

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Does Gucci really understand sustainability?

October 19, 2017



Fur flies. Image credit: Fur Information Council of America

By STAFF REPORTS

A statement from the Fur Information Council of America reacting to [Gucci's decision Oct. 11 to ban real fur](#) from its product offering as part of a decade-long sustainability plan:

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Last week's announcement that Gucci had decided to drop real fur has generated much discussion and confusion for its contradiction of the core principles of sustainability.

Real fur is, after all, a natural, renewable and sustainable resource. And it is durable, reusable and recyclable. It hits all the key notes that define sustainability.

Today's farm-raised mink are among the world's best cared-for livestock. They have to be. Good nutrition, comfortable housing and prompt veterinary care are absolutely essential for rich, lustrous, healthy fur. And if a farmer isn't producing healthy animals, he goes out of business quickly due to inferior product. That's just common sense.

National codes of practice and operating guidelines provide further assurance that farmed fur bearing animals are well cared for.

In addition, mink farmers voluntarily adhere to stricter codes of animal husbandry to participate in farm certification programs. It is also important to note that farmed mink consume mountains of food waste each year, making these farms net pollution consumers.

Then there's the role that wild fur sales play in wildlife management and conservation programs. Many furbearers are so abundant today that overpopulation poses a threat to their own welfare. Failure to properly manage these populations will result in disaster for the animals, their habitats and the people who must share space with them.

Due to continued cuts in government budgets, wildlife management professionals lack the resources to do what is needed to sustain healthy populations. Without the financial support that comes from the sale of wild furs, it becomes increasingly difficult to effectively manage these populations.

The fur trade provides a crucial, finely tuned symbiotic relationship that helps to achieve the objectives of wildlife management and conservation and society as a whole.

Now let's look at production.

Unlike mass-produced faux fur apparel, real fur garments are produced by hand, requiring the artistry and skilled handiwork of talented craftsmen. The amount of energy and fossil fuel required for fabrication is relatively low when compared to large, automated factories.

Let's also not forget that the fur trade supports land-based cultures and local indigenous populations contributing to environmental conservation.

Without the ability to trap, or hunt, these indigenous people's livelihood and source of sustenance would become extinct, forcing them to turn to other activities for their livelihoods, opening up their territories to mining, oil drilling or other interests.

According to [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) the very definition of sustainability is "the quality of not being harmful to the environment or depleting natural resources, and thereby supporting long-term ecological balance."

Petroleum-based faux fur products are the complete antithesis of the concept of responsible environmental conservation.

Right off the top, petrol-based plastic fur is extremely harmful to the environment. It isn't biodegradable. It's harmful to wildlife. Deadly carcinogens are released during the production of these materials and thousands of tiny plastic lint fibers are released into wastewater when these faux furs are washed. They are then released into oceans and rivers where they are ingested by fish, mammals and sea birds. It doesn't take a scientist to know that can't be good!

Secondly, the definition of "sustainability" also suggests that it is the quality of not depleting natural resources; it is well documented that petroleum is a non-renewable resource. There's only so much of it left. Isn't that one of the reasons the race has been on for alternative sources of fuel?

Therefore, the use of petroleum based faux fur product not only does not support sustainability, it is a direct contradiction to the ideals of sustainability!

As fast fashion is quickly dominating retail, other questions about sustainability arise. What is the impact on the environment from the overconsumption of synthetic fast fashion that quickly gets disposed of? Where consumers are concerned about sustainability and the environment, shouldn't the focus be on natural, renewal, recyclable products that can last generations such as real fur, rather than the plastic materials and other synthetics such as petrol-based faux fur?

Around the world fur continues to be a popular fashion item with nearly 70 percent of major designers including some fur in their collections.

Innovative new techniques in fur dyeing and production allow designers a breadth of creative possibilities unmatched by any other textile.

The extraordinary fur fashions created are generating strong sales among a broadening audience worldwide. These designers and consumers recognize the value of a natural product and an artisanal production process.

IT WOULD BE prudent for Gucci to reconsider and engage in a meaningful dialogue about sustainability and the value of real fur in this regard.

Hopefully we will see their extraordinary design talents applied once again to create the exceptional fur fashions synonymous with the brand's DNA.

Based in Los Angeles, the [Fur Information Council of America](#) seeks to promote markets for fur retailers, manufacturers and wholesalers across the United States through ongoing public relations, media and consumer outreach, fashion promotion, proactive public policy management at the local, state and federal levels and any other positive promotional activities. This statement was reproduced in its entirety.