

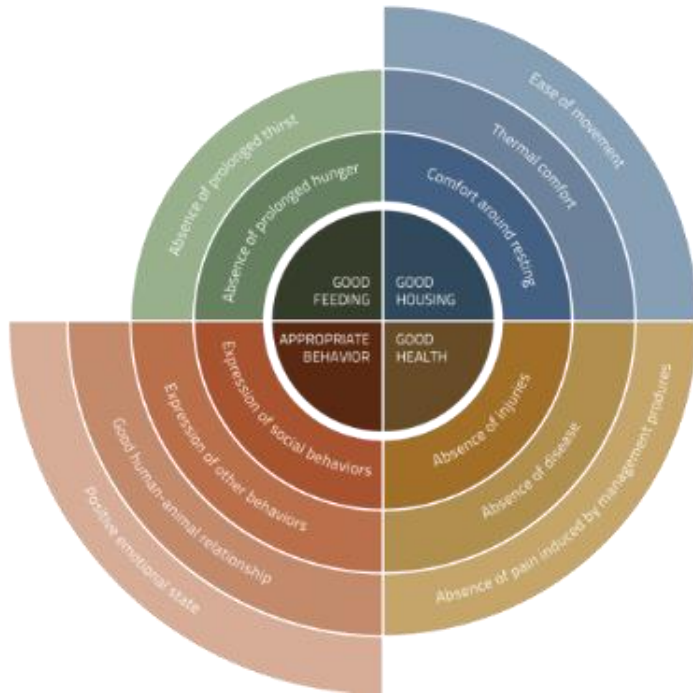
WELFUR CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME

WelFur is an animal welfare assessment- and certification programme for fur farmed species developed by independent scientists. WelFur is based on all animal welfare research done over the past 30 years.

The WelFur project was voluntarily initiated by Fur Europe in 2009 and designed to provide reliable animal welfare assessment, consumer transparency and improvement of animal welfare in the European fur sector. The programme is developed by independent scientists from seven European universities¹ and is based on the principles of the European Commission funded Welfare Quality® project (<http://www.welfarequality.net/everyone>). The system works as a farm level certification scheme that incorporates various angles on animal welfare considering all important welfare parameters, including:

- Good Housing
- Good Feeding
- Good Health
- Appropriate Behaviour

The principles are further divided into 12 welfare criteria. To assess these criteria the scientists reviewed 30 years of fur animal welfare science and based on that decided on species-specific measures to be assessed during the farm assessments. For mink the researchers have selected 22 measurements and for fox the scientist have selected 25 measurements.



Where possible the scientists have selected animal-based measures which differ from the way animal welfare typically is being assessed today, because animal-based measures look at the animals themselves rather than for example, if the cage holds a certain size. Popularly speaking, animal-based measures are the indirect way to ask the animals about their own well-being, since we are unable to speak with them directly.

The first protocols for farmed species (fox and mink) were eventually published in 2013 and 2014 and then tested in 10 different countries in 2015/2016. The protocol for finnraccoon is currently in progress and the clear aim is that the protocols will be finalised, reviewed and implemented before 2020. These protocols work as science-based 'manuals' for the third parties assessing the individual fur farms.

¹ University of Eastern Finland (Department of Biosciences), MTT Agrifood Research, Finland (Animal Production Research), Aarhus University, Denmark (Department of Animal Health and Bioscience), Norwegian University of Life Sciences (Department of Animal and Agricultural Sciences), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Department of Animal Environment and Health), University of Utrecht, The Netherlands (Department of Animals in Science & Society), French National Institute of Agronomic Research.

Third party assessment

Third party assessments are undertaken by the independent global certification body Baltic Control.² Baltic Control is internationally recognised and works for the UN, EU as well as in Denmark, where they are the responsible auditors for the animal welfare programme made by the Danish Animal Protection Society. They are responsible of concluding the contracts with individual farmers, assuring that all assessors have received a specific assessment training including a test, and carrying out the assessments according to the WelFur programme guidelines. WelFur assessors cannot be connected with a farm. Should they have been working on or with a farm in the past, they need to respect a 2-years away period in order to be eligible for becoming a WelFur assessor. The reports and data from assessed fur farms is immediately introduced into a database and it is Baltic Control who is reporting any breaches of national or EU law.

Programme participation requirements

After consultations with stakeholders it was decided, that in order to be able to participate in the WelFur certification programme, farmers must fulfil **an industry minimum standard** (see document attached). These standards are based on the cage sizes as well as the number of animal per cage used in the basic recommendation from the Council of Europe Recommendation from 1999³. In most countries, this is currently part of national law. Compliance with minimum standards is part of the assessment undertaken by Baltic Control.

Since the official start of the implementation of WelFur in January 2017, approximately 97 % of fur farmers in Europe signed up to start the assessments. European fur farmers' willingness to participate in a certification programme measuring and documenting animal welfare on fur farms is significant. European fur farmers know that animal welfare on farms is a central part of the sustainable development of the fur sector.

Therefore, the main objectives of the programme are:

- To provide a reliable on-farm animal welfare assessment system based on scientifically proven measures and independent third party assessments.
- To improve animal welfare on European fur farms through analysing of the assessment data and education of the farmers.
- To provide consumer transparency on the welfare status on European fur farms by publishing assessment data.

Structure of WelFur Assessments

In order to receive a WelFur certificate, a farm needs to be visited three times (one visit in each period of the production cycle – see graphic below). Each following year, the farm will need to be visited randomly in one of the 3 periods to maintain the certificate. A farm visit takes between 5-8 hours and based on the assessment result Baltic Control is solely in charge of issuing the WelFur certificates.

