



UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021

# NATURAL FUR; DELIVERING ON THE COP26 AGENDA



HOW THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
FUR SECTOR IS  
PLAYING ITS PART

INTERNATIONAL  
**I F F**  
FUR FEDERATION

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# THE SUSTAINABILITY OF NATURAL FUR

**We need to reach net zero by the middle of the century: we recognise that this requires ambitious emissions reductions targets now – because the climate is changing now. It is the greatest risk facing all of us; just as individual countries can and will contribute to the solution, individual sectors and industries must play their part.**



▶ **F**ashion, one of the world's largest manufacturing industries but biggest polluters, must play a major role in delivering on COP26. As the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion notes, **fashion is currently responsible for an estimated 2-8% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions**, an annual material loss of US \$100 billion due to underutilisation, and around 215 trillion litres of water per year.

Efforts to adapt to the impact of climate change are urgently required; these are genuine opportunities to shape the green recovery and the natural fur sector welcomes its role in stepping up efforts and building a more sustainable future. **The global fur sector has launched an ambitious programme** and a clear direction of travel for the sector and wider supply chain around animal welfare, environmental protection and for the people and communities that work in the sector as part of its first **Sustainability Strategy**.

Launched by the International Fur Federation (IFF) to coincide with London Fashion Week at the Danish Embassy in London ahead of the global pandemic, COVID-19 has made the task of rebalancing our relationship with the environment more, not less, urgent.

**The natural fur sector is therefore already delivering on the agenda of COP26 and is part of the solution.**

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**INDIVIDUAL SECTORS  
AND INDUSTRIES MUST  
PLAY THEIR PART.**”

# SECURING SUSTAINABILITY, REDUCING EMMISSIONS



**Natural, animal-derived fibres such as fur, leather, silk, and wool represent one of the key solutions to the ‘fast fashion’ problem. Fashion, as it is currently constituted, is not in crisis — it is crisis. The model has to change at its very roots; this starts with the materials we use to create products.**

▶ **N**atural fibres provide a viable, biodegradable alternative to those synthetic materials associated with landfill, microplastics, and pollution. Sustainability qualities demand similarly sustainable processes: the continued use of natural textiles has to be contingent on the fashion industry’s ability to demonstrate these commitments. The sector has to know its impact; it has to have a plan to mitigate its impact; and it has to commit itself to continuous, ambitious, and incremental change.

As part of the natural fur sector’s Sustainability Strategy, **we have undertaken a full carbon footprint product analysis of our sector** during the primary production stages; seeking to understand and account for our impact; putting in steps to improve where necessary; and matching this work with ambiguous decade-long reduction targets. It is, however, critical that that we do not view carbon footprint studies in isolation as the way we produce and use materials varies dramatically.

The sector is historically committed to reducing the impact of production by **ensuring that natural fur products are long-lasting and made to a circular, rather than a linear, model, in which products can be reused and remodelled for as long as possible before being safely returned to the biosphere.** That circularity represents a shared goal and a common vision and a shift away from a “take-make-dispose” linear process across the textile value chain and ensures that we reduce the carbon footprint per year of use for our products. Natural fur is one of the materials that epitomises the ‘slow fashion’ movement: more must be done and we look forward to meeting ambitious carbon reduction targets.



One of the central premises of COP26 is that the world has to halve emissions over the next decade and reach net zero carbon emissions by the middle of the century: fashion needs to take responsibility for its emissions and tackle issues like underutilisation.

**As part of our Sustainability Strategy, the natural fur sector is committed to publishing studies on both farm-raised and wild fur carbon footprints; lower energy consumption; understanding the full lifecycle impact of the product;** and enhancing circularity at farming level and in the dressing and dyeing (tannery) process. We are committed to reporting on this progress in a robust and transparent way and will be publishing our Sustainability Strategy, interim report in Q1 2022.

Incorporated within this progress, are many examples of the fur sector delivering positive change. Furmark®, a global certification and traceability system, has **clear environmental objectives** that are compatible with increasing regulatory and consumer demands.

