

Overview

Could you summarise Furmark®?

Furmark® is a comprehensive global certification and traceability system for natural fur that guarantees animal welfare and environmental standards.

Furmark®, in short, is the international mark of sustainable natural fur.

What does Furmark® mean in practice?

- Furmark® is the global certification and traceability system for natural fur that guarantees animal welfare and environmental standards.
- Furmark® is a simple, recognisable mark of quality, assurance, and confidence.
- Furmark® animal welfare and environmental programmes are science-based, third-party certified, and transparent.
- Furmark® products are traceable and verified: they have met recognised standards.
- Furmark® launches to consumers A/W 2021.

What is Furmark®'s USP? What is important about it? Why does it matter?

We recognise that the public, regulators and those in fashion do not have a clear understanding of the fur trade.

The International Fur Federation (IFF) has therefore created a single certification framework for natural fur, as well as introducing new component parts which are subject to certification. This is Furmark®.

Furmark® represents simple, recognisable, and global certification, indicated by a clear mark.

What is the purpose of Furmark®?

- Furmark® encompasses a number of individual certification programmes in one single system.
- Each programme has a specific, independently-developed science-based protocol/standard.
- The programmes are subject to third-party assessment and certified by a recognised certification body.
- The certification system itself also includes a traceability component (accessible to the consumer).
- It is also a quality mark (indicating certification).

For consumers, Furmark® is a mark of guaranteed quality for the product they are purchasing. For businesses, Furmark® is an industry-wide commitment to exacting practices and sustainability across the supply chain. For the industry, Furmark® reaffirms both the value of natural, sustainable fur and the collective effort to deliver global standards and solutions.

What fur types are included in Furmark®?

Furmark® is a comprehensive global certification and traceability system for natural fur that guarantees animal welfare and environmental standards. As such, a range of fur types are incorporated.



Farm-raised fur types/fur-bearing animals included in the Furmark® certification system (programme(s) in parenthesis):

- Mink (WelFur AND North American Farm-Raised)
- Fox (WelFur AND North American Farm-Raised)
- Finnraccoon (WelFur)
- Swakara (Swakara)
- Sable (Farm-Raised Sable)

Wild fur types/fur-bearing animals included in the Furmark® certification system (programme(s) in parenthesis):

- American Marten/Sable (North American Wild Fur)
- Arctic Fox (North American Wild Fur)
- Bobcat/Lynx Cat (North American Wild Fur)
- Canada Lynx (North American Wild Fur)
- Coyote (North American Wild Fur)
- Ermine/Stoat/Weasel (long-tail, short-tail) (North American Wild Fur)
- Fisher (North American Wild Fur)
- Grey Fox (North American Wild Fur)
- Mink (North American Wild Fur)
- Muskrat (North American Wild Fur)
- North American Beaver (North American Wild Fur)
- North American River Otter (North American Wild Fur)
- Nutria/Coypu (North American Wild Fur)
- Raccoon (North American Wild Fur)
- Red Fox (North American Wild Fur)
- Sable (Wild Sable)

Why is a particular fur type (rex rabbit, for instance) NOT included in Furmark®?

Our aim is to build a comprehensive system, but high standards means a high barrier to entry: Furmark® will continue to evolve beyond 2021-22 and will seek to incorporate new and emerging programmes, but their accession to Furmark® requires (among other things) that they meet all of Furmark®'s three key principles.

We are looking at fur types, but more progress is necessary.

What are the principles of Furmark®?

Furmark® has three key principles—science, independent inspection, and transparency.

In short:

- Certification programmes and their individual protocols must be science-based and approved by independent experts.
- Certification programmes must be verified by third parties and publicly available.
- Certification programmes must be sustainable, relevant, accessible, and traceable.



The certification programmes that Furmark® draws together must meet recognized national regulations and ISEAL's credibility principles including truthfulness, transparency, sustainability, relevance, accessibility, efficiency, engagement, impartiality, improvement, and rigour.

