

# fashion

HOW TO SET ANIMAL WELFARE AT  
THE HEART OF YOUR COMPANY'S  
ETHICAL POLICY.

The annual **Good Business Awards** give companies the opportunity to promote their commitment to and improvements in animal welfare.

The inaugural awards ceremony was held in 2005 and revealed some of the UK's top achievers in the treatment of animals in the fashion, food and cosmetics industries.

The winners were presented with an award and 12 months' use of a new logo enabling consumers to identify the companies as businesses committed to higher animal welfare.

Enter the **RSPCA Good Business Awards** to show your company's commitment to improvements in animal welfare. Visit: [www.rspca.org.uk/awards](http://www.rspca.org.uk/awards)

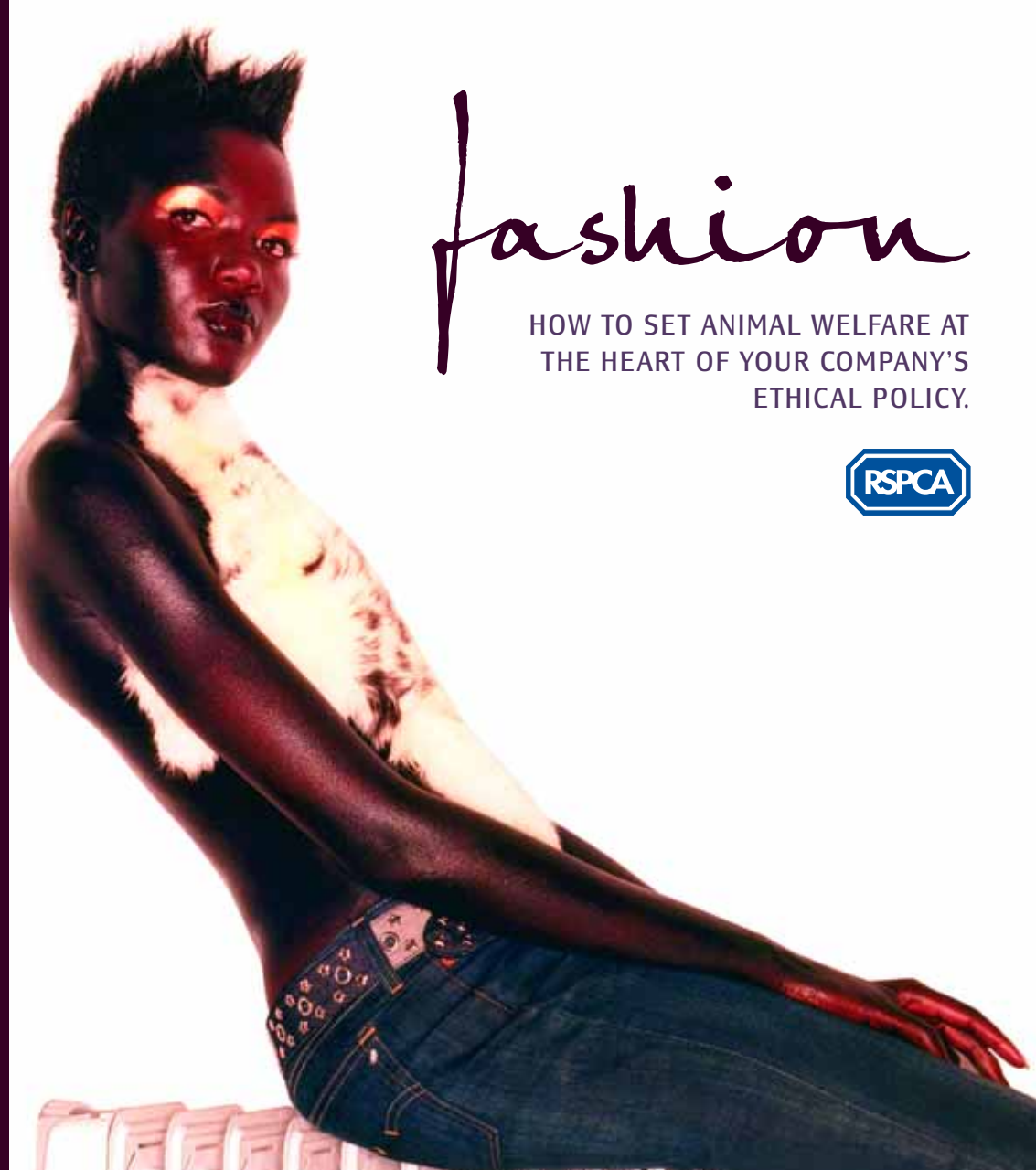
FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON THE  
LISTS OF ENDANGERED SPECIES  
MENTIONED IN THE CASE STUDY  
VISIT CITES: [www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org) AND  
THE IUCN RED LIST: [www.redlist.org](http://www.redlist.org)



Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS  
Tel: 0870 010 1181 [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)  
Registered charity no. 219099  
We receive no government funding 2.06  
COVER PHOTO: KIRCHHNER/MAURITUS DIE BILDAGENTUR GMBH/PHOTOLIBRARY.COM

Printed on 50 per cent  
recycled paper sourced  
from sustainable forests.


90106



# fashion

HOW TO SET ANIMAL WELFARE AT  
THE HEART OF YOUR COMPANY'S  
ETHICAL POLICY.





THE RSPCA'S AIM IS TO ENCOURAGE THE FASHION INDUSTRY TO BE INSPIRED TO REVISE ITS OWN POLICIES WHEN DERIVING ANIMAL PRODUCTS FOR ITS COLLECTIONS.

## Ethical consumerism is worth a staggering £25.8 billion a year\*.

In recent times shoppers have become more aware of the origin of items they are purchasing and the processes these products have been through.

This increasing consumer awareness has played a crucial role in persuading companies to raise their standards for animal welfare by choosing and supplying only higher welfare products.

There are many issues surrounding animal welfare and the fashion industry, which fashion houses, retailers and buyers may not be aware of or choose to ignore.

PHOTO: ALTO/JUPITER IMAGES.COM

# Leather and skins

**The RSPCA is opposed to the infliction of pain and suffering on, or the killing of, any animal in the name of fashion.**

When leather is obtained from animals that have only been reared for their skins, there are ethical concerns about the use of these animals for sole production of luxury (unnecessary) fashion products and items. For example, ostriches are now often raised solely for their use in high quality/luxury goods and fashion items.

Contrary to popular belief, not all leather is obtained as a by-product of the meat industry. Snakes, crocodiles, other reptiles (often referred to as 'exotics') and ostriches are all used as sources of leather. Most of this trade is legal and the same animal welfare concerns that apply to the breeding of cattle for meat and leather with regard to how the animals are reared, transported and slaughtered, apply to 'exotic' animals.

With animals caught from the wild, there are further welfare concerns about how the capture/killing was achieved and there are conservation issues surrounding catching wild animals that could be endangered or threatened species. There is evidence of a substantial illegal trade in skins from protected wild-caught specimens.

LEATHER FROM CATTLE (INCLUDING COWS, PIGS, SHEEP AND GOATS) MAY NOT ALWAYS BE A BY-PRODUCT OF THE MEAT INDUSTRY – IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ESTABLISH WHERE THE LEATHER HAS BEEN SOURCED.

SLAUGHTER METHODS USED TO OBTAIN SKINS CAN BE INHUMANE WHEN PROCESSES INCLUDE LIVE SKINNING AND LIVE BOILING OF ANIMALS.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT WORLDWIDE, 10 MILLION REPTILES ARE KILLED FOR THEIR SKINS EACH YEAR.\*

## WHAT POLICY SHOULD YOUR COMPANY IMPLEMENT WITH REGARDS TO SKINS AND LEATHER?

- Implement a policy to not source skins from certain animals because of conservation issues. Ensure that you do not source skins from wild-caught/endangered or threatened animals. This information can be obtained from CITES ([www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)) and the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) Red List ([www.redlist.org](http://www.redlist.org)).
- If you are unsure of the source of the leather, do not purchase items or use the skin.
- Always ensure that the leather is obtained as a by-product of the meat industry.
- Implement a monitoring process regarding obtaining leather and leather items to enable traceability from the original source, for example from the farm through to the finished product ensuring the welfare of the animal at every stage of the process.
- Ensure that the items you stock and sell are clearly labelled to display the following:
  - country of origin
  - the species of the animal used
  - whether or not the animal is a by-product of the meat industry.



