ANIMAL CRUELTY

FUR FARMS: Fur is the annual slaughter of some 40 million animals...chinchillas, foxes, minks, sables, beavers, rabbits... Over 80% of foxes become decorative trim.

Fur farms are low-budget operations where animals live stacked in cages in open sheds. Intensively confined their entire lives, they pace in feces, urine, rusty cans. Some die from dehydration, starvation or self-mutilation. Photos from Matt Rossell, an undercover investigator who worked inside an Illinois fur farm for six months, show cannibalized cagemates and a fox who’d chewed through his entangled leg to reach food.

Wild animals travel miles each day, raise their young, burrow, dig and express other traits. On fur farms, they’re denied natural behaviors. Most display severe psychological distress: Constant pacing, head bobbing, self-mutilation, infanticide, cannibalism.

Animals are inbred for specific colors, causing abnormalities such as deafness, crippling, deformed sex organs, screw-necks, anemia, sterility, nervous system disorders.

18 foxes, 40 mink or 40 rabbits = The sum of dead animals to craft one full-length fur coat. At least 60 chinchillas — timid, bright animals who can live 15 years in the wild — are needed to construct a single coat.

SLAUGHTER METHODS: Fur bearing animals are not protected under the U.S. Humane Slaughter Act. Processors are free harvest pelts cheaply and crudely.

- GENITAL ELECTROCUTION: To ensure undamaged pelts: An alligator clamp attaches to an animal’s ear or a metal conductor is lodged in the throat. A second clamp grips the animal’s labia or an electric prod is pushed inside the rectum. The killer delivers a 240-volt blast of electricity through the alert animal’s body. The animal remains conscious for 2 or more minutes during a massive heart attack. “In an unsuccessful electrocution, they are left convulsing until [killer] can pick up the probe to shove it back inside this poor animal writhing in pain. And then it has to be done again and again,” says undercover investigator Matt Rossell, whose “job” was to hold animals during electrocutions at a fur farm.

- NECK SNAPPING: Easy, cheap cervical dislocation is a preferred method for smaller animals. The killer wraps one hand around an animal’s neck, grasps the lower body with the other, and yanks the animal’s vertebra out of the socket. One worker at a California chinchilla farm told PETA investigators an animal typically spasms and kicks up to 5 minutes after the neck is broken. To preserve the fur of rabbits (a smaller type rabbit than those bred for meat) killers break necks and bludgeon skulls. Rabbits are strung up by their legs and beheaded.

- GASSING: Some animals are gassed with carbon monoxide derived from unfiltered engine exhaust. Minks, agile swimmers able to hold their breath for long periods, often awaken to be skinned alive.
**DOG/CAT FUR TRADE**

In Virginia Beach, a fox trapper wound up with dead cats instead. A child, 13, suffered bruising, pincer marks and abraded skin on his ankle from a Conibear for beavers. Within five minutes, he was dead. Olie, a Jack Russell Terrier, could not cry or bark by the time his guardian found his neck in the clutches of a Conibear. Their well-documented database includes Oreo Cookie, a 15-month-old golden retriever. Millions of dogs and cats are killed for their fur, with 80% of Americans and Europeans disapproving of Canada's seal hunt — the world's largest marine wildlife hunt, off Canada's East Coast. 2011 KILL QUOTA: Nearly 400,000 harp and grey seals • 2009 QUOTA: 294,000 harp seals; 8,200 hooded • 2008: 275,000 seals • 2007: 270,000 seals

**BODY-GRIPPING (CONIBEAR) TRAPS:** So brutal they are banned or restricted in at least 11 states. Crafted to instantaneously crush an animal's neck or torso, the traps often mistire. If an animal faces the wrong direction when caught, he is partially crushed and left to endure pain, dehydration, hypothermia, and predation. Trappers claim they isolate a species with no harm to other animals or people. Incident reports indicate otherwise. The Animal Protection Institute, a national nonprofit organization, charts non-target trapping incidents through publicly submitted forms. Their well-documented database includes Greg Cookie, a 15-month-old Lab and border collie mix whose neck was crushed inside a spring-loaded Conibear. Olie, a Jack Russell Terrier, could not cry or bark by the time his guardian found his neck in the clutches of a Conibear. Within five minutes, he was dead.

In Virginia Beach, a fox trapper wound up with dead cats instead. A child, 13, suffered bruising, pincer marks and abraded skin on his ankle from a Conibear for beavers. In Pennsylvania, a 9-year-old nearly lost his thumb to a Conibear set for muskrats.

**STEEL-JAW LEGHOLD TRAPS & SNARES:** Raccons, coyotes, nutria, muskrats, foxes, bobcats, lynxes... If an animal is not crushed by the trap, 1 of 4 gnaw their teeth to the jawbone or chew off their feet to escape. They later die of blood loss or infection. Those who survive mutilation, exposure and starvation in the traps are clubbed, crushed (a trapper stomps them to death), shot or drowned after languishing on trap lines for days. Non-target species are among the millions of "trash animals" dumped by trappers every year.

**NON-TARGET SPECIES:** Indiscriminate trapping devices snap shut on dogs, cats, deer, livestock and 2 to 10 times as many non-target animals. Endangered species are among the millions of "trash animals" dumped by trappers every year. Trappers claim they isolate a species with no harm to other animals or people. Incident reports indicate otherwise. The Animal Protection Institute, a national nonprofit organization, charts non-target trapping incidents through publicly submitted forms. Their well-documented database includes Greg Cookie, a 15-month-old Lab and border collie mix whose neck was crushed inside a spring-loaded Conibear. Olie, a Jack Russell Terrier, could not cry or bark by the time his guardian found his neck in the clutches of a Conibear. Within five minutes, he was dead.

For aquatic animals like muskrats, failed "quick-kill" traps result in death by drowning. Because beavers are excellent swimmers with ample lung capacity, a drowning may last up to 20 minutes.

**LETHAL INJECTION OF JUNK CHEMICALS:** Fur farmers cannot use sodium pentobarbital, the drug recommended for euthanasia of companion animals, because it's a legally controlled substance available to veterinarians or licensed professionals. It's also costly. Fur-bearing animals are injected with chloral hydrate, magnesium sulfate and nicotine sulfate (often in the form of a pesticide) diluted with rubbing alcohol.

**FUR/FUR BEARING ANIMALS:**

- **2009:**
  - 12/18/10: President Obama signs Truth In Fur Labeling Act

**SHIFTING VALUES**

- **12/18/10:** President Obama signs Truth In Fur Labeling Act to legally require all fur labels show animals used and country of origin.
- **5/5/09:** European Parliament bans seal items from import-export across European Union's 27 nations. Canadian sealers lose biggest customer: EUROPE!
- **1/1/09: EU Dog/Cat Fur Ban on import, export and sale of cat and dog fur begins.**
- **74% of Americans want traps banned nationwide. Gallup Poll.**
- **80% of Americans and Europeans disapprove of Canada's seal hunt [Penn, Schoen & Berland, 2002 and MORI, 2002].**
- **Fur farming is banned in the UK.**

- **Conscientious couture:** Calvin Klein, J. Crew, Ann Taylor, Polo Ralph Lauren, Stella McCartney, Tommy Hilfiger, Vivienne Westwood, Kenneth Cole, Todd Oldham, Marc Bouwer, Donna Karan, Jucy Couture...
- **Progressive Retailers:** Urban Outfitters, Forever 21, Jucy Couture, Gap, American Eagle, Zappos, Abercrombie & Fitch, Zara, JC Penney...140 names as of March 2009.