

The Anti-Fur Society response to:

- 1) Canadian Pro-Fur Council (Please see their attached statement)
- 2) Other Pro-Fur councils, using this same response, or adjusted depending upon the circumstances. Here is one example:

Mario Tremblay
Fur Council of Canada
1435 St. Alexandre, Suite 1270
Montreal, Quebec H3A 2G4

Phone: (514) 844-1945
Fax: (514) 844-8593
e-mail: info@furcouncil.com

Dear Mr. Tremblay

Fur has become popular lately, and many celebrities have been flouncing around in pelts. Fur industry representatives will claim that fur is "responsible" and "ecological." They say that the rest of the animal is used and that endangered species are not used. They will say that it's necessary to thin the populations of wild animals. They claim that it is possible to trap animals humanely. All of this is false.

Animals raised for fur are often kept in small cages, and have all their natural instincts thwarted. Many animals are driven insane. When the time comes to kill them, they are genitally or anally electrocuted.

They argue that fur is biodegradable. In a sense, this is true; all body parts of all living beings are biodegradable. This means that after an animal dies-or is killed-the body begins to decompose, including the fur. To prevent these articles of clothing from rotting on the wearer's back, fur-and leather for that matter-are tanned and processed with toxic and potentially carcinogenic chemicals like formaldehyde, coal tar derivatives, and various oils, dyes, and finishes, some of them cyanide-based. In addition to the toxic substances mentioned above, tannery effluent also contains large amounts of other pollutants, such as protein, hair, salt, lime sludge, sulfides, and acids. Tanners, and those living downstream from them, also have higher rates of cancer than the general population. A New York State Department of Health study shows that more than half of all testicular cancer victims work in tanneries.

The idea that farmed fur uses less energy and petroleum than faux furs is also false. A study by the Ford Motor Company showed that the production of a fur coat uses 20 times the energy than that of a faux fur or faux leather.

Furthermore, all animals, whether wild or raised on farms, produce waste, and it has to go somewhere. With "farmed" animals, this typically finds its way into streams, rivers, and lakes, along with the tanning

chemicals.

As for trapping, it is absolutely impossible to find a "humane" trapping system. The traps don't just catch the animals they are "supposed" to catch, but can catch cats and dogs, often people's pets. Furthermore, when the trap snaps shut, it causes the animal intense pain. Anti-fur groups compare it to having a car door slammed on one's hand. And unless the traps are checked frequently, a trapped animal is vulnerable to hunger, thirst, predation, and vagaries of the weather. There is simply no humane way to trap animals.

The argument of "culling"-or killing-some animals to save the rest rings false. After all, if there are too many animals for the food supply, raccoons, muskrats and other fur animals will slow down the breeding. This is also true for those who hunt deer to "thin" a (usually artificially) large population. Nature is quite good at righting the course of things. Then there is the fur trade from China, enabling low- and middle-income people to buy fur-trimmed coats and sweaters and furry trinkets and tchotchkes. The animals used for fur in China are typically cats and dogs, and many are someone's pet, kidnapped and caged until it's time to kill them. Animals stolen for fur in China are shown no mercy at any point. They are beaten, strangled, slammed against walls and floors, and often skinned alive. Because China has no animal welfare laws whatsoever, the workers in Chinese fur farms abuse all sort of fur-bearing animals with impunity.

Many anti-fur activists are also vegans or vegetarians. We don't believe that animals are put on earth for humans to use for food, clothing, entertainment or research. Many anti-fur and anti-animal exploitation groups operate on shoestring budgets, unlike the fur industry, the meat industry, the dairy industry, and all the other animal exploitation industries. It's laughable that such industries would accuse animal-rights activists of not providing a balanced view because the animal exploitation industries have the ears of more people in which to pour their lies.

It's also laughable that pro-fur industry representatives care about aboriginal and native peoples. Companies that make their money exploiting animals also typically exploit humans working in these industries as well.

The bottom line is: there is no such thing as humane, biodegradable, or responsible fur.

Sincerely,

Rosa Close
AntiFurSociety@msn.com
www.antifursociety.org

Letter written by:
Danielle Kichler
veggietart@hotmail.com

=====

From: mariotremblay

Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2006 2:20 PM

I understand your concerns and, of course, it is not for us to tell you what you should wear, eat or think. But i would still like you to know that, strange as you may find this, the fur trade is NOT anti-nature or anti-animals.

The fur industry is responsible and ecological. In Canada, conservation policies and regulations are established to assure the harmony with nature. No endangered species are used and the fur trade uses only a small part of the surplus nature produces each year. This is what biologists call sustainable use of renewable resources, a principle promoted by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and every major world conservation organization. In fact, after 400 years of commercial trading, there are as many beavers in Canada now as when Europeans first arrived.

Also, the animals are not only used for clothing. Aboriginal and other Canadians trappers hunt beaver, muskrat and other furbearers for food. Animals not used for food are returned to the woods to feed other wildlife through the winter. Farmed mink provide organic fertilizers, fine oils and other useful products in addition to fur. Nothing is wasted.

Canadians are also world leaders in promoting high standards of animal-welfare on fur farms and in the wild. Trappers have a direct personal interest in protecting vital wildlife habitat: they are the first to sound the alarm when wildlife is threatened by disease, pollution or poorly planned development projects.

Fur is a true eco-fabric; it is biodegradable, renewable and natural.

Finally, the industry provides income to more than 80 000 Canadians who live in rural or remote regions.

You may feel better wearing synthetics, but most synthetics are derived from petrochemicals. I am not against synthetics, but look at the harm to nature and, yes, to real animals caused by the recent oil spills off the Spanish and French coasts. Cotton or linen, perhaps? I don't know if anyone has accurately calculated how many insects and animals are killed by the pesticides used to protect these crops and by the machines used to cultivate and harvest them. (The same is true of soybean production, for tofu, and for just about any other foods.)

Meanwhile, nature can only feed and shelter relatively few of the young raccoons, muskrats and other fur animals that are born each Spring... we (as part of nature) can use some of this "surplus" without depleting wildlife populations. And a skilled trapper using the new, more humane methods that have been developed over the past decade, will probably cause far less

suffering than results when nature "takes its course" with disease and starvation. (I don't know if you are aware that the Canadian Government and the International Fur Trade Federation have invested more than \$13 million over the past decade to develop and test more humane trapping systems. This research provided the scientific basis for the recent Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards, signed by Canada and the European Union.)

Animal-rights fund-raising groups, including PETA and others, have very little interest in informing you about these and other facts about the fur trade. PETA now collects about US\$20 million annually; the HSUS collects about \$50 million annually, and the list goes on... "Animal rights" has become a big business. A big business with very little accountability. A big business that makes money by attacking the cultures and livelihoods of aboriginal and other people who still live close to the land. We should be very careful before attacking people we don't even know -- especially when these attacks are based on VERY biased information provided by groups that have a vested interest in stirring controversy, instead of fostering honest communication and mutual understanding.

Once again, it is not for me to tell you to wear fur or anything else. But be aware that people who have little interest in providing a balanced view of this story may manipulate your good intentions.

Do not hesitate to contact us about your concerns. I hope you can at least see that this issue is not quite so black & white as you may have thought!

Sincerely,

Mario Tremblay
Fur Council of Canada
514-844-1945