# Fur

**The RSPCA is opposed to the farming and trapping of fur-bearing animals because these practices can cause considerable suffering.**

Some high street shops now implement an animal welfare policy for their clothing ranges and promote their fur-free stance in stores. The restriction of fur use in these stores signals the general public's continuing hostility towards buying and wearing fur.

MORI research\* commissioned by the RSPCA revealed that almost half of the population wrongly believes that where animal fur is used for clothes, the animal will have been killed for its meat (and not just for its fur). This is not the case – it is fashion, not food, which drives the fur trade.

Eighty-five per cent of the world's fur originates from farms, with the most commonly bred animals being mink and fox. They can often be confined to tiny, barren cages set in rows in sheds containing many thousands of animals, and they are denied freedom to pursue their biological and behavioral needs\*\*.

ARCTIC FOX

**EACH YEAR THE WORLDWIDE FUR INDUSTRY KILLS MORE THAN 40 MILLION ANIMALS IN THE NAME OF FASHION.**

\* MORI research interviews of UK adults held between April and May 2005.  
\*\* Fashion victims – an enquiry into the welfare of animals on fur farms. WSPA. 1998.

MARK HAMBLIN/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY

CHARLES GULLUNG/NOINSTOCK/PHOTOLIBRARY.COM

The fur farmers' primary concern when slaughtering the animals is to preserve the quality of the fur. A report looking at Chinese fur farms showed that a significant number of animals remain fully conscious during the process\*.

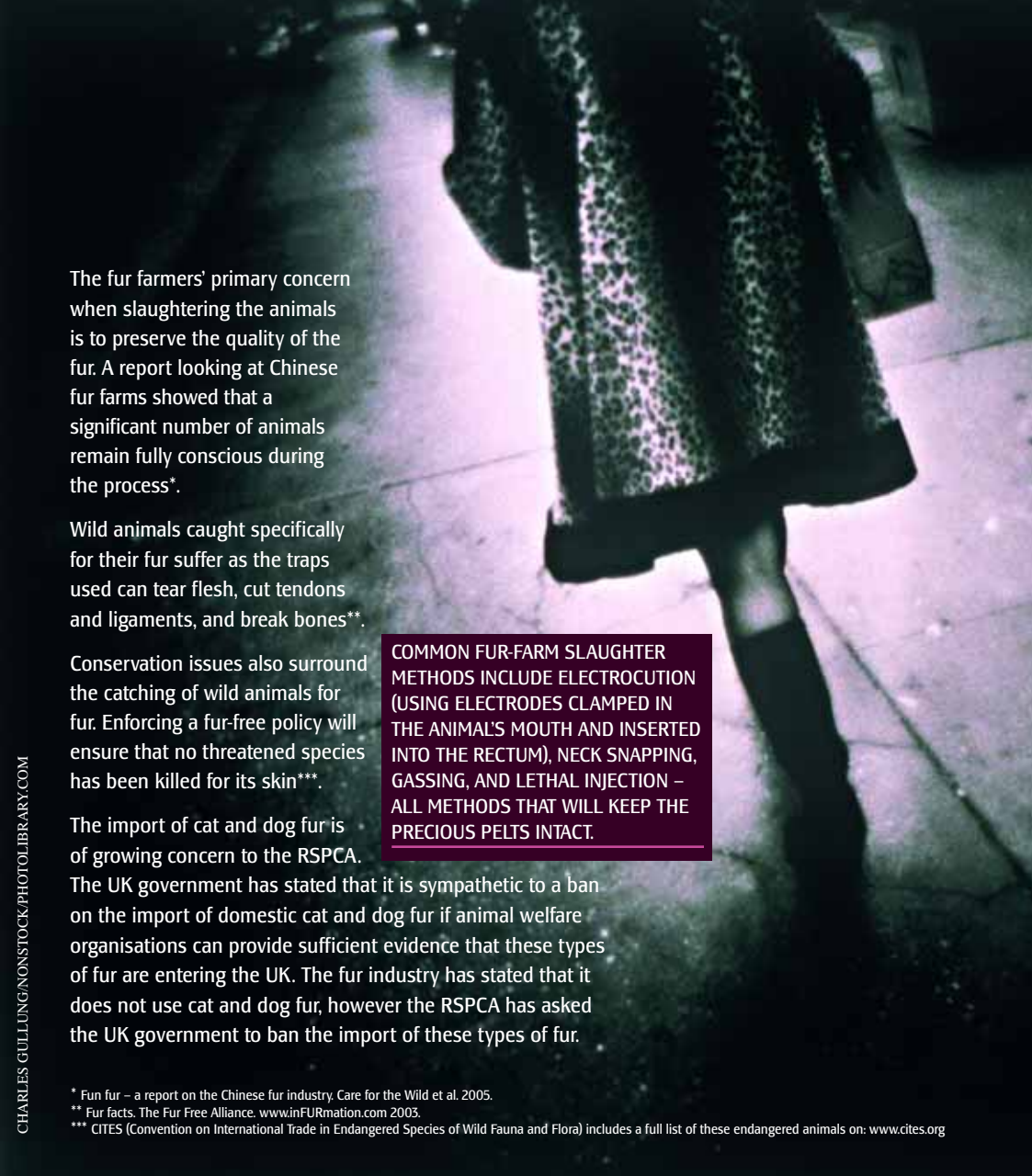
Wild animals caught specifically for their fur suffer as the traps used can tear flesh, cut tendons and ligaments, and break bones\*\*.

