



British Fur Trade Association  
Sky Gardens  
153 Wandsworth Road  
London  
SW8 2GB

Mike Ashley  
CEO  
House of Fraser  
Unit A Brook Park East  
Meadow Lane  
Shirebrook  
NG20 8RY

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Dear Mr. Ashley,

In light of recent campaigning by animal rights groups targeted at House of Fraser, we wanted to write to you about natural, sustainable fur and FURMARK and take the opportunity to set out the facts about faux or plastic fur.

Firstly, let me state that the fur industry is committed to the highest possible standards around animal welfare, environmental protection, and sustainability. The industry will shortly launch and roll out FURMARK, an international mark that will guarantee standards in these areas across the entire supply chain (including at the point of sale).

FURMARK will ensure and guarantee that each stage of the production process meets strict requirements that reflect globally recognised animal welfare and sustainability standards.

The FURMARK certification programmes are based on independent scientific and veterinary advice and best practice: importantly, the verification of each scheme will be conducted by independent third parties. All stages of the supply chain are subject to comprehensive, transparent, and independently verified traceability systems and will be subject to an external audit.

Fur is also of course a natural product compared to synthetic, fossil fuels-derived, faux alternatives with a production process that accords to local, regional, and international standards around environmental protection. With the introduction of FURMARK, the five major global auction houses are committed to selling certified farm-raised and wild fur from 2020. Ultimately, FURMARK enables retailers, brands, and consumers to have complete assurance and confidence when buying natural fur.

Secondly, fake fur – a fossil-fuel derived material – has no place in contemporary fashion.

Firstly, fake fur takes between 500 to 1,000 years to degrade. Real fur degrades at the same rate as oak, poplar, and willow leaves: tests performed to ISO 15985 and ASTM D5511 standards

demonstrated that undyed mink and dyed mink partially biodegraded 25.8% and 18.3% respectively in just 30 days. Over that same period, fake fur biodegradation stood at just 0.3% ± 0.1%.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, 4 in 10 are unaware that fake fur is actually made from fossil-fuel derived plastic. When polled, 42% of the British public were unaware that fake fur is made from plastic and other non-biodegradable materials, including blends of acrylic and modacrylic polymers derived from coal, air, water, petroleum, and limestone.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, fake fur epitomises the crisis of fast fashion whereas real fur lasts decades. The average lifetime for a garment is estimated to be 2.2 years in the UK and clothes with expanded lifetimes have a significantly lower environmental impact - fake fur lasts just a few short years, whereas a natural fur coat will last circa 30 years.<sup>3</sup>

Fourthly, fake fur means marine microplastics. Up to 35% of all primary source microplastics in the marine environment are from synthetic clothing, a single wash has the potential to release as many as 700,000 fibres, and over nine trillion fibres could be released per week in the UK. The mass of discarded clothing is estimated to be in the order of millions of tonnes.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, people are more likely to buy real fur that meets their environmental and welfare standards than fake fur made from single-use plastics and similar materials. When you poll those who buy any type of fur – real or fake – 31% are more likely to buy the former rather than the latter when they are aware of the standards in place and aware of what fake fur is actually made from.<sup>5</sup>

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter with you. Please do us know if there is any further information we could around fur, FURMARK, and the dangers of fossil-fuel derived fake fur.

Yours sincerely,

Giles Roca  
Chief Executive  
British Fur Trade Association  
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<sup>1</sup> Organic Waste Systems 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Populus - 2,087 adult in June 2019.

<sup>3</sup> WRAP; DSS Management Consultants Inc. 2012.

<sup>4</sup> SIFO-Akershus 2018; Boucher and Friot 2017; Cobbing and Vicaire 2016; House of Commons Environmental Audit Select Committee 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Populus - 2,087 adult in June 2019.