The governance surrounding Furmark® is critical to ensuring the programme operates within the agreed principles.

How are the ISEAL principles applied to Furmark®

ISEAL have published a revised draft of the 10 key principles in 2021. The IFF have systematically reviewed these latest drafts to align with the development and implementation of Furmark®.

Why should I buy a Furmark® product over another fur product?

Under the Furmark® certification system, stages of the supply chain are subject to comprehensive, transparent, and independently-verified traceability systems.

Crucially for animal welfare and environmental sustainability, this means that the fur used in the product has come from one of the select leading certification programmes (farm or wild) and then been dressed and/or dyed according to a strict environmental standard.

Importantly for confidence and assurance, this also means that the journey of the product from through the supply chain is tracked with a traceability component and that areas of the supply chain are subject to due diligence.

The choice, therefore, is between a certified, verifiable, and traceable natural fur product over a product that does not meet that standard.

Aren't brands (i.e. Canada Goose) walking away from fur? Is this just a response from a dying sector? Is this a knee-jerk reaction to that? Have you left it too late?

The Furmark® certification system and its constituent programmes have been in development for several years: it is a proactive exercise in standards and traceability, and not a reactive exercise due to a particular brand or brands.

Ultimately, it ensures that standards are rigorous and clearly distinguishable: it protects and enhances the status of a natural, sustainable material that aligns with contemporary environmental concerns. Furmark® means brands can confidently continue using natural fur.

Do you expect brands who have stopped using fur to start using it again because of Furmark®?

Fur use is dependent on fashion and fashion is cyclical. However, environmental concerns have seen brands move towards 'slow fashion' and natural, sustainable materials, which could bring some brands 'back' to fur.

Similarly, a maison's attitude towards fur often depends on their head of design, meaning change is entirely possible. Kering, for instance, has a range of opinions among its maisons.

Why now?



Societal concerns around animal welfare and environmental standards mean Furmark® is the right initiative for the right material at the right time.

Increasingly popular on both the high-street and on the catwalk, fur's relevance and accessibility has increased in recent years: it is material that represents craftsmanship and care. As a biodegradable, renewable textile, natural fur accords with contemporary environmental concerns.

Fur embodies the concept of circular, 'slow' fashion: it is designed, sourced, produced, and provided with the intention of being used and circulated – in its most valuable form – for as long as possible before being returned safely to the biosphere.

Why the International Fur Federation (IFF)?

Furmark® requires coordination, collaboration, and commitment across the entire supply chain: no other organisations could deliver Furmark® because no other organisation has the oversight and governance of the fur supply chain necessary to deliver Furmark®.

The International Fur Federation represents 56 associations in 40+ countries. As such, membership encompasses everyone from farmers at the very start of the supply chain to retailers at the other end of said supply chain.

How does this relate to international, national, and local laws and regulations?

Furmark®, as a comprehensive system based on independent science, certification, and third-party inspection, represents confidence and assurance. Fur is already a highly-regulated sector, and therefore Furmark® exists to provide an additional layer on top of stringent local, national, and international laws and regulations.

We are going further than what is required of us as a sector—and we are doing it for the consumer.

What percentage of fur globally will be covered by Furmark®?

The fur that matters the most: that in major shops and in major cities will be sourced from the highest standard farms and trappers. This includes the global fashion capitals.

All of the main fur types (such as mink and fox) sold through the auction system will be certified. As such, we expect a majority of major brands and major retailers will be using certified fur.

Programmes

What criteria do the various programmes have to meet to be included in Furmark®?

Furmark® encompasses a number of individual certification programmes in one single system.

Only programmes that meet the following criteria are recognised and included in Furmark®:

1. Certification programmes and their individual protocols must be science-based and approved by independent experts.
2. Certification programmes must be verified by third parties and publicly available.
3. Certification programmes must be sustainable, relevant, accessible, and traceable.

There are no exceptions, now or ever.