Conservation issues also surround the catching of wild animals for fur. Enforcing a fur-free policy will ensure that no threatened species has been killed for its skin\*\*\*.

The import of cat and dog fur is of growing concern to the RSPCA. The UK government has stated that it is sympathetic to a ban on the import of domestic cat and dog fur if animal welfare organisations can provide sufficient evidence that these types of fur are entering the UK. The fur industry has stated that it does not use cat and dog fur, however the RSPCA has asked the UK government to ban the import of these types of fur.

**COMMON FUR-FARM SLAUGHTER METHODS INCLUDE ELECTROCUTION (USING ELECTRODES CLAMPED IN THE ANIMAL'S MOUTH AND INSERTED INTO THE RECTUM), NECK SNAPPING, GASSING, AND LETHAL INJECTION – ALL METHODS THAT WILL KEEP THE PRECIOUS PELTS INTACT.**

\* Fun fur – a report on the Chinese fur industry. Care for the Wild et al. 2005.  
\*\* Fur facts. The Fur Free Alliance. www.inFURmation.com 2003.  
\*\*\* CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) includes a full list of these endangered animals on: www.cites.org



# Fur

## Karakul:

The horror of pelts taken from unborn lambs.

**Karakul lamb skin (or as the fashion industry sometimes refers to it, astrakhan or broadtail) is not usually obtained as a by-product of the meat industry. The value of the pelts drop once the prized curls begin to unfold following birth.**

KARAKUL LAMBS ARE SOLELY RAISED FOR THEIR PRIZED FUR WITH THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PELTS TAKEN FROM FETAL (UNBORN) LAMBS.



THE HSUS

In 2001 the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) investigated the production of Karakul pelts\*. HSUS discovered that the female sheep has between three and five lambs during her life, and all except her last are taken away from her within a few days of birth to be slaughtered for their pelts. While pregnant with the final lamb, the ewe's throat is slit. **Shockingly, her uterus is then cut open and the dying or dead foetus is removed and killed for its fur.**

Labelling on fur garments can be misleading and therefore the consumer is unable to identify which animal the skin has come from. For example, Karakul can also be labelled as broadtail, Persian lamb, swakara, krimmer and astrakhan.

\* Karakul sheep and lamb slaughter for the fur trade. Humane Society of the United States. March 2001.

## WHAT POLICY SHOULD YOUR COMPANY IMPLEMENT WITH REGARDS TO FUR?

- **Do not buy or use fur** – there are many humanely produced alternative materials available instead of fur. The RSPCA urges fashion houses, designers and retailers to shun real fur.
- **Adopt and promote a fur-free policy to your consumers** – stand out from the crowd, be proud and shout out to your consumers that your company does not use real fur.
- **Ensure items to be sold to consumers are clearly labelled** highlighting that the fur on garments is fake.

