

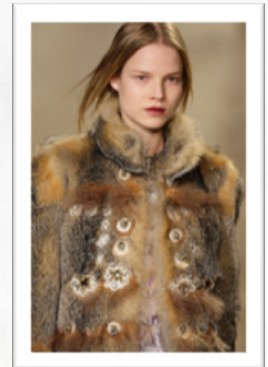


THE FURTRAIL.CO.UK

THE FUR TRAIL STUDY PACK

Fur has always had a traditional appeal as a luxury item. Now it is new, with new designs, new techniques, new markets and new consumers. In this pack you will learn about modern developments in a trade, which has gone on for centuries.

The Hudson's Bay Company started to import furs to England from Canada in 1670. London has played an important role in the world fur trade ever since, although fur has not been farmed in England since 2003.



Using the Fur Trail website you will find out about the global range of the fur trade and how it is developing and growing to meet modern demands. You will explore the economic impact of the fur trade on UK and European markets and the emergence of new markets such as those in Russia and China.

You will have the opportunity to watch a video showing the stages of the Fur Trail. You will be able to access the following information sheets, which support the video:

1. Facts and figures showing the range and growth of the Fur Trail.
2. Details about the geography of the countries featured on film, from Finland in Northern Europe to Namibia in Southern Africa.
3. A brief description of what you will see on the video.
4. An account of the world's key markets for fur, and the role that Britain plays as a trading centre.
5. Read about the jobs of the people you have seen at each stage of the Fur Trail, from the farmer who breeds the animals to the retailer who sells the finished product.
6. The fur trade is changing and growing. Read about what has happened in the last twenty years, and the direction of future changes.



**Once you have watched the video and read the information sheets, you'll have all you need to help you tackle these tasks:**

- On a map of the world, mark in all the countries in which fur is produced.
- Given the information that you have, what geographical factors do you think are important for fur production?
- In what ways can fur-trapping help the environment?
- On your world map, mark in the journey a mink pelt might make from an auction house in Denmark to a dresser in China and then on to a fashion designer in France.
- Why are clothes that are designed in London then manufactured in China?
- If you were going to start a fur farm in a country, which did not yet have a fur farming industry, which country would you choose, and why?

## Facts and Figures

**Is fur a big business?** In 2006/2007 retail fur sales worldwide totalled US\$ 15,000 million, an increase of 48% since 2001/2002.

Is fur a global business? Fur is farmed in the EU, particularly in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Poland. New EU member states such as the Baltic States also have important fur production industries. Fur is farmed in North America, Russia, Ukraine and China. To complete the continents, it is also farmed in Namibia, in Southern Africa and in Argentina in South America.

Mink and fox are the main farmed species.

### What does the fur trade contribute to the economies of the countries in which it takes place?

- In Denmark, where fur is the third largest export after cheese and bacon, fur farming is now worth 750 million Euro per year.
- In Finland, fur production is worth 250 million Euro annually, which makes it a bigger earner than beef.
- In Canada, the fur trade is worth Can\$ 800 million to the Canadian economy.
- In the USA the retail fur trade was worth US\$ 1,200 million in 2006/2007.
- In Russia, the fur trade is worth over US\$ 2,500 million.
- In the UK the trading of pelts is worth £400-500 million per year.



In addition to the financial value of the fur trade, there is the social factor of employment. The fur trade is made up of skilled craftsmen working in small workshops. The fur trade provides employment for **143,000** skilled people within EU and nearly **1.5 million** outside EU. There are nearly **117,000** enterprises covering all the stages of the Fur Trail from the farm to the shop. And the trade is growing all the time.

The international fur trade does not handle any endangered species and to this end supports the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The majority of wild species used by the fur trade are not taken specifically for their fur but as part of wildlife management programmes.

## Places

### Why are certain countries suitable for the production of fur-bearing animals?

Here is some information about fur-producing countries, including Denmark and Finland, which you can explore in the website and video clips:

- Denmark covers an area of 43,075 sq. km. and has 5.4 million inhabitants. The capital is Copenhagen and the currency is the Danish krone. The Danish climate has cool summers and mild winters, which make it particularly suitable for breeding mink. Mink can be fed nutritiously with the readily available by-products of the fish and poultry processing industries.
- Finland's population of 5.3 million occupies an area of 338,145 sq km. The capital is Helsinki and the currency is the Euro. Finland has a very cold winter climate, which makes it ideal for fox farming.
- The capital of Canada is Ottawa and the currency is the Canadian dollar. Canada is an enormous country, covering 9.9 million sq km. The harsh winter climate favours fur-bearing animals and the slow-moving streams and deciduous woodlands are the preferred habitats of muskrat and beaver. This is wild fur. There are 60,000 trappers in Canada and 25,000 of them are aboriginal people. Beaver and muskrat need to be managed. Beaver dams can cause flooding of roads, homes and agricultural land and put lives at risk. If the muskrat population gets too large it can result in water contamination with parasites such as giardia, an intestinal parasite. Other wild fur in Canada includes squirrel, raccoon, marten, coyote, wild mink, lynx and fox.
- Namibia is in Southern Africa. After Mongolia, it is the second most sparsely populated country in the world. The capital is Windhoek and the currency is the Namibian dollar. The climate is very dry and temperatures can be extreme, with hot days and freezing nights. Karakul sheep, which originate from the plains of Central Asia, flourish here and are farmed for their meat and fur. They are known as Swakara (from South West African KARAKul).

## The Fur Trail video

In this video clip you can watch an English retailer and Danish and Finnish marketeers talking about the industry. You can meet a Danish fur farmer and a young designer. (You can also hear a Finnish fur farmer talking about the importance of science in fur farming in the short video clip **Finnish Fur Farmer**).

