

Open

Menu

Patagonia Animal Welfare Policy

Patagonia uses animal fibers for our products, and it's our responsibility to ensure the animals in our supply chain are treated humanely.

We source a small number of animal fibers for their superior performance and durability. When choosing the right fibers for our products, we also consider the environmental benefits of fibers from renewable sources, such as wool or organic cotton, over synthetic alternatives, such as virgin polyester. Most animal fibers we use are a by-product from animals that are raised for their meat. While Patagonia does not directly contribute to the slaughter of animals, we have a responsibility to ensure a quality and ethical animal-fiber supply chain. We do this by monitoring practices at the farm level with the help of trusted third-party audits, certifications and, where possible, visits from Patagonia employees to see the conditions ourselves.

Animal welfare refers to the general health and well-being of animals within a variety of farming systems. For us, animal welfare is a fundamental consideration when choosing the materials we use in our products. It's not acceptable for animals to suffer in the name of performance, luxury or fashion. Whenever possible, we source recycled animal fibers, and we've set a goal to use only renewable or recycled materials in our products by 2025.

Our Animal Welfare Policy was built using two main documents as its cornerstones:

The Five Freedoms, developed by the UK's Farm Animal Welfare Council. The Five Freedoms are a logical and comprehensive framework for analysis of animal welfare. It provides an outline to our position that all farm animals should have a life worth living and ensures that their overall needs are met. The pillars of the Five Freedoms are as follows:

Freedom from hunger and thirst

Freedom from discomfort

Freedom from pain, injury and disease

Freedom to express normal behavior

Freedom from fear and distress

Non-Species-Specific Animal Welfare Requirements. When we are sourcing fibers that do not have a Patagonia-recognized animal welfare certification, we have created a list of Non-Species-Specific Animal Welfare

Requirements that we expect all suppliers to meet. These requirements are based on the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Chapter 7.1. While the Five Freedoms provide the conceptual framework for our animal welfare aspirations, the OIE code provides concrete recommendations for each step specific to the management of raising animals.

Policy Development

This policy was initially intended only for internal purposes, but we decided to publish it here to educate our customers and the apparel industry about the importance of animal welfare.

In developing this policy, Patagonia partnered with:

Animal welfare experts who conducted a benchmarking of large international brands to understand best practices that existed in sourcing animal fibers

Animal welfare NGOs for their guidance on important areas

Industry stakeholders such as the Textile Exchange, the Outdoor Industry Association and the European Outdoor Group

Processors of animal fibers and the farmers who are in close contact with the animals

Patagonia employees with experience in conducting animal welfare shadow assessments and supplier visits

Our animal welfare policy was developed together with Patagonia executives and has been communicated internally.

Scope

This document covers all virgin animal fibers we currently use and provides guidance for future sourcing of new virgin fibers. The document also goes over how we enforce supplier compliance with our animal welfare requirements.

A large part of the animal fibers we source are made from postconsumer recycled materials, such as recycled down, recycled wool and recycled cashmere. This animal welfare policy does not apply to recycled materials, which are covered by our internal recycled materials certification program. We continue to innovate and develop recycled fibers or alternatives to virgin animal fibers, where possible.

Prohibited Animal Fibers and Materials

The section below outlines animal fibers and materials that we prohibit from using in our products.

Fur: We do not use any form of real animal fur, including, but not limited to, angora, fox, chinchilla, mink, rabbit, coyote and raccoon.

Endangered and Threatened Species: We do not use animal skins such as snake, crocodile, alligator or any species specified in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species or those which appear on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora list (CITES).

Species-Specific Standards

All Patagonia suppliers must meet local legal animal welfare requirements, as well as the following species-specific certification standards for all of our applicable products where the material is used:

Down and feather (geese):

Advanced Global Traceable Down Standard (Advanced Global TDS): Patagonia developed this standard to ensure we met the highest bar in animal welfare. In 2014, we gifted this standard to the industry by making it publicly available through NSF International. We are proud of the work we and our suppliers have done in developing the standard, conducting education and outreach, and implementing the certification in our supply chains. We stopped using this standard in 2021, to allow the clothing industry to align on a single standard for down—the Responsible Down Standard.

Responsible Down Standard (RDS): The RDS is a publicly available standard owned by the Textile Exchange. Patagonia has helped shape the evolution of the standard starting from its early days to what it has become today. The RDS requires animal welfare practices to be in place at the duck and goose farms in the down-and-feather supply chain and has become the leading industry standard.

Wool (sheep):

Responsible Wool Standard (RWS): The RWS is a third-party certification standard open to the public and administered by the Textile Exchange. The RWS verifies wool animal welfare and land management requirements and tracks it from the source to the final product. Patagonia was heavily involved in the development of this standard.

Leather (cattle, sheep and buffalo):

While Patagonia does not routinely source leather for our products, in the event we do, we favor sourcing from:

Fully traceable leather sources

Tanneries that are Leather Working Group Silver or Gold Rated

Farms that meet the Regenerative Organic Certified module on animal welfare

Farms that have one or more of these certification attributes: animal welfare, grass-fed or organic

We are monitoring the development of the Responsible Leather Initiative by the Textile Exchange as a possible standard for suppliers to meet in the future.

Non-Species-Specific Animal Welfare Requirements

In the event we source animal fibers that are not covered under our Species-Specific Standards, any potential new animal-based fiber supply chain would be assessed against a number of criteria that are called the Non-Species-Specific Animal Welfare Requirements.

The Five Freedoms form the framework for all of our animal welfare guidelines, while the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Codes provide more detailed guidance on criteria that must be met, including:

Mutilations

Confinement

Responsible use of medicines

Harvesting of fiber

Nutrition

Handling

Housing

Education and training

Transport and slaughter

The supply chains that process the fibers subsequently would also have to adhere to a chain of custody standard, such as the [Content Claims Standard](#).

More detailed information about these requirements can be found [here](#).

Policy Enforcement

To ensure that our existing and new suppliers are in compliance to our Animal Welfare Policy, we request they follow one of three possible pathways:

Suppliers are certified by one of the species-specific animal welfare standards listed in our [Species Specific Standards](#).

Where no recognized standards exist, an on-site, third-party assessment of animal welfare requirements will be carried out according to the criteria outlined in [Non-Species-Specific Animal Welfare Requirements](#).

On farms where the Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC) standard is being implemented, we require our suppliers to meet the species-specific standards in the ROC Animal Welfare pillar.

Education and Outreach

A critical component of the implementation of our animal welfare policy is education and outreach. As an outdoor clothing business, we have much to learn from farmers about the challenges they face to survive. We will continue to educate our customers and other brands on the growing importance of animal welfare.

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