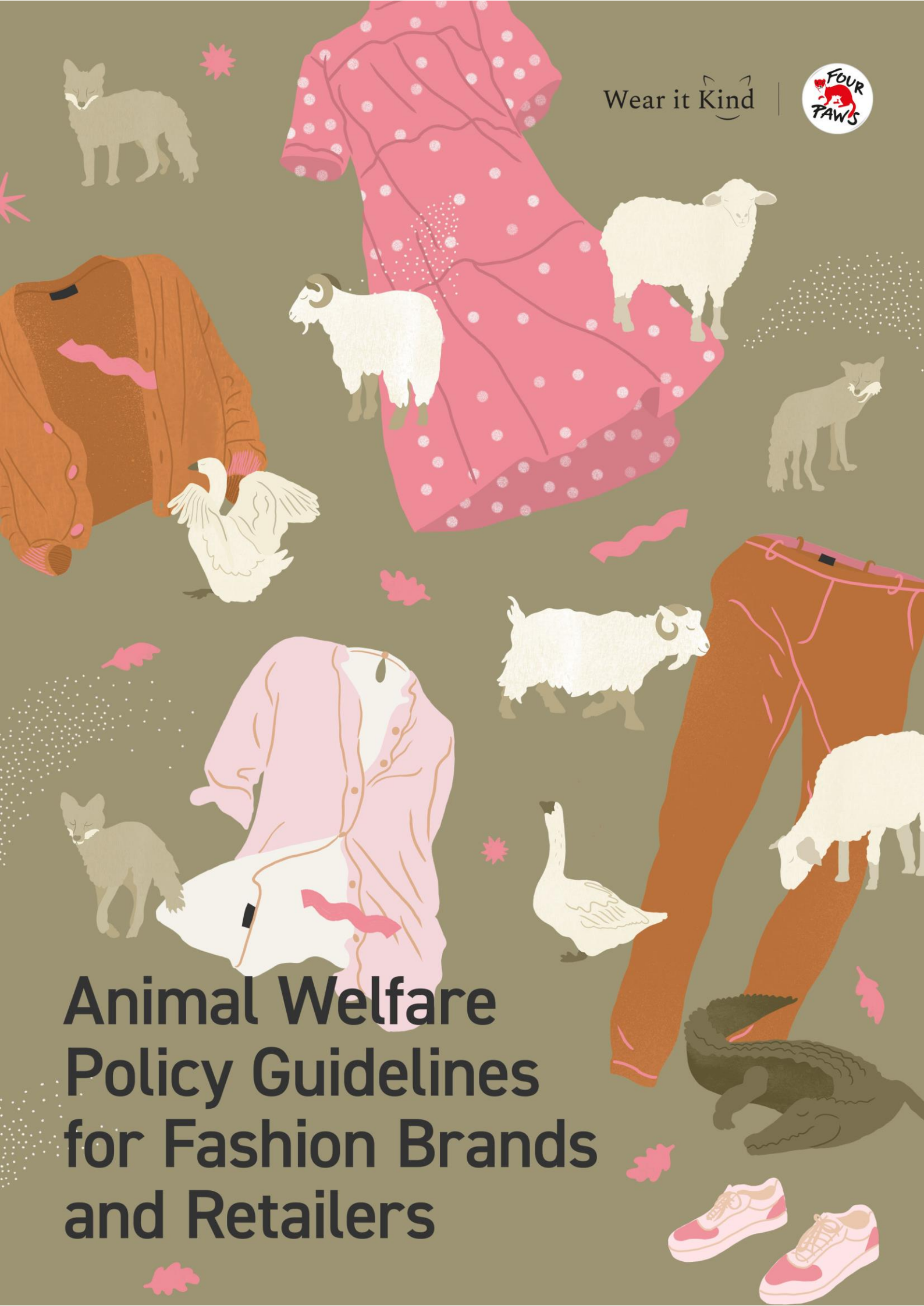


Wear it Kind



Animal Welfare Policy Guidelines for Fashion Brands and Retailers



ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY GUIDELINES FOR FASHION BRANDS AND RETAILERS

September 2021

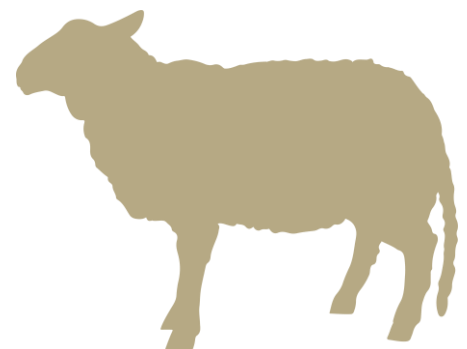
Alongside human rights and environmental protection, ensuring good animal welfare is a crucial component of ethical fashion and a company's Corporate Social Responsibility strategy.

Shoppers, together with FOUR PAWS are calling on brands to take responsibility for the welfare of animals used in fashion supply chains and to reduce the use of animals for clothing and accessories overall. To achieve this, all brands should aim to develop a clear and progressive animal welfare policy.

The guidance provided throughout this document has been designed to help fashion companies play their part in protecting animals, minimise business risk and realise growing market opportunities for animal-friendly fashion.

CONTENTS

- Why develop an animal welfare policy?.....3
- FOUR PAWS animal welfare principles.....4
- Steps to building an animal welfare policy.....6
- Key components of an effective animal welfare policy.....7
- Animal-derived material recommendations.....9
- Transparency and traceability.....10



WHY DEVELOP AN ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY?

Animals used by the textiles industry can be subject to inadequate living conditions, painful mutilations, long-term mental stress, poor breeding choices, and more. If left unmanaged, business and animal welfare risks can arise. However, through the proactive development of a strong animal welfare policy, brands can effectively mitigate these risks for both the business and animals.

✓ **Meet growing expectations of better animal welfare**

