

ETHICAL CLAIMS AND ANSWERS (mink)

- THE EUROPEAN FUR SECTOR

C: *Fur is an unnecessary luxury product to which alternatives exist.*

A: The important thing is the welfare provided for the animals whilst they are alive, and mink can live good and healthy lives on European fur farms. In modern society we surround ourselves with all kind of products which are non-essential to human survival and to this end; meat is also an unnecessary luxury product we can live without. Animals do not care whether they become food or fashion - the only issue that matters to animals is their welfare. This includes shelter, food, protection from harm and the opportunity to reproduce.

C: *Mink are wild animals who suffer in small, cramped wired cages.*

A: As all other farm animals, mink have adapted to the farm environment through more than 100 generations of domestication, and the housing systems are designed in accordance with the mink's biology. This is no different to the way gerbils and hamsters are commonplace domestic pets these days. Mink mate naturally, raise their own kits and spend 70-80% of their time in the nest box, and all of this precisely mirrors their natural behaviour. In nature, mink have large territories and enter into water because they are looking for food. Farmed mink do not have this need as they are fed fresh food every day.

C: *Fur is damaging to the environment.*

A: In Europe, the environmental aspects of fur are strictly regulated in accordance with national legislation. These guidelines cover the handling and distribution of manure and through the EU's REACH directive, on the use of chemicals. This means that European fur sets the best environmental standards in the world, when it comes to the environmental impact of this type of farming. Fur also has a number of environmentally friendly attributes, the most important of which is the generally long life span of fur products. It is not unusual for a fur coat to last 20-30 years. Distributing any environmental cost over such a long period also serves to reduce any impact.

C: *Fur is only bred for their fur – the rest of the animal is wasted*

A: All over Europe, the carcasses from mink production are processed at bio-processing plants where the carcasses are used to generate low carbon energy, fertilizers, cement, cosmetic products and second generation biofuels. More than 70% of European fur production actively participates in this recycling process. The recycling process also works the other way around because mink are fed with waste products from primarily the chicken and fish industries.