Furmark® will continue to evolve beyond 2021-22 and will seek to incorporate new and emerging programmes, but their accession to Furmark® requires (among other things) that they meet all of Furmark®'s three key principles.

Clarify something — is Furmark® itself a programme?

Furmark® is a comprehensive global certification system.

It encompasses a number of individual certification programmes.

Each programme has a specific, independently-developed science-based protocol/standard.

The respective programmes are then subject to third-party assessment and certified by a recognised certification body.

The certification system itself also includes a traceability component (accessible to the consumer) and a quality mark (indicating certification).

In short, it is a system that brings together species-specific animal welfare standards, environmental standards, traceability, and third-party assessment.

Do we need any more certification systems, schemes, or programmes?

The sector needs a clear vision, narrative, and certification system which everyone can understand: Furmark® responds to consumer demands for a simple, recognisable, and global certification system indicated by a clear mark.

It has been tested with the trade, brands, consumers, and regulators across the globe. They understand it; they like it; and they want it. With input and backing from luxury groups like LVMH and Kering, Furmark® has been developed with stakeholders across the supply chain.

How does third-party assessment work?

Furmark®-included programmes are subject to third-party assessment and certified by a recognised certification body. So the Welfur, North American Farm-Raised, North American Wild, Swakara, Sable, and Dressing and Dyeing



certification programmes are all subject to a specific and separate third-party assessment. This results in a more rigorous system.

But is it really ‘independent’?

Reassuringly, it is: when it comes to third-party assessments, the contract of payment has nothing to do with the outcomes, so work funded by the sector or by anti-fur campaigners would render precisely the same results.

Is the Furmark® certification system itself subject to further third-party assessment or accreditation?

The entire Furmark® system will be subject to third-party assessment from 2021. This means that an audit of the entire system is built into the process from the very first year; it is a central component post-launch.

The IFF is applying to have Furmark® recognised as an EU Certification Mark and a US Certification Mark. A number of industry programmes in various areas seek to have their standards and regulations verified as a “certification mark”. They provide a guarantee that the goods or services bearing the mark meet a certain defined standard or possess a particular characteristic. A certification mark, whether US or EU, is not a mark of geographical origin.

What other internationally respected organisations or bodies do you work with?

The IFF is a designated “expert member” of the UNECE’s work in developing sustainable and traceable supply chains for the garment and footwear sector. This includes submissions to a “Call to action”, a commitment to supply chain traceability and sustainability.

What programmes are included in Furmark®?

At launch, Furmark® will include six programmes. These are:

1. WelFur Certification
2. North American Farm-Raised Fur Certification
3. North American Wild Fur Certification
4. Swakara Certification
5. Farm-Raised and Wild Sable Certification
6. Dressers and Dyers Certification

Each programme meets the three principles of Furmark®. WelFur, for example, is the first ever animal welfare programme endorsed by the European Commission as a Self-Regulation and Co-Regulation Initiative.

Similarly, the Dressers and Dyers Certification programme has been developed with the International Fur Dressers and Dyers Association and includes a new chemical standard for the fur industry with oversight from a third-party testing institute – FILK, an established member of OEKO-TEX, with extensive experience in leather sampling.

What about fur originating from China?



None of the certification programmes included operate in China: there is therefore no fur originating from China within the Furmark® certification system. Furmark® will continue to evolve beyond 2021-22 and will seek to incorporate new and emerging programmes, but their accession to Furmark® is entirely dependent on whether they meet Furmark®'s three key principles. We will continue working with Chinese members and the Chinese fur sector to develop standards and best practices.

Is Furmark® simply a European-centric system?

The Furmark® certification system is international, the products are available globally, the programmes and certification bodies are American, Canadian, Russian, and African, as well as European.

Why do farming protocols not cover killing methods?

These are obviously covered, in rigorous detail, by legislation.

How does this address bad actors and/or questionable practices?

In building a system based on non-negotiable principles (including science-based protocols and independent inspection), we are driving up standards across the board: some will not be able to meet those standards. Individuals and businesses will be able to clearly differentiate between those who meet the Furmark® standards they expect and those who do not.

