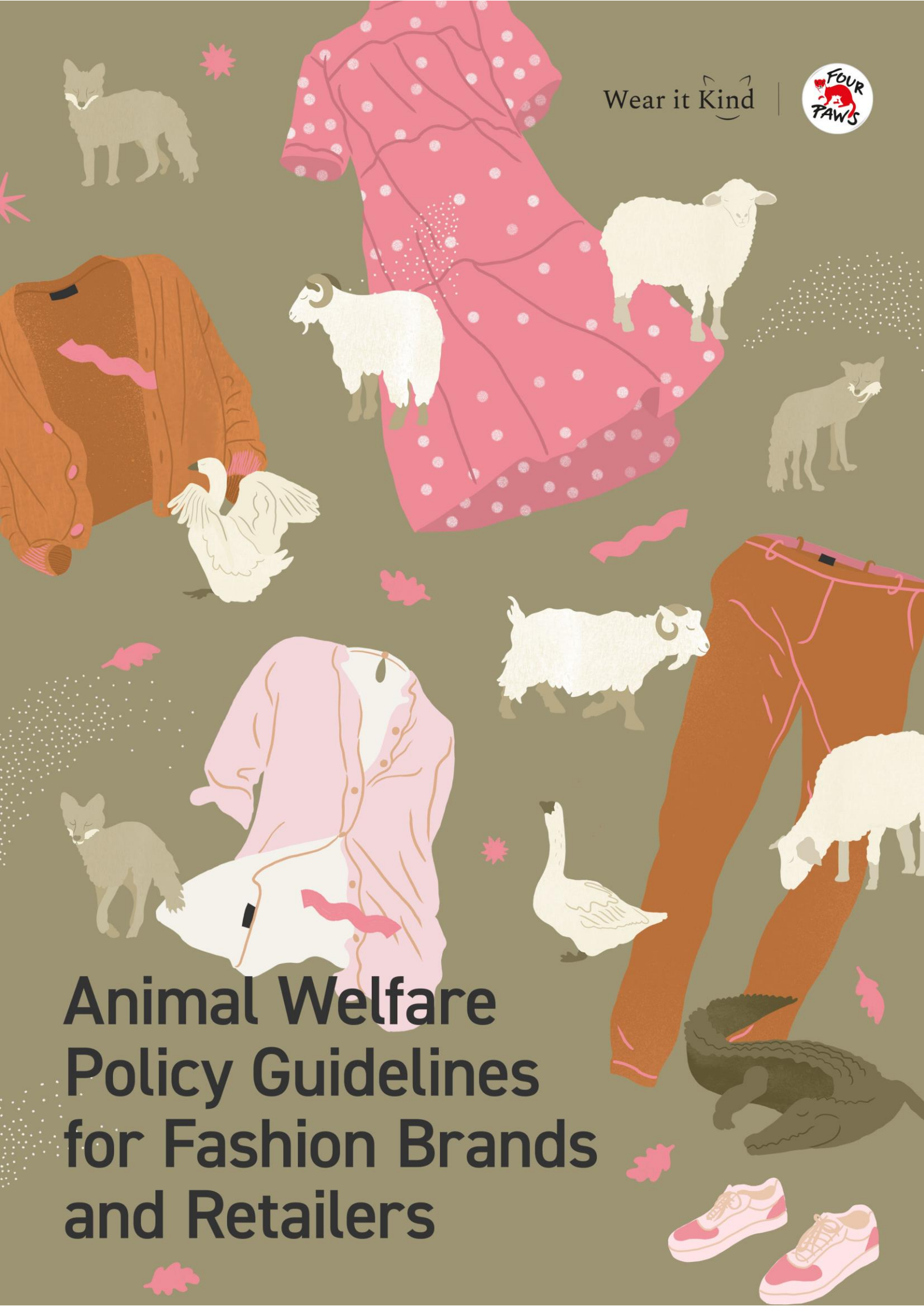


Wear it Kind



Animal Welfare Policy Guidelines for Fashion Brands and Retailers



ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY GUIDELINES FOR FASHION BRANDS AND RETAILERS

February 2022

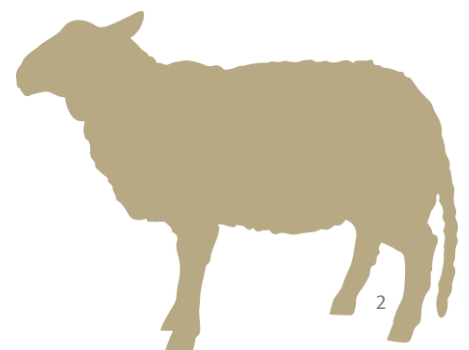
Alongside human rights and environmental protection, ensuring good animal welfare is a crucial component of ethical fashion and a company’s Corporate Social Responsibility strategy.