In today's world, both consumers and investors care about how brands address animal welfare, and those who do take a stand for animals will resonate better with them. In 2021, a YouGov poll of over 14,000 people across 12 countries, including European nations, the U.S., and more, found every third (37%) adult now chooses one fashion brand over another if they prioritise animal welfare, and globally, nine out of ten people (86%) want companies to make animal protection a key priority.¹ It's clear that when consumers have more access to information on animal treatment, and the animal welfare certifications applied they have more trust. Thankfully with the global move to online shopping, it has become increasingly possible to fulfill this.

✓ **Mitigate risks, manage reputation, and ensure continuity of supply**

Companies that commit to improving standards of animal welfare and regular monitoring are more likely to identify potential animal welfare or traceability risks, enabling prompt action. Regularly engaging with suppliers regarding market demands and responsible sourcing promotes trust among value chain partners, goodwill and transparency, and places value on responsible animal treatment. By carrying out these steps, as well as communicating an organisation's vision and timebound commitments to improve animal welfare, suppliers will be able to forward plan and implement changes that can help fulfil animal welfare goals and enable a better continuity of supply.

✓ **Brands can leverage major change for animals**

By developing a robust policy to improve animal welfare in value chains, joining multi-stakeholder initiatives, encouraging certification owners to lift the bar, and engaging directly with supply chain partners, companies can influence the way animals are kept and treated. When brands communicate about the practices they do and do not want to be identified with or support, supply chains can respond.