Why do you not have one farming standard (i.e. for mink and fox, which could come under the Welfur programme or North American Farm-Raised programme)? In that example, which one represents the higher standard?

Programmes are species-specific; even then, they are also regional-specific. There are geographical and material differences (such as weather and climate, pests, predators, and biosecurity risks) that need to be considered. Housing and husbandry is, however, consistent and nuance rightly exists where necessary.

Is Furmark® just like Woolmark?

No, they are very different and we are not based on Woolmark: but we would hope for the same level of consumer recognition. We cover much more of the supply chain and provide individualised traceability for certified products.

Traceability

Who else is using this ChainPoint technology?

The system is bespoke but closely related to the technology that ChainPoint and others have used for other materials and sectors (gold, diamonds, cotton, cocoa, and so on).

Does the traceability go all the way to the farms, or just to the auction house? Why can't I see which farm my fur is coming from?

The ChainPoint traceability system tracks certified furs from the auction to retail: this is a significant, wide-ranging traceability offering.

Auction lots comprise of multiple pelts which are each individually barcoded – linking that pelt to the respective certified farm origin. It is therefore possible to identify through the auction the origin of individual pelts.

Why does traceability not automatically track back to the farm? And why will the consumer not have access to the farm of origin?

Pelts are sorted at the auction: a lot and ultimately a garment could be comprised of pelts from multiple farms.

Are you offering full traceability when some parts of the supply chain are not immediately available to the consumer?

Furmark® means that, from sourcing to manufacturing, natural fur products are produced to recognised standards.

In terms of traceability, the consumer is able to see precisely which natural fur type (e.g. mink) has been used and certified and which certification programme (e.g. WelFur) it has come from. Additionally, the product must have gone through certified dressing and dyeing (e.g. SafeFur Chemical Standard): this is the case for every single certified product. We have full oversight of which lot that comes from at the auction and which farm it therefore comes from: sorting at auctions prevents us from sharing individual farm data with customers but does not prevent us from offering this level of traceability.

Is there an automatic data exchange between ChainPoint and the auction houses?

Integration with the auctions ERP systems will happen at the next ERP upgrade and in the case of Saga is due in 2022.

If a furrier is sourcing from a skin dealer, how will the traceability be handled?

Skin dealers that are classified as merchants will be incorporated into the ChainPoint system and therefore the traceability will be captured.



If there are multiple fur types on the same product, how is that handled?

The traceability system is designed to reflect scenarios where multiple fur types are included in one garment. This is also reflected through the traceability functionality.

Are the registered manufacturers allowed to add material without Furmark® to a product with Furmark® certified status?

Yes, a garment may for example include certified mink and uncertified fox. However, labelling will clearly identify what is Furmark® certified.

Why can't I see which dresser and dyer or what chemicals were involved?

Every single Furmark® certified product has to have been dressed or dyed according to the dedicated Dressers and Dyers certification programme.

Everyone certified is using chemicals/processes that *at least* meet LVMH's list of restricted substances; many have even more stringent restrictions. These standards are also approved by the IFDDA and are aligned with relevant legislation (e.g. EU REACH).

A list of approved dressers and dyers is available publicly: we also publish the criteria the testing body (FILK) uses to assess dressers and dyers.

Labelling

What type of labels are available in Furmark®?

There are effectively three labels available at launch of Furmark®

Full certified label – Furmark® label with the strapline Natural Sustainable Fur in combination with a unique serial number. This label is used to reflect the full traceability story

Certified under Furmark® label – Furmark® label that simply reflects the animal welfare certification programme. This is for certified furs that have been previously purchased at auction and will be phased out as manufacturers sell through stock

Auction label – Joint auction and Furmark® branded label that simply reflects the animal welfare certification programme.

How secure are the labels?

The full certified label carries around 8 security features, however, the IFF is working with a leading covert security marking company to deliver an on-label security feature that can be used to both authenticate as well as act as a traceability tool. Subject to a successful pilot phase the new label will be introduced in Q4 2021.