**This includes, for example the introduction of a chemical standard at the tannery level, developed with and assessed by accredited independent experts.**

# PROTECTING COMMUNITIES, PRESERVING HABITATS



By agreeing and working towards the Paris Agreement, individual countries and the international community have demonstrated their commitment to limit global warming to 1.5°C. But nations and societies are facing the impacts of climate change now: and that damage to homes and livelihoods has intensified in recent years.



Long-term planning is welcome, but we recognise that work is required now to protect communities and preserve habitats.

The natural fur sector's Sustainability Strategy recognises that many small, often indigenous communities have a long-standing, symbiotic relationship with their natural environment.

Wild fur comes from carefully managed and abundant wild furbearer populations throughout North America and Eurasia, and provides local communities with a surplus that can be harvested without negatively impacting long-term viability or the habitat itself. Regulated by Federal, State, Provincial and Territorial governments, **communities are able to continue working with the environment they have lived within for generations**, and strict quotas populations at levels appropriate for the optimum health of the ecosystem.



The Furmark® logo will appear on products that meet our strict criteria

The sale of wild fur not only provides vital income for remote and indigenous communities but also helps manage the ecosystem. **The people living and hunting in these wild and remote environments are mindful of their impact on nature** and respect the animals they harvest: wild fur has a significant economic benefit, and ensures these societies (and their traditional income stream) can survive well into the future.

Fur also allows many indigenous communities to carry out their traditional way of life while providing for their families in some of the harshest climates on Earth. The sector is **committed to defending and promoting the communities that depend on natural fur**. As part of our Sustainability Strategy, we are identifying and developing collaborative projects in support of communities within the sector, including indigenous people.

**Furmark® — the comprehensive global certification and traceability system — will also come to include social certification of businesses in the supply chain, to ensure we are protecting the communities that rely on us.**



WILD FUR COMES FROM CAREFULLY  
MANAGED AND ABUNDANT WILD  
FURBEARER POPULATIONS



# INCENTIVISING CONSUMERS, IMPROVING PRODUCTS



**The COVID-19 pandemic has brought devastation to millions around the world, disrupting many parts of the global economy.**

▶ **T**he governments present at COP26 will all have taken actions to save lives and protect livelihoods; in that time, however, climate change has continued unabated. Reaching agreements between governments is one of the key goals of the event, and countries are rightly reflecting on their relationship with the environment. But **consumers have a significant role to play** here, as do the businesses that serve them.

While COP26 mobilises public finance to develop climate-resilient infrastructure and private finance to fund technology and innovation, we have to remember that consumer product consumption is, directly and indirectly, driving emissions:

incentives can and should change behaviours.

**Slow fashion means an emphasis on eco-friendly processes,** sustainability, quality, and longevity. Transparency, demanded by governments and provided by businesses, would allow consumers in individual market economies to make much better and more informed decisions on what they buy, what it is made with, and who they buy from. As it stands in fashion, many consumers are unintentionally driving climate change with their actions because they are unable to recognise, and respond to, obvious trade-offs between low prices and high environmental impact.

Similarly, COP26 attendees have a range of policies at their disposal that, if enacted, would bring an immediate boost to businesses already creating, repairing, and remodelling natural, sustainable products and would incentivise others to adopt these biodegradable materials. These policies include making reuse, repair, and remodel garment services tax-exempt; reducing consumption taxes on natural products; improving labelling to cover the carbon footprint of the product; and introducing transparency obligations around product end-of-life and the true 'cost' of the garment.

Success at COP26 means finalising the Paris Rulebook: this will lay the groundwork for future collaboration between governments, businesses, and civil society that will accelerate actions aimed at tackling the climate crisis.

**As part of the global Sustainability Strategy, we are committed to moving to low-impact production and, crucially, to incentive full use and reuse of existing products.**

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**CONSUMERS ARE UNABLE TO  
RECOGNISE, AND RESPOND TO  
TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN LOW PRICES  
AND HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

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**BRITISH FUR TRADE ASSOCIATION**  
**[WWW.BRITISHFUR.CO.UK](http://WWW.BRITISHFUR.CO.UK)**

**INTERNATIONAL FUR FEDERATION**  
**[WWW.WEAREFUR.COM](http://WWW.WEAREFUR.COM)**