

The chairman of the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament  
Postoffice box 20018  
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Date 02-07-2003

**Subject**

Questions of the parliament member Van Velzen (SP) regarding the trade in dog and cat fur in the Netherlands.

TRC 2003/2332

Dear Chairman,

I hereby submit to you, also on behalf of the Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, the answers to questions asked by the member Van Velzen (SP) regarding the trade in dog and cat fur in the Netherlands.

**1**

Are you familiar with the article 'Street cat becomes fur coat ' and 'Belgians shocked about trade in fur of dogs and cats'?

Yes.

**2**

Can you indicate to what extent dogs and cats are being bred for the fur industry, to what extent the furs of these animals are used in the Netherlands and to what extent these products are traded in the Netherlands?

It is illegal in the Netherlands to breed dogs or cats for their fur. In the Netherlands it is permitted to import and trade in the fur of dogs and cats. Regarding the extent of the importation and trading in the Netherlands, I do not know any figures.

**3**

Can you indicate what other (types and numbers of) furbearing animals other than foxes and mink are bred in the Netherlands and are you willing – taking into account [the industry's] explosive growth, incorporate annually that data into the CBS (Central Statistic Bureau of the Netherlands) agriculture statistics? 2)? If not, why?

The Chamber question [that] reported explosive growth of 'remaining furbearing animals' between 2000 and 2002 has lead to further research by Laser. The agency Laser of the ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food quality, takes care of the registration upon which the CBS bases the Agriculture statistics.

By virtue of that research the CBS has corrected the total number of 'remaining furbearing animals' in 2002 downwards by 11,000 to 1,240. One owner filled in the questionnaire in error: the number of mink – 11,000 – was written down in the category of 'mink' as well as in the category 'remaining furred animals'. After processing these corrections we can no longer speak about an enormous growth between 2000 and 2002 in the category 'remaining furred

animals': from 1,115 to 1,240. Apart from that the category 'remaining furred animals' does almost certainly not concern dogs and cats, but [for species such as] beavers.

**4**

Are you familiar with the research that was done last April at the Academic Medical Centre of the University of Amsterdam, whereby 93 fur items, purchased in Dutch stores, were DNA tested with the result that at least 5 items were shown to be made of dog fur?

Yes.

**5**

What is your opinion about using dog and cat fur in clothing and other products and what is your opinion about the trading of these commodities in the Netherlands?

Keeping dogs and cats for their fur is not permitted in the Netherlands. This ban is appropriate according to Dutch standards and values. Using fur of dogs and cats in clothing and other products and trading these commodities is, on the other hand, allowed in the Netherlands. Furthermore, see the answer to question 10.

**6**

Do you know that misleading names for fur are printed on labels, like nylon, woollen yarn and rabbit fur, and that only sporadically do the labels correctly indicate from which animal species the fur originates?

All textile articles have to comply with labelling requirements according to the ordinance of textile articles (law of merchandise). According to this ordinance, articles that are made of the hair of certain animals specified by the ordinance should be reflected on the label. For species that are not mentioned specifically in the ordinance, such as dogs and cats, the identification 'hair' suffices without the species being cited. The inspection service of merchandise is vested with the responsibility of monitoring observance of this ordinance. No offences under this ordinance have been registered by the service in recent years. The ordinance of the law of merchandise implements EU directive 71/307/EEC with regard to the naming of textiles.

**7**

Given that consumers are ignorant of the fact that they buy fur that originates from dogs and cats, do you share the view that consumers are being deceived? And, are you willing to insist at the European Commission that the source of fur should be mentioned obliged on the label? If not, why?

It can be deduced from my answer to question 6 that not identifying relevant fur products as dog or cat in origin does not conflict with the aforementioned regulation or ordinance. Therefore, according to a strict interpretation, we cannot speak of misleading consumers. Furthermore, see the answer to question 10.

**8**

Are you aware that the United States and Italy have established a trading ban on dog and cat fur and that other European countries are preparing similar restrictions?

Yes.

**9**

Are you willing to implement a Dutch ban on the import and export on dog and cat fur? If not, why?

No. With the disappearance of internal borders (internal free market) a national ban cannot be effective. Furthermore, see my answer to question 10.

**10**

Are you willing to insist that the European Commission establish a European ban on the import and export of dog and cat fur?

We are prepared expend effort in the European framework, to obtain implementation of measures necessary to put a stop to the trade of dog and cat fur.

The minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food quality,

**Dr. C.P. Veerman**