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
- Animal welfare standards and certifications.....11
- Transparency and traceability.....12
- Glossary.....13



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 credibility 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 their own business and the welfare of animals.

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

In today's world, consumers and investors care about how brands address animal welfare, and it's those who take a stand for animals that resonate better with their customers. 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 When consumers have more access to information about the animal welfare credentials of a product they have more trust. Thankfully with the global move to online shopping, it has become increasingly possible for brands to fulfill need.

✓ **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 provide a better continuity of supply.

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

By developing a robust policy to improve animal welfare in value chains, utilising the best animal welfare standards available, joining multi-stakeholder initiatives, encouraging and supporting 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 will 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 damaging 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 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/c263e8a4e228eb7f2cf9651f29d7b74cc9cbf64/FINAL%20Global%20results%20-%20PDF%20Summary%20-%202021.07.21.pdf>

FOUR PAWS ANIMAL WELFARE PRINCIPLES

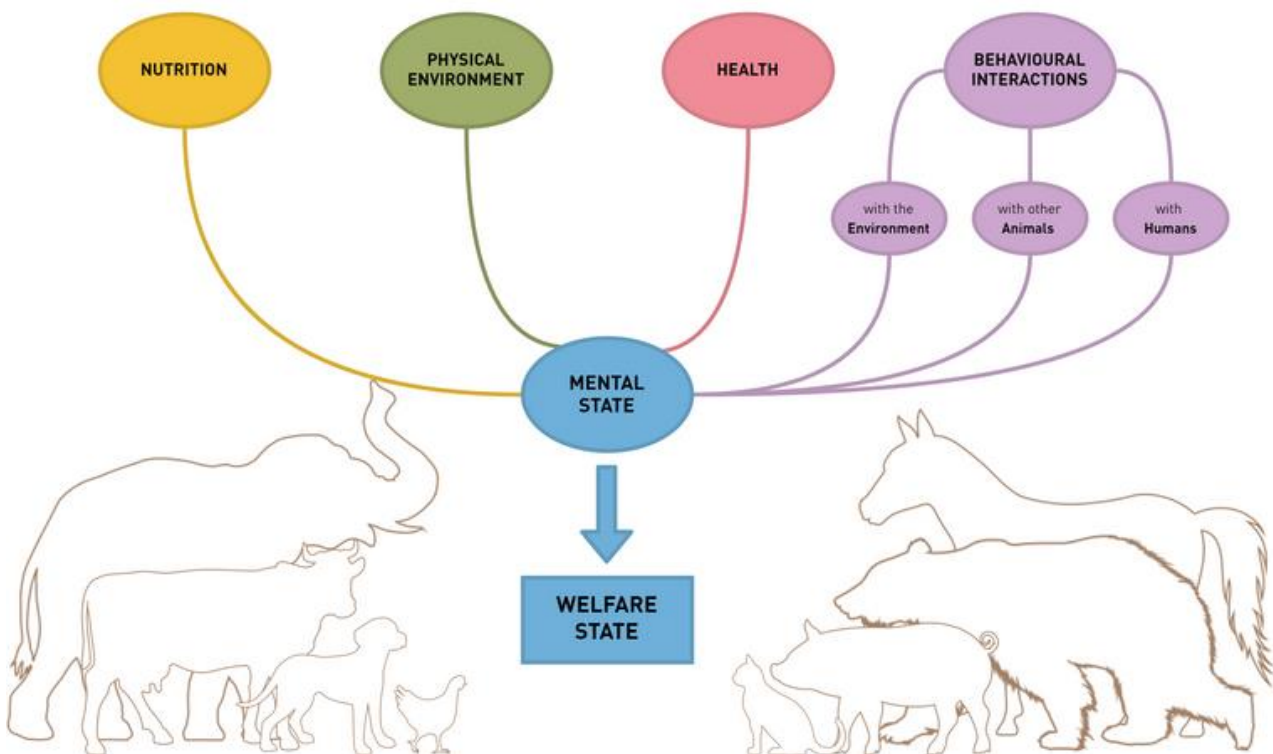
FOUR PAWS is an international animal welfare organisation committed to supporting and encouraging brands to **reduce** the use of animal products, **refine** animal-based supply chain choices to ensure and encourage higher levels of animal welfare, and **replace** animal products with sustainable animal-free 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 unfortunately none can currently claim to follow the Five Provisions (nor the Five Freedoms) in full. Because of this, it is important for brands solely reliant on mainstream certifications to state that they commit to working towards following the Five Domains, but avoid language which claims to currently follow or fulfil them or the corresponding Five Provisions in full.