✓ **Contribute to UN Sustainable Development Goals**

Improving the welfare of animals often means a move away from intensive, environmentally polluting farming to more small-scale, more people-friendly, and often far less polluting types of farming. Hence textiles companies demanding better animal treatment often also create benefits for people and the planet. By developing an animal welfare policy that includes targets to refine, reduce and replace animal-derived materials for more sustainable options, brands can lower their environmental footprint and contribute to all the UN Sustainable Development goals and most notably:



¹ You Gov 2021. Consumer expectations for animal welfare in fashion. <https://media.4-paws.org/c/2/6/3/c263e8a4e228eb7f2cf9651f29d7b74cc9cbfb64/FINAL%20Global%20results%20-%20PDF%20Summary%20-%202021.07.21.pdf>

FOUR PAWS ANIMAL WELFARE PRINCIPLES

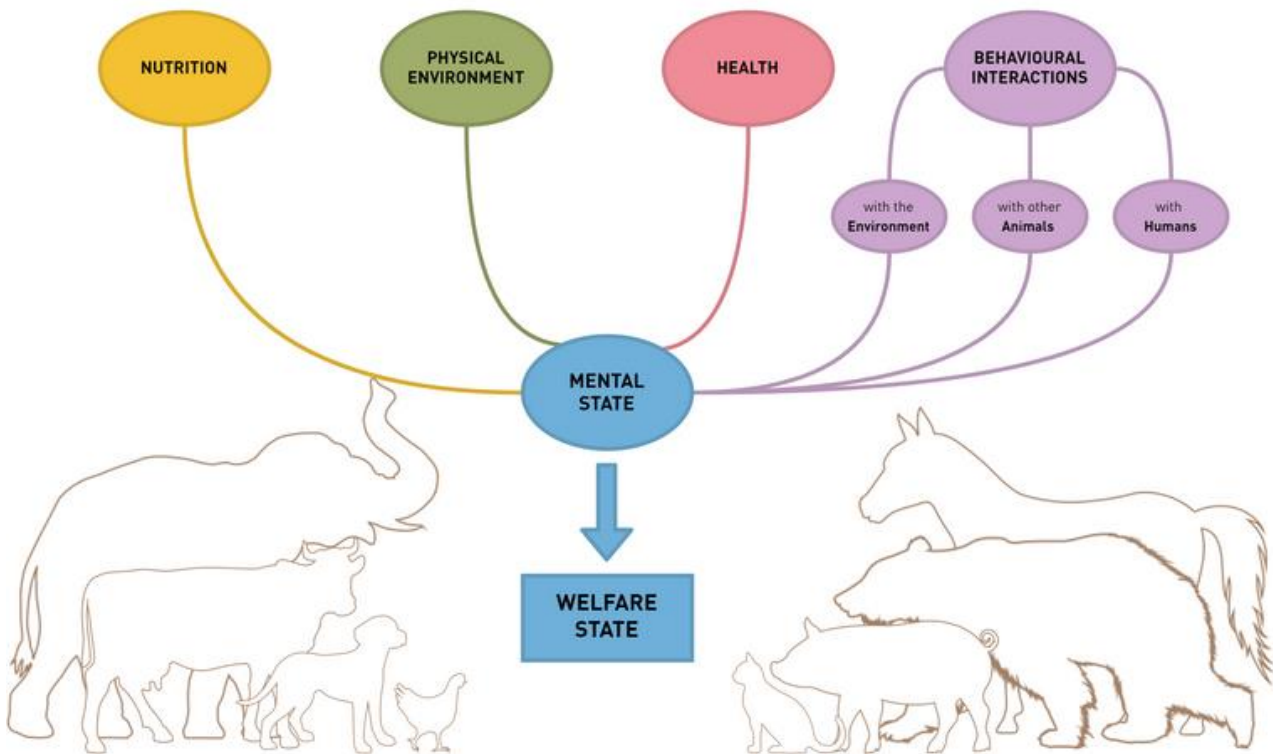
FOUR PAWS is an international animal welfare organisation committed to supporting and encouraging brands to **reduce** the use of animal products, **refine** animal-based supply chain choices to ensure and encourage higher levels of welfare, and **replace** animal products with sustainable animal-free alternatives. With regards to animal welfare in textiles, FOUR PAWS adheres to the following four principles:

- 1. Any company using products derived from domesticated animals should aim to progressively achieve a high standard of animal welfare within their supply chains.**

Animal welfare can be defined as an individual and subjective mental state. It is the sum of all mental experiences of an individual at a given time. This mental state is influenced by the interplay between the functional domains of an animal's life, namely:

- the quality of its nutrition,
- the physical environment it lives in,
- its health status, and
- its behavioural interactions within its physical and social context.

