

Trade ban on seal products fails to raise welfare standards

The European Commission's draft legislation on the trade in seal products is ill-conceived and driven by emotion rather than fact according to the British Fur Trade Association (BFTA).

The British Fur Trade Association is a member of the International Fur Trade Federation (IFTF). Both BFTA and IFTF are committed to driving up welfare standards in the fur industry and support the need to harmonise the rules covering the welfare of seals. But the Commission's proposal is discriminatory and only targets commercial sealing. It risks undermining legitimate efforts to maintain balanced eco-systems.

As with most wildlife, populations must be managed and the European Commission's own advisors [1] say that seal stocks can be managed humanely. According to estimates, there are some 8 million Harp and Hooded seals in the North Atlantic, and grey seals populations have increased significantly in the Baltic Sea of late. Unless these stocks are carefully managed, there will be increased pressure on fish stocks and the risk of seal migrations to other areas. 'Trade bans are not the answer to conservation or animal welfare best practices,' says Andreas Lenhart, the IFTF's chairman, adding, 'Why is one seal more deserving of good animal welfare because the skin, meat and oils are traded, than another which is hunted purely to manage population levels?'

BFTA and the IFTF are disappointed that the EU is not seeking an improvement in global welfare standards in sealing and standing by sustainable use principles. The only way that this can be achieved is to encourage all sealing nations (including those within the EU) to adopt international standards, such as those which the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) proposes to develop.

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For more information see www.britishfur.co.uk and www.iftf.com

[1] European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) Scientific Opinion, 6 December 2007

About BFTA:

The BFTA (British Fur Trade Association) represents the fur sector in the UK, promotes high standards and champions fur fashion.

BFTA is a member of the International Fur Trade Federation (IFTF). The IFTF promotes strict codes of practice that meet or exceed established and accepted animal welfare standards for wild and farmed fur. The BFTA and the IFTF strongly condemn cruelty to animals and their members do not trade in endangered species.

www.britishfur.co.uk

About Origin Assured:

The new fur industry initiative gives consumers assurance about the provenance of fur they are buying. Just as people wish increasingly to know about the sources of their food, coffee and clothing, research among designers and consumers has shown that they too would like to know about the source of their fur.

When consumers see the OA™ label they can be certain that, wild or farmed, the fur comes from a country where national or local regulations or standards governing fur production are in force.

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