



People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
Response to H&M's [Statement](#) Regarding Leather
April 26, 2017

H&M claims to be taking "steps towards responsible leather," thereby admitting that the leather currently on its shelves is not "responsible." It also admits that leather is not a long-term option and has already removed it from its "conscious" collection. Yet, it continues to sell it.

In the leather industry, the millions of cows who are slaughtered for their skin every year endure the horrors of factory farming—confined to severely crowded spaces and denied everything that's natural and important to them. Branding, ear-tagging, tail-docking, electroshocking, and castration are all standard practices, and cows are transported hundreds of miles to feedlots and slaughterhouses, where an often inadequately performed stunning procedure causes many to be killed while still conscious.

Alleging that H&M will someday sell "responsible" leather is a fantasy. There is no such thing as "responsible" leather. Adopting standards and conducting audits, while well intentioned, may marginally reduce cruelty, but they'll never *eliminate* it. When animals are viewed as commodities, cruelty will always be part of the production process. Killing an animal is a violent act no matter which safeguards are put in place.

Every "global initiative," "standard," and "certification" meant to enhance animal welfare has failed animals as well as the environment since they cannot change the fact that animals are a significant source of greenhouse-gas emissions—the number one cause of climate change.

The environmental footprint of polyurethane is minor compared to the devastation of methane-emitting animal agriculture and one of its primary coproducts, leather. So, while we're pleased that H&M sells vegan leather and shares our desire to see the introduction of additional vegan innovations, it nevertheless cannot justify continuing to sell leather.

If H&M wishes to produce goods "in a socially and environmentally sustainable way" and not cause animals to suffer, it *must* stop selling leather.

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