All factors may fluctuate in time, leading to changes in overall welfare within a range from good to bad. Regular monitoring is therefore essential for welfare to be managed well. The goal is to achieve a positive quality of life overall, i.e., a favourable balance, by keeping negative experiences as mild and as few as possible and to enable animals to also have positive experiences.



FOUR PAWS is committed to shaping its advice according to the latest scientific evidence. To that end, FOUR PAWS recommends the use of 'The Five Domains Model', created by Prof. Emeritus D.J. Mellor and supported by the international animal welfare community.

Animal welfare policies should be developed in consideration of the Five Domains model, as well as the corresponding General Welfare Aims (see table below adapted from Mellor 2016² and Mellor et al. 2020³) designed to assess and encapsulate both the physical and mental state of animals.

General Welfare Aims	Focusing Welfare Targets	Provisions
Good Nutrition	To minimise thirst and hunger and enable eating to be a pleasurable experience.	By providing ready access to fresh water and a species-appropriate diet to maintain full health and vigour.
Good Physical Environment	To minimise discomfort and exposure to adverse environmental conditions and to promote physical comfort.	By providing appropriate outdoor access and suitable shelter against adverse weather conditions, and/or housing with different functional areas, comfortable resting areas, and good air quality.
Good Health	To minimise pain, disease, and other discomforts and to promote the pleasures of vigour, strength, robustness, and harmonious physical activity.	By preventing or rapidly diagnosing and treating diseases and injuries, and by stimulating, among others, proper muscle tone, natural body posture, cardiorespiratory function, and digestive system processes.
Appropriate Behavioural Interactions	To minimise threats and unpleasant restrictions on behaviour and movement, and to promote engagement in rewarding activities.	By providing sufficient space, conspecific company, human interactions that are adapted to the individual needs and appropriately varied conditions to allow for species-specific behavioural expression
Positive mental experiences	To promote the experience of various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence, and a sense of control.	By providing safe and species-appropriate environmental, conspecific, and human interactive opportunities to have pleasurable experiences.

The updated set of Five Provisions and Aligned Animal Welfare Aims are a modern tool for guiding animal welfare assessments and highly differ from the previously widely used “Five freedoms” concept.

Currently there are several animal welfare certification initiatives available that mitigate certain cruel practices and help to ensure some basic needs are met, however none can currently claim to follow the Five Provisions in full. Because of this, it is important for brands reliant on mainstream certifications to state that they commit to working towards following the Five Domains model – which will help to send a market signal, but avoid language which claims to currently follow the Five Domains model in full.

2. Wild animals should not be used for textiles.

Due to the biological makeup of wild (undomesticated) animals, most cannot be farmed in a way that meets their basic physical and behavioral needs. FOUR PAWS also has zero-tolerance to using animals hunted or caught from the wild, due to the direct and indirect suffering caused during and after the capture and slaughter process. This includes the potential impact their absence has on the welfare of their offspring and wild populations overall.

² Mellor DJ. Moving beyond the “Five freedoms” by Updating the “Five Provisions” and Introducing Aligned “Animal Welfare Aims.” *Animals*. 2016;6(10). doi:10.3390/ani6100059

³ Mellor DJ, Beausoleil NJ, Littlewood KE, McLean AN, McGreevy PD, Jones B, Wilkins C. The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including Human–Animal Interactions in Assessments of Animal Welfare. *Animals*. 2020;10(10):1870. doi:10.3390/ani10101870

3. Traceability and transparency are vital to ensure adherence to adequate animal welfare standards at primary production levels, as well as sustainable and ethical sourcing overall.

