

GIVE LEATHER THE BOOT



Leather is a luxury we cannot afford; its widespread use continues only through ignorance about its production and myths about its qualities.



Produced in association with The Campaign Against Leather and Fur (CALF), BM Box 8889, London WC1N 3XX



MYTH 1: Leather is a by-product of the meat industry

Leather is not an 'incidental' product of the rearing of animals for meat; every last part of the animal is sold in order to make the whole bloody business profitable. The skin/hide, which is tanned to make leather, represents around 10% of the animal's total value – which makes it pound for pound the most valuable part of the unfortunate creature. UK leather sales are worth more than £400 million a year.

Although the skins and hides of sheep, pigs and goats are a significant source of 'raw material' for tanners, cattle hides and calf skins account for most footwear and leather goods produced in the UK. These are derived from over 2 million cattle slaughtered annually in the UK – including dairy cattle. Speciality leathers are made from deer, alligators, lizards, sharks, snakes, crocodiles, kangaroos, ostriches and other 'exotic' species.

MYTH 2: The animals spend contented lives grazing in fields and go to slaughter because they are old

Cattle are selectively bred and are subjected to a range of stock operations and procedures – including artificial insemination, artificial weaning and feeding, embryo transfer, overwintering, mechanised milking, dosing with antibiotics, disbudding, castration, marking, and the separation of cow and calf within a few days of birth. As a consequence of undergoing a vicious cycle of pregnancy and lactation, dairy cows are especially susceptible to mastitis and lameness. Their calves provide tanneries with highly valued fine-grained skin, used for shoe uppers, jackets, gloves and wallets.

The most highly prized skin comes from unborn calves and is used to make soft suede.

The natural life expectancy of cattle is 20 years, yet beef cattle are killed at 1-3 years and dairy cows at about 4-5 years.

MYTH 3: Unlike a wild fur-bearing animal, the leather-producing animal is killed humanely

Transportation to slaughterhouses causes animals discomfort and stress. Packed in cramped conditions, they may suffer heat exhaustion, heart attacks, bruising, hunger, dehydration and broken bones *before* reaching the slaughterhouse. Once in the slaughterhouse, they are stunned prior to having their throats cut. Inaccurate or ineffective stunning may result in animals remaining conscious or regaining consciousness. Slaughterers need possess no formal qualifications or training.

MYTH 4: Unlike the plastic alternatives, leather products are environmentally friendly

Footwear and clothing products derived from petroleum-based materials are often criticised for being environmentally damaging. Tanneries, however, not only emit unpleasant odours, the powerful chemicals used to remove every last scrap of flesh produce a host of pollutants – including lead, zinc, formaldehyde, dyes and cyanide-based chemicals. Added to the equation is the devastating environmental impact of raising livestock.

Purchasing leather goods helps to make the rearing and killing of millions of animals a profitable concern and maintains a demand that can be satisfied only by the taking of life.

For information on animal-free alternatives to leather visit www.vegansociety.com or send an A5 SAE to The Vegan Society, Donald Watson House, 7 Battle Road, St.Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7AA Tel: 0845 45 88244