Firstly you see a catwalk display of modern fur designs. It shows the range of uses to which fur can be put.

The role of the fur trade is explained. How as a luxury product it is important in the international world of fashion, but also how it is now competing in the ready-to-wear market.

A Danish fur farmer introduces himself and explains how important fur farming is to the Danish economy. There are 1,800 fur farms generating 750 million Euro for the Danish economy. They also make sheds and cages for sale all over the world.

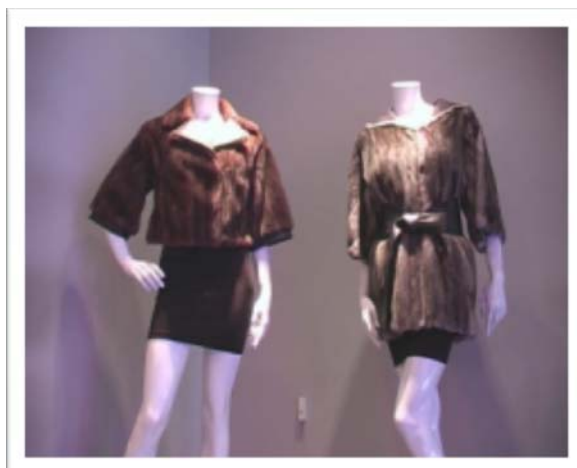
It is explained that Denmark is in a good position to maintain its fur industry because of the plentiful supply of animal feed from the waste products of the fishing and poultry industries.

The farmers joined forces to form fur trade associations, which established auction houses. More than 400 buyers from all over the world came to the most recent auction in Copenhagen. In 5 days 4.6 million pelts were auctioned.

These raw skins are then sent elsewhere to be dressed and in many cases dyed. The main centres for these processes are the Baltic States, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Russia.

The English retailer tells us that the prototypes for the sample range are then made up in London. The fur trade is made up of skilled craftsmen working in small workshops and this appeals to today's consumer. Buyers place their orders after they have seen the designs on the catwalk and the garments are then manufactured in Italy or Greece and often also in China.

The clip ends with a young designer talking enthusiastically about the possibilities of fur as a material, both to work with and to wear. We see images of a range of fur products.



## Fur Markets

Fur garments are popular all over the world, but the greatest demand comes from China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Russia and many of the former Soviet republics, Spain and the USA.

Canada, China, Greece, Italy and Russia are the main countries where full fur, combination fur and fur-trimmed garments are made. Manufacturing also takes place in France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Spain, Turkey, the Ukraine, UK and USA.

Trade shows are held each year in Beijing, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Kastoria, Madrid, Milan, Montreal and Moscow. Retailers from all over the world come to these shows to see the latest fur fashions. They choose and buy their stock for the coming season.

Although fur is not farmed in the UK, London is an important trading centre with British traders and brokers responsible for buying a significant share of the world's fur traded as pelts, at international auction. This trade is worth some £400 million - £500 million per year to the UK.

Raw pelts are auctioned in Copenhagen, Helsinki, Toronto, Seattle, North Bay, and St Petersburg.



## Key Roles in the Fur Trade

### The Fur Farmer

The fur farm is the first stage on the Fur Trail. The fur farmer keeps his animals healthy and content in order to produce high quality furs.

### The Trapper

Trappers use trapping to control wildlife overpopulation problems avoiding imbalances that can bring disease and damage to both animal populations and their natural habitats.

### The Auctioneer

Buyers bid for pelts at auction. The auctioneer enables the farmer to sell his pelts to the international market at a good price.

### The Fur Trader or Broker

Traders buy pelts at auction for their manufacturer or retailer clients, or for their own account to sell on. They inspect the lots before the auction. Fur auctions take place in Copenhagen, Helsinki, Toronto, Seattle, North Bay and St Petersburg.

### The Dresser and Dyer

Once the pelts have been auctioned, they are dressed and often dyed. Dressing includes cleaning, softening, preserving and drying the pelts. Modern techniques allow all fur types to be dyed to whatever shade may be desired.

### The Designer

The designer creates modern fashions for the growing market. There are now more than 400 well known designers using fur in their designs.

### The Marketeer

The fur marketing organisations provide designers with knowledge about the qualities of fur and about the techniques of craftsmanship. This knowledge enables designers to use fur in inspiring ways and ensures that fur will play a role in fashion in the future.

### The Manufacturer

The manufacturer produces the finished garment. Traditional skills are passed on from generation to generation, while modern technology ensures innovation.

### The Retailer

Retailers provide a range of outlets for fur products. There are furriers (specialised fur retailers), international fashion houses, department stores and designer boutiques.

## Developments in Fur

The role of fur in the fashion industry has grown in the last decade. Many designers now incorporate fur into their collections, inspired by its versatility.

Technical developments have led to the production of lighter furs and to methods of combining fur with other fabrics such as wool and textiles. New processing techniques mean that fur can now be treated like any other fabric.

Fur has a traditional appeal as a luxury item. The popularity of fur among designers and consumers has been greatly helped by product development, including the production of lighter furs and the introduction of new techniques. Used as trim and for accessories, fur is now reaching a much wider market. Although it will always be used for warmth in countries where temperatures fall below zero, it can also be used for light and comfortable garments in more temperate climates. The fur trade is made up of skilled craftsmen working in small workshops, and this appeals to today's consumer.

The International Fur Trade Federation (IFTF) represents the fur industries of the many countries in which fur is produced, manufactured and sold. Introduced by the IFTF and the major auction houses, the new Origin Assured™ (OA) label gives consumers confidence about the provenance of the fur they are buying. It is an assurance that the fur comes from a country where national or local regulations or standards governing animal welfare and fur production are in force. The label's proper use is monitored by an independent international agency.