Animal-derived materials should not be used unless an acceptable standard of animal welfare can be credibly verified and the supply chain can be tracked via audits and documentation for the entire lifecycle of the animal, to the point of sale of the finished product. At minimum, brands should use robust certification schemes which at minimum significantly address most ‘cruel practices’, robustness and traceability factors, and enable consumers to understand the standard of care provided to the animals used.

Additionally, FOUR PAWS encourages brands to help lift the bar for animals used for textiles beyond the status quo. As stated, the current certifications available do not fulfill the 5 Domains of animal welfare and have much room for improvement. Therefore we encourage brands to work collaboratively and innovatively to lift the bar on animal welfare textiles certifications and transparency overall.

4. Efforts should be made to reduce the use of animal-derived materials.

The most ethical choice is the use of sustainable and responsibly sourced animal-free alternatives. FOUR PAWS encourages both improving the welfare of animals used for textiles and the reduction of animal-derived materials due to the inherent risks commercial systems bring to animal welfare, and because farming animals at the scale we do today makes good welfare impossible to achieve for most animals.

However, while domesticated animals are being used, all efforts to end cruel practices such as Mulesing and live plucking, minimise harm and encourage higher welfare should be a priority for brands and retailers continuing to source animal-derived materials.

STEPS TO BUILD AN ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

1

Define company expectations

Circulate these guidelines to relevant staff and come together as a team to define your company’s vision and position on animal welfare and the use of animal products. To support this process, you may like to engage with externals including animal protection organisations with knowledge on animal welfare in textiles, such as FOUR PAWS, to discuss any aspects of interest.

2

Understand current company practices and options

Carry out an initial assessment which should include a supply chain analysis to understand what is being sourced, from where, and for which product. Gather any known animal welfare/transparency risks within your supply chains, consider which supply chains could be improved by using robust certification initiatives, which you should cease to use, and what animal-free materials are available.

3

Develop and publish your policy

Develop or refresh your animal welfare policy to include the key elements listed below. Importantly, ensure your policy is published, made easily accessible, and make an announcement to all parties within your supply chain. Ideally, this announcement would also be made public and to customers.

KEY COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

FOUR PAWS encourages the development of an animal welfare policy that includes the following four key areas: vision and goals, governance, animal welfare positions and commitments, and supplier engagement, analysis, performance reporting.

1. Vision and goals

Best practice for companies using animal-derived materials begins by defining a vision on animal welfare. This should encapsulate the overall use of animals in accordance with the brands' values. For example, some brands may choose to reduce the use of animal products over time, while others may aim to eliminate all cruel practices within a set timeframe, or even further to aim for an excellent standard of animal welfare. Some may do both while also committing to invest in broad industry animal welfare or traceability initiatives. Measurable animal welfare goals should also be included, covering:

- targets to reduce, refine and replace the use of animal-derived materials,
- timely targets to identify and reduce animal welfare risk overall, and
- supply chain traceability goals to increase insight into sourcing.

2. Governance

The policy should make clear who holds responsibility for animal welfare within a company and what roles people play concerning the development and implementation of a policy, as well as management and conformation to it. A company should also highlight the engagement process with internal and external stakeholders, and how the policy and reporting against it will be published.