Additionally, FOUR PAWS encourages brands to call for improvements and work collaboratively to strengthen the effectiveness of animal welfare textiles certifications to ensure a better standard of care is achieved and enabling CSR goals to become realised.

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

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

slaughter process. This includes the potential impact their absence has on the welfare of their offspring and wild populations overall.

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 the best available certification schemes according to FOUR PAWS assessment, certifications which ensure strong robustness and traceability, and those which can help enable consumers to understand the standard of care provided to the animals used.

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, the inadequacies of the current certifications available, 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 who continue to source animal-derived materials.

STEPS TO BUILD AN ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

1

Define company expectations

Circulate these guidelines to all relevant staff as a starting point 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. At this stage it is important that senior staff are engaged in the process, particularly to help define the vision and the expectations.

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. Ensure decision makers are aware of the gaps in your company’s animal welfare practices.

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 to consumers, and make an announcement to all parties within your supply chain. This announcement could also be made public and to customers. Be proud of your animal welfare targets!

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 and eliminate all cruel practices within a set timeframe, while others will further aim for an excellent standard of animal welfare or eliminate animal derived materials overall. Or some may choose to utilise the most robust animal welfare standards, while also committing to invest in 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

Internally, responsibility for fulfilling the policy should be carefully integrated into business planning. The policy itself should also include how frequently the policy will be reviewed and updated, as well as the stakeholders involved in its development and how reporting against it will be published and again at what frequency.

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, e.g mulesing.
- ✓ 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 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 information about a products animal welfare standard will be made available to consumers. Ideally this would be at the point of sale.
- ✓ If brands choose to continue using animal derived materials, brands should publicly commit to encouraging and supporting 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 vigorous file management system.




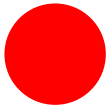




















ANIMAL-DERIVED MATERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below have been designed to support the needs of most brands and fashion companies, which are largely reliant on the use of mainstream certification initiatives to help ensure animal welfare. FOUR PAWS has assessed the animal welfare certifications currently available and found that there is significant room for improvement across all standards. Therefore, it is important brands understand the animal welfare gaps which persist even with using certification and call for and encourage further improvements. The methodology used to define the recommendations below are based on three main criteria - see 1,2,3 below.

 = **Replace**. If any of these questions are answered with a 'no', they are marked with a red traffic light symbol which signifies a substantial welfare risk increase for the animals used to create these materials.

  = **Refine, Reduce**. If a material is marked with a combination of orange half circles and green circles, reduce usage, apply the most robust certification available, and help to strengthen the animal welfare standards currently accessible.

Materials	1. Can the species be farmed commercially in a way that enables them to have a good quality of life?	2. Are there mainstream assurance schemes available for this material type, which can help to address animal welfare issues?	3. Is it clear that this product does not come from sources where animals/eggs are hunted/harvested from the wild?	Recommendations
Alpaca				The Responsible Alpaca Standard (RAS) is the only animal welfare certification currently available. Brands continuing to source Alpaca wool should seek out suppliers certified by the RAS. FOUR PAWS urges that further improvements are made to this standard. *See further notes below.
Angora (Angora Rabbits)				FOUR PAWS is against angora wool farming and calls for a worldwide ban on all caged systems for rabbits, and an end to breeding angora rabbits with excessive hair – which compromises their welfare and health. FOUR PAWS calls on brands to ban the use of wool/fur from Angora rabbits as it is an inherently cruel industry.
Cashmere				Brands sourcing cashmere should seek and utilise cashmere from supply chains which have been certified by the Good Cashmere Standard (GCS). While the GCS does acceptably address animal welfare and provides the strongest animal welfare assurance of the cashmere certifications reviewed by FOUR PAWS, further improvements should still be made.
Down feathers				Brands sourcing down should utilise down from supply chains which have been certified by the Responsible Down Standard (RDS). Whilst this is one of the strongest standards available, FOUR PAWS urges that further improvements are made to this standard, for example live-plucking is currently not excluded at parent farm production level. *See further notes below.