Are the labels free?

Label prices for the full certified label and Certified under Furmark® label are available from the IFF and the price points have been developed in consultation with manufacturers from across the trade for each of the label types – garment, trim and accessory. Pricing details are available from the IFF.

Manufacturing

How does a manufacturer become part of the Furmark® system?

The process is relatively straightforward. An individual manufacturer should contact the IFF who in turn will be provided with a Due Diligence form which must be completed and returned to FACT. Once FACT have run the necessary checks and successfully completed the process (using a traffic light method of scoring), the IFF will then contact the manufacturer to begin the process of onboarding to the Furmark® traceability system.

Are manufacturers from China included in the system?

Yes, Furmark® is a truly global solution and manufacturers from across the world are currently using the traceability system. In order to better inform and understand the system, multi-language content has been created and shared with businesses as they onboard to the system.

Can my present stock of skins and garments be uploaded to the Furmark® system?

As a part of the transitional arrangement, raw European skins dating back to the auction season 2016/2017 can be admitted into Furmark® based on the Welfur certification. When it comes to dressed skins and any garments that have been produced, then the cut-off date is based on the date of the dresser's certification. Please contact IFF or IFDDA for further information.



Retail

Can a retailer be Furmark® certified?

No, the certification goes with the product, however the IFF is developing marketing materials for retail.

How do I stock Furmark® certified garments?

Your suppliers should be encouraged to be part of the Furmark® system. They need to contact the IFF and effectively go through the due diligence process as described previously in order that they can onboard to the ChainPoint traceability system.

How will I, the customer, know which goods are Furmark® certified in a Furmark® stockist? How will people 'spot' Furmark® certified products?

In most cases, look for the label and hang tags.

Additionally and in all other cases, in-store material (including signs and branded collateral) will confirm this and the stockist will be happy to advise which of their products are Furmark® certified. Similarly, large brands may not use a label but will have it in their sourcing guidelines and promotional materials.

Will consumers have to pay more for Furmark® certified products?

Possibly, yes: but that is a choice for the brand/retailer.

Which brands? Which retailers? Which high street stores? Where can I buy the actual certified products?

A range of brands, retailers, and high street stores will be stocking and selling Furmark® certified products. Galeries Lafayette, for example, has committed to only stock Furmark® certified products by 2022 onwards. Pelts have already been sold as Furmark® and they are working through the value chain. As we speak, that fur is being dressed/dyed and those products are being made. The starting pistol was fired the moment those pelts were sold at the start of this year and the consumer-available product is the end point of a process.

LVMH, to give one example, acknowledges Furmark® in a number of ways, including in their Sustainability Strategy. Kering, to provide another, recognise Furmark® in its animal welfare standards. Time and time again, brands are acknowledging publicly that they only wish to use fur that meets their high animal welfare standards and their consumers' ethical positions.

Are you worried about fraud and counterfeiting?

All Furmark® certified products can be individually traced and verified: there are also procedures in place to prevent a single, legitimate code being used on a fraudulent product.



Can a retailer sell both Furmark®-certified products and non-certified products? How can I tell the difference?

Yes: the former should be easily distinguishable and there are clear regulations in place to ensure customers are not misled. Reassuringly, the label, hang tags, and unique alphanumeric code will distinguish most certified products.



Joining Furmark®

How do I join Furmark®?

It depends on where you are in the supply chain. For example, farmers that are part of the WelFur programmes are already part of Furmark®, as WelFur is one of the key Furmark® certification programmes. This means that the pelts they produce could be used to create Furmark® certified products if they then go through the certified supply chain (e.g. not all WelFur pelts will become certified products, because some will not be dressed and dyed and/or manufactured according to our strict standards).

Dressers and dyers and manufacturers must go through a certification or due diligence process respectively.

The IFF has created a detailed membership form which outlines the expectations of Furmark® members and this will be rolled out later in 2021.

