

100% Use of Animals

The European fur industry welcomes the growing engagement of the European Commission towards more sustainable production and consumption, and shares the commitment to achieve the objectives set out through multiple strands, such as the Bioeconomy Strategy and the Circular Economy Action Plan. Fur Europe believes that the fur sector can play a relevant role in achieving those objectives: indeed, although the main product of fur farming is fur, animal by-products do not have to be discarded and can have further use for different purposes, such as the production of biofuels, fertilizers, cement, biomass for renewable energy production, as well as cosmetics.

According to our survey undertaken in October and November 2012, as many as 68.42% of the fur animals are used 100%, and we see this number growing as farms in many countries undertook initiatives in this sense. The recycling of biological mass from fur farms as a renewable energy source can be a significant input in achieving the goals of *managing natural resources sustainably* and *reducing dependence on non-renewable resources* as set out in the European Commission Bioeconomy strategy, and the broader Europe 2020 strategy goal *raising the share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable resources to 20%*.

Animal fat

As an example, mink fat is energy rich and it is suitable to be processed for biofuel production. The EU institutions themselves recognised the high sustainability level of biodiesel made from animal fat, and recent studies reveal that the production of biodiesel from this source can cut greenhouse gas emissions by 85% compared to fossil diesel fuel.¹

Livestock manure

Besides fat, manure is also included in the list of feedstocks and fuels whose use shall be encouraged by public institutions² to promote renewable energy sources. Mink manure has an impressive potential also when it comes to organic fertilisers, thanks to its high concentration of phosphorus. As an example, the nutrient content of mink manure is comparable with the one of poultry and turkey concerning phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium, and it outweighs manure of other livestock species such as beef and dairy: mink manure contains 26 kg/ton of Phosphorus pentoxide, while horse manure only 3.1 kg/ton and dairy and beef 2 kg/ton. As it is widely acknowledged that the European Union suffers from a chronic scarcity of phosphate rock, - a critical raw material whose global demand is growing steadily - the fur industry, with around 42.7 million mink pelted yearly, can provide an alternative and sustainable source of phosphorus, participating in the lowering of European dependency on imports, and mitigating the negative effects of the current unsustainable management of phosphorus in Europe.

Through these activities, the European fur industry aims to cut CO2 emissions, reduce land use for energy production, and mitigate the related environmental impact. Fur Europe will continue to encourage its farming members to process animal by-products in the most sustainable way and make their part in implementing a new sustainable and circular economic model.

¹ <http://www.ifeu.de/english/index.php?bereich=lan&seite=bioenergie>

² Directive 2015/1513/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 September 2015 amending Directive 98/70/EC relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels and amending Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources

Established in 2014, Fur Europe is the result of a merger between the European Fur Breeders' Association and the European members of the International Fur Federation. Fur Europe represents 50 national associations in Europe.