Fur				FOUR PAWS is against the use of all forms of fur and calls on brands to ban the use of fur. 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 sourcing from Leather Impact Accelerator approved suppliers or farms should only use certifications in 'Category D' and carefully ensure supply chain traceability which is particularly challenging for leather. Brands should exclude sales of leather from aborted (sporadic or induced) animals i.e. slink and karakul.
Mohair (Angora Goats)				The Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS) is the only specific mohair animal welfare certification currently available. Brands continuing to source mohair wool should seek out suppliers certified by the RMS. Improvements should be made to this standard. *See further notes below.
Sheep wool				Brands sourcing wool should utilise wool from supply chains which have been certified by the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) or NATIVA™. These two standards can help to ensure mulesed wool is excluded from supply chains and provides the strongest animal welfare assurance of the sheep wool certifications currently available. See here for further guidance on mulesing initiatives. Improvements should be made to the level of animal welfare ensured by all mainstream wool assurance initiatives. *See further notes below.
Other fine wools e.g Vicuna and Yak Wool				In addition to the wool types mentioned above, there are several other types of animal fibre being used today. Some of this fibre comes from wild species and there are no certifications currently available which give any animal welfare assurance at all. We call on brands to avoid these materials.
Animal hair, shells, feathers, bones or teeth				FOUR PAWS is against the use of animal hair, shells, feathers, bones and teeth from wild animals due to the lack of transparency available regarding the origins and species of these materials.
Silk				FOUR PAWS recommends replacing silk with animal-free alternatives due to a lack of any welfare certifications available, and the challenges in sourcing a non-lethal supply of silk.

*The certifications listed in each of the material types above are either the only certification available for this type of material or are considered the strongest in minimising animal welfare risk. However, while these certifications can successfully help to eliminate certain practices, apart from the Good Cashmere Standard they do not currently sufficiently mitigate the risk of poor animal welfare overall and do not meet the five domains as explained above. Because of this, FOUR PAWS encourages brands to avoid the use of these materials, and to commit to actively help improve the standard of animal welfare they can uphold.



ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Mainstream animal welfare certifications

FOUR PAWS has assessed all mainstream animal welfare textiles certifications against the Five Domains model, and considers a 'neutral' state an 'acceptable' level of animal welfare, based on the [Welfare Quality Assessment Scoring System](#). Whereas 'good' or 'excellent' states would mean a more desirable level of animal welfare and ultimately what should be aimed for. While the certifications available today do help to promote better welfare on the global scale, there is still much room for improvement.

Organic certifications

FOUR PAWS supports organic farming practices, however the organic standards which currently exist today often do not explicitly or adequately address animal welfare and are largely regionally or nationally focused and animal welfare can be dependent on the local legislation. While organic standards can help encourage higher standards of welfare, they should be used in conjunction with the best available species-specific standard which properly addresses animal welfare.

Recycled certifications

FOUR PAWS supports the use of certified recycled animal derived materials over their virgin material counterparts. However, as some recycled certifications allow for the blending of recycled animal derived materials with virgin material, there is an increased risk that recycled animal derived materials are replaced or substituted with their virgin material counterparts. For this reason, brands should utilise certifications which have robust systems in place to ensure proper measurement and the highest standards of traceability to avoid mislabelling.

Please note this advice does not apply where FOUR PAWS is against the use of all forms of the animal derived material, such as exotic leathers, fur, and angora.

TRANSPARENCY, TRACEABILITY AND ROBUSTNESS

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 and markers 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 brand's 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 Five 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 ideally 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 to 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 animal welfare to animals on farm.

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>

GLOSSARY

Word	Meaning
Fur	<p>Means any animal skin or part thereof with hair or fur fibers attached thereto, either in its raw or processed state or the pelt of any animal killed for the animal's fur. "Animal" includes, but is not limited to mink, fox, rabbit, karakul lamb and raccoon dog.</p> <p>"Fur" shall not include 1) such skins as are, or are to be, converted into leather or which in processing have, or shall have, the hair, fleece, or fur fiber completely removed, 2) materials clipped, shorn, or combed from animals, fleece, sheepskin, shearling, 3) leather or hair attached to skin that is typically used as leather e.g. cowhide with hair attached, 4) synthetic materials intended to look like fur.</p>
Exotic leather	Any animal leather that comes from wild animals instead of domesticated species. The exotic skins are either from the wild or from farm breeding and include among others crocodile, snake, kangaroo and ostrich.
Animal Welfare Standard	A standard can be defined as a set of criteria which must be followed for a supplier to 'meet' that standard. Standards in the context of animal welfare address how animals should be farmed and what practices are and are not permitted. Standards can also be developed for processes carried out throughout processing.
Animal Welfare Certification	A certification is used to guarantee that the materials used possess a particular standard.
Vegan	Products and fibers which contain no animal products whatsoever. This includes not only the fiber itself, but also glues, waxes and dyes. See BRC's 'The Voluntary Guideline on Veganism in Fashion' for more information.
Animal welfare	<p>Animal welfare is 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 an experience itself influenced by the interplay between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the quality of an animal's nutrition, - the physical environment it lives in, - its health status, - and its behavioural interactions within its physical and social context.