3. Animal welfare positions and commitments

- ✓ Within the policy, all materials of animal origin that a company either uses or actively excludes should be listed and addressed.
- ✓ Cruel farming practices should be phased out as soon as practicable, and at minimum companies should clearly indicate their stance on major societal issues of concern.
- ✓ Support for the Five Domains Model and aligned Welfare Aims should be made clear.
- ✓ Commitments to the reduction of animal-derived materials use should be communicated to value chain partners as well as consumers and the general public.
- ✓ Companies cannot rely solely on voluntary self-declaration as proof of compliance with their animal welfare policy. Companies should commit to and employ robust certification and assurance schemes to verify claims made about animal welfare. Assurance initiatives approved for use by the company as well as future aims with regards to utilising increasingly stronger certification options should also be listed (i.e. clear targets to move from reliance on the National Wool Declaration, to the Responsible Wool Standards by a set date and %).
- ✓ Policies should also stipulate how product animal welfare standards will be made available to consumers.
- ✓ For some animal derived materials, acceptable animal welfare assurance solutions are not yet widely available (e.g. leather); in this instance companies are encouraged to:
 - avoid the material, and
 - seek alternatives and support the commercialisation of sustainable animal free materials.
- ✓ If brands choose to continue using animal derived materials, brands should publicly commit to encouraging and support the development or enhancement of animal welfare certification schemes.



4. Policy implementation and performance reporting

To ensure animal welfare policies are effectively executed, companies should also set up reporting and implementation plans. Note, high buy-in within a company can be best ensured when senior management also support and approve of implementation plans and the resources needed to fulfil it. Those responsible for the implementation of the plan should at minimum:

- ✓ Perform an annual review of objectives and targets and report publicly on progress and challenges.
- ✓ Bi-annually review the policy and ensure a clear understanding of the current animal welfare risks occurring and standards upheld within their supply chains.
- ✓ Set up and distribute a code of conduct with relation to the treatment of animals within supply chains.
- ✓ Continue to review the company's use of animal derived materials overall and help to encourage and monitor the uptake of innovative alternatives.
- ✓ Join multi-stakeholder initiatives to keep up to date with industry advances in animal welfare and help to drive industry solutions.
- ✓ Ensure animal welfare certificates are recorded in a proper file management system.

ANIMAL-DERIVED MATERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below have been designed to support the needs of most brands, which are reliant on the use of mainstream certification initiatives to ensure animal welfare. The methodology used to define the recommendations are largely based on three main criteria:

- a) Can the species be farmed in a way that enables the animal to have a good quality of life?
- b) Does this product rely on hunting/capturing of animals from the wild/harvesting of eggs?
- c) Are there robust assurance schemes available to assist brands in at least mitigating most cruel practices, and fulfil an acceptable level of robustness and traceability needs?

Materials	Recommendation
Alpaca	FOUR PAWS is concerned about the lack of robust animal welfare assurance initiatives available to significantly certify the mitigation of animal welfare risks. Therefore, FOUR PAWS encourages brands to avoid the use of alpaca wool until improved animal welfare assurance schemes are in place.
Angora	FOUR PAWS is against angora wool farming as it is an inherently cruel industry. FOUR PAWS calls on brands to ban the use of wool/fur from Angora rabbits.
Cashmere	Brands sourcing cashmere, should seek and utilise cashmere from supply chains which have been certified by the Good Cashmere Standard.
Down feathers	Brands sourcing down should seek and utilise down from supply chains which have been certified by the Responsible Down Standard.
Fur	FOUR PAWS is against the use of all forms of fur and calls on brands to ban the use of fur from any animal. Brands are also encouraged to join the Fur Free Retailer program.
Exotic leather	FOUR PAWS is against the use of all forms of exotic leather, such as crocodile, snake and kangaroo leather and calls on brands to ban the use of exotic leather from any animal.
Leather from domesticated animals	FOUR PAWS is against the use of leather, from intensive farming practices, and concerned about general use as there are no certification initiatives which can significantly mitigate animal welfare risks. Brands should exclude sales of leather from aborted (sporadic or induced) animals i.e. slink and karakul and avoid the use of all domesticated animal leather (including shearling) until robust animal welfare assurance schemes become available.
Mohair (Angora Goats)	FOUR PAWS is concerned about the lack of robust animal welfare assurance initiatives available to significantly mitigate animal welfare risks. Therefore, FOUR PAWS encourages brands to avoid the use of mohair until improved animal welfare assurance schemes are in place.
Sheep wool	Brands sourcing wool should seek and utilise wool from supply chains which have been certified by the Responsible Wool Standard, NATIVA or an equivalent standard which significantly mitigates animal welfare risks overall. At the very least, brands should commit to a phase out of mulesed sheep wool. See here for further guidance on mulesing certification initiatives.
Animal hair, shells, feathers, bones or teeth	FOUR PAWS is against the use of animal hair, shells, feathers, bones and teeth from wild animals.
Silk	FOUR PAWS recommends replacing silk with animal-free alternatives unless the welfare of the pupa used can be ensured through a robust certification initiative. Within conventional silk production, the pupa is boiled alive to remove them from their cocoons, brands must ensure this does not occur within their supply chains and that animal welfare is ensured overall.