Is there a membership fee?

There is no fee for joining Furmark® at present although the IFF are in discussions with major brands to provide a membership alternative to using labels.

Other areas

Will there be Furmark®-only cities/countries due to legislation?

The idea has been mooted by a small number of stakeholders and the IFF has discussed the topic. At the moment, there are no examples of a city or country limiting fur products other than Furmark® products.

LVMH are heavily involved: how does the involvement/partnership with Stella McCartney affect this?

A range of views is possible, even in the same group: despite the campaigning, LVMH continues to make public commitments to fur and to Furmark®.

In terms of dressing and dyeing, how close are you to only using natural chemicals/processes?

Everyone certified is using chemicals/processes that *at least* meet LVMH's list of restricted substances; many have even more stringent restrictions. These standards are also approved by the IFDDA and are aligned with relevant legislation (e.g. EU REACH).

Can older pelts (e.g. the fur itself) that predates this system be used to make certified products?

WelFur skins produced in 2016/17 are the precise same standards WelFur skins are produced to now: as such, a transitional arrangement is in place where they can be admitted into Furmark® based on this preexisting status. They must, of course, follow precisely the same process as WelFur and all other farm-raised and wild fur certification programme skins produced this year: the requirement is no different.

Will the IFF stop working with stakeholders (e.g. farms, retailers, brands) who do not take part in the Furmark® certification system?

We look forward to launching the system with significant stakeholder support and hope that the success and the standards set encourages the rest of the sector to join.

Are the auctions committed to only selling Furmark® pelts?

Yes, where appropriate, but because Furmark® does not currently include some fur types, those pelts will inevitably be the exception here.

What if a relevant business (a manufacturer operating inside the system, for instance) is found to have breached standards and broke rules?

There are processes in place to swiftly remove organisations from the certified supply chain: thanks to our bespoke traceability feature, there are also various checkpoints in the process and points at which a bad actor and its products can be stopped and removed entirely from the Furmark® certification system.



Farm-raised fur and wild fur certification programmes (e.g. the sourcing stage of the supply chain) have rigorous processes in place for admission and exclusion. Because of this, a farm or trapper could be removed from the certification system and its pelts no longer certified and therefore no longer for sale through the auction process. This would end their participation in Furmark®. The standards are therefore policed by the certification body itself.

In terms of the dressing and dyeing programme (e.g. the middle of the supply chain), there are similarly rigorous processes in place for admission and exclusion. Additionally, a dresser and dyer acting against the rules and breaching standards can be identified and removed by the certification body itself. Thanks again to the traceability system, they can be removed from the certification system and they would no longer be able to participate in Furmark®.

In terms of manufacturing (e.g. the final stage of the supply chain before retail), the process is precisely the same: manufacturers can be excluded from the process and removed from the system entirely.

At every stage of the supply chain, standards can be enforced and the actor (and their product/involvement) removed from the certification process. Certification bodies (e.g. WelFur and the IFDDA) have their own processes and checks in place.

Reapplication would have to be considered by the certification body (for most stages) or ourselves (for manufacturing). It is highly unlikely that it would be considered; even then, reapplication would only be entertained in the event of significant and material reforms and improvements. High standards by nature excludes some actors.

What would happen if products were made and then one actor in the certification process of that product was found to have been in breach of the rules?

If this breach occurred after the product's creation and they were certified until that point, the product remains a fully certified product. That is: it was made fully according to our standards and that was true at the time of its creation.

If the breach occurred during or before the product's creation, the traceability system would allow us to locate it and remove it from the system. We would need to communicate with the relevant point of the supply chain (e.g. the stockists, if it had reached retail) to ensure it is removed from certified circulation. It could not be sold as a Furmark® product.

Reapplication would have to be considered by the certification body (for most stages) or ourselves (for manufacturing). It is highly unlikely that it would be considered; even then, reapplication would only be entertained in the event of significant and material reforms and improvements. High standards by nature excludes some actors.