² <http://balticcontrol.com/welfur>

³ http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_co-operation/biological_safety_and_use_of_animals/farming/Rec%20fur%20animals%20E%201999.asp

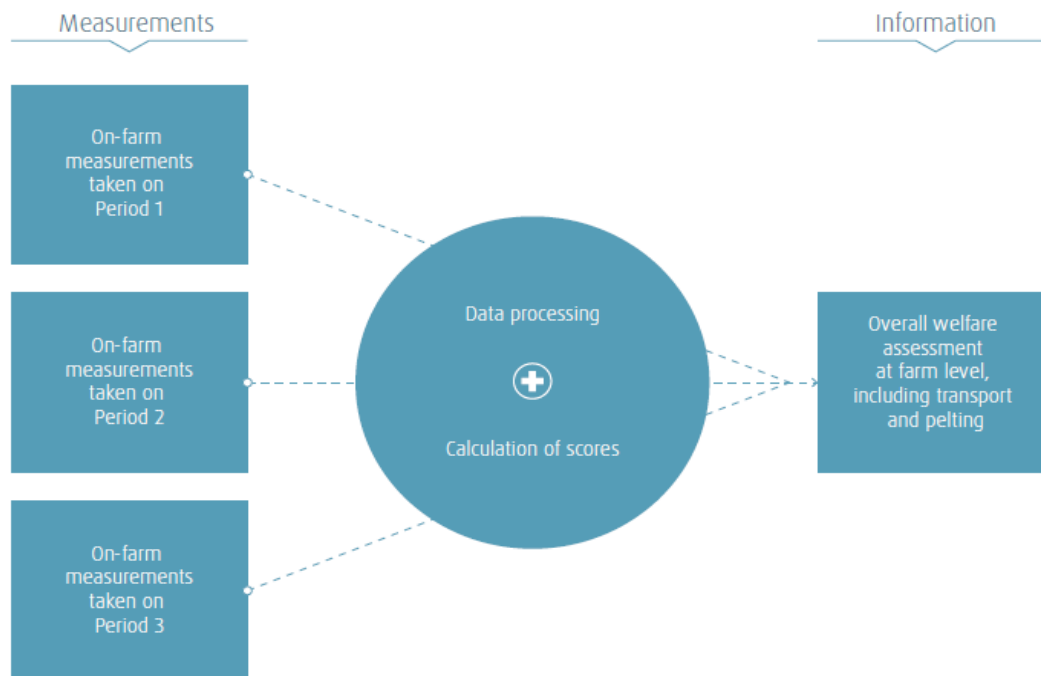


Figure 3 Structure of the WelFur assessment including the different sources of information.

Besides from that, the science-based scheme serves as a tool for farmers who want to improve animal welfare standards on their farms by providing them with support from specially trained WelFur advisors. This gives space for boosting areas in the farms where animal welfare can be improved under the supervision of animal experts.

The farmer will get a report via email after each assessment that contains the data collected of his/her farms. After the three initial assessments the farmer will receive the report of the full WelFur assessment and the WelFur certificate within 30 days, if passed. The WelFur score, that will be calculated based on the farms' data after all 3 visits on each 3 periods, is divided in 4 categories:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Best current practice: | the welfare of the animals is of the best current level of practice |
| Good current practice: | the welfare of the animals is of good current practice |
| Acceptable current practice: | the welfare of the animals is at or above minimal requirements of current practice |
| Unacceptable current practice: | the welfare of the animals is below current practice and considered unacceptable |

The farmer owns the data collected from his/her farm. Fur Europe will be publishing the aggregated data of the participating farms but not the individual farm data. Fur Europe keeps the list of certified farms which will be available on request by relevant stakeholders.

Next steps

It is Fur Europe's objective to certify all 3.500 European mink and fox farms in the period 2017-2020 and the approximately 100 European finnraccoon farms. Farmers will have to undergo three visits during the different production periods conducted by the independent third party assessors from Baltic Control to obtain the certificate.

So far, 6,680 assessments (64 %)⁴ have been undertaken. Mandatory assessments once a year are also required in order to keep the certificate valid.

As of December 2018, the two European auction houses, Kopenhagen Fur and SAGA Furs, as well as the Canada-based North American Fur Auctions (NAFA) will be able to sell the first WelFur certified mink, fox and finnraccoon skins.

Farms that are not WelFur certified by 2020 will be unable to sell their skins through the international fur auction houses until a WelFur certificate has been achieved. This effectively put non-certified fur farms out of business.

Traceability

WelFur offers a reliable traceability system for consumers who are becoming more vocal when expressing concerns about traceability and the available information about the condition on farms. According to the latest survey by the European Commission from 2016 mapping the attitudes of Europeans towards animal welfare, almost two thirds of the respondents say they would like to have more information on how animals are treated.⁵

To address the increasing consumer demands, WelFur will also serve as a labelling scheme for consumers. Through the WelFur label consumers will know that their fur comes from European fur farms with acceptable welfare standards by means of objective scientific research, regardless if the product is composed of skins from different fur farms. The skins will arrive at the auction houses with a barcode and, as of December 2018, they will also arrive with a WelFur certificate from the farm.

Contact: Daniela Liebetegger, Retail and CSR Manager | daniela.liebetegger@fureurope.eu | +32 2 209 1170

ABOUT FUR EUROPE

Fur Europe represents the entire value chain of the European fur sector including farmers, feed kitchens, auction houses, fur brokers, manufacturing, marketing and fur retailers. A Brussels-based umbrella organisation we represent national associations in 28 European countries.

We exist by the values of openness, transparency and reliability and from this fundament we develop our policies under six sustainability pillars: animal welfare, biodiversity, by-products, environmental footprint, skills and transparency.

Fur Europe was founded in 2014, as a result of a merger between the European Fur Breeders' Association and the European members of the International Fur Federation.

⁴ Figures from November 2018

⁵<http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2096>