*Note if an animal derived material is not listed within the table above, FOUR PAWS encourages brands to avoid this material due to the lack of animal welfare assurance available.

TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY

To enable transparency and traceability, FOUR PAWS strongly encourages the use of robust assurance schemes to help verify claims made in relation to animal welfare. Brands are also encouraged to consider the use of block chain mechanisms to strengthen transparency with consumers, and to develop strong internal data management and record keeping processes. By implementing these practices, consumers can make informed choices, and in doing so greatly help to demonstrate a brands dedication to animal welfare to brand rating platforms.

In saying this, not all certifications are equal. Brands should seek certifications which include the following:

- ✓ Are set via a multi-stakeholder process, including representatives from two or more animal protection organisations.
- ✓ Mandate a comprehensive set of meaningful and reliable animal welfare indicators which as closely as possible fulfil the 5 Domains of the species being utilised and can be assessed.
- ✓ Ensure 100% of all farms are checked on site by a third-party auditor prior to certification, with following on-site checks occurring at species/issue appropriate intervals.
- ✓ Where possible, require unannounced random audits alongside announced audits of supply chains.
- ✓ Ensure separation between the entities writing certification standards ('standard setting bodies'), those who are doing the verification against that standard ('auditors') and those issuing the certificates ('certifying bodies').
- ✓ Avoid transparency loopholes; for example, it is best to actively exclude parallel farming systems.
- ✓ Employ a robust chain of custody approach to ensure each batch of product remains traceable throughout the supply chain, and third-party assurance that each member of the supply chain complies and has the capacity to ensure traceability.
- ✓ Provide both companies and consumers with consistent marketing assets that can be applied to products, for ease of identification.
- ✓ Standards are developed in line with the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling alliance (ISEAL) Principles of Sustainable Standard creation.

Additional considerations:

- ✓ Whilst animal welfare certification schemes provide a strong indication as to welfare standards of the animals used, they cannot provide 100% assurance.
- ✓ Recent research shows that best practice for supply chain assurance is for companies to use a combination of both internal and external auditing services.⁴
- ✓ Over 90% of vegans and vegetarians look for vegan verification, and 85% believe third-party certification is important.⁵ Therefore, for brands that are animal free, it is important this is made clear to consumers, and ideally products should be accredited as animal-free.
- ✓ In addition to ensuring animal welfare of the animals used, wildlife that also inhabit or pass-through farms can be impacted by farming practices and landowners. There are initiatives now available to mitigate risks these animals, such as the standards and guidelines developed by the *Wildlife Enterprise Network*. To ensure all the animals impacted for clothing are considered, FOUR PAWS encourages the use of wildlife-friendly assurance initiatives in addition to the certification of direct animal welfare.

Thank you for collaborating with us on the journey towards an animal-friendly fashion future. For more information contact FOUR PAWS via wearitkind@four-paws.org

⁴ Egels-Zandén, N., Lindholm, H 2014, 'Do codes of conduct improve worker rights in supply chains? A study of Fair Wear Foundation', Journal of Cleaner Production, No. 107, pp. 31-40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.08.096>

⁵ The Vegan Society. <https://www.vegansociety.com/news/news/industry-first-rocol-secures-vegan-trademark>