CHERYLA ERTELT/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY



BOBCAT

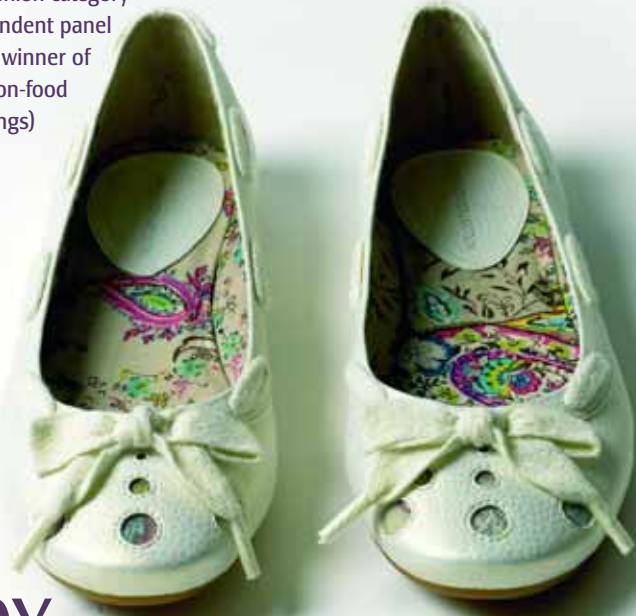
# MARKS & SPENCER

In October 2005, the RSPCA was delighted to acknowledge Marks & Spencer for achieving higher standards for animal welfare in the fashion category at the first annual awards. An independent panel of judges chose Marks & Spencer as winner of the award due to its policies on all non-food products (e.g. clothes, home furnishings) that are derived from animals.

The award was presented to Marks & Spencer on a judgement of the company's policies in many areas including the following:

- fur
- sourcing of leather
- use of Karakul lamb skin
- use of other skins (e.g. snake, fish, ostrich)
- labelling and sourcing.

One of the judges, Wayne Hemingway, founder of fashion label Red or Dead, said: *"Marks & Spencer submitted an exceptional application in this category demonstrating a robust policy for ethical sourcing of all material, including leather. Marks & Spencer is combining ethical sourcing with readily available high-street fashion and therefore setting a great example to the rest of its industry."*



## CASE STUDY MARKS & SPENCER FASHION

MARKS AND SPENCER PLC

### WHY WAS MARKS & SPENCER CHOSEN AS WINNER OF THE FASHION CATEGORY?

The company's animal welfare for non-food animal products policy states that its objective is to ensure that non-food products are sourced within the framework provided by its whole business principles on animal welfare, and the sustainable use of wild animal populations.

Marks & Spencer will, as far as possible, only use animal products when the supplier can provide the following information:

- the name of species in Latin and common name
- the country or area from which the animals derive.

Its policy also states a 'red list' which details the following products that are not to be used. These include:

- no non-food products that are derived from slaughtered animals unless as a by-product of the meat industry
- no non-food products that are derived from endangered species, defined as those which appear on CITES list or the IUCN Red List.

Marks & Spencer specifically states that the following animal products have been assessed as not complying with its business principles on animal

welfare and therefore will not use them in its non-food products (e.g. clothes, home furnishings).

- Fur – this includes farmed fur (e.g. fox, sable, mink, chinchilla, rabbit) and fur which may be a by-product of the meat industry (e.g. rabbit).
- Endangered species – defined as those which appear on the CITES or IUCN lists – this includes, but is not restricted to, ivory and turtle, tortoiseshell and most species of spotted cat.
- Karakul – or any leather/skin products that are the product of unnatural abortions.
- Leather or skin products obtained from live skinning (e.g. reptiles) or live boiling.
- Cow hide – originating or slaughtered in India.
- Feather/down obtained from the live plucking of birds.

In accordance with its animal welfare business principles, Marks & Spencer states that for labelling clothing, synthetic materials made to look like animal products should be clearly labelled as such to avoid unnecessary offence or confusion.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MARKS & SPENCER'S ETHICAL POLICIES, VISIT:  
[www2.marksandspencer.com/thecompany](http://www2.marksandspencer.com/thecompany)