



FURMARK  
SUSTAINABLE NATURAL FUR



# Executive Summary

Q1 2020



NATURAL FUR

THE  
RESPONSIBLE  
CHOICE



FURMARK  
SUSTAINABLE NATURAL FUR

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Q1 2020

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# Introduction

FURMARK is the global certification and traceability scheme for natural, sustainable fur.

FURMARK means confidence. Confidence for our suppliers, partners, retailers, and consumers. FURMARK sets clear, independent protocols and standards for the fur trade and supply chain. For consumers, FURMARK delivers the reassurance needed to confidently buy natural fur. The certification is transparent, traceable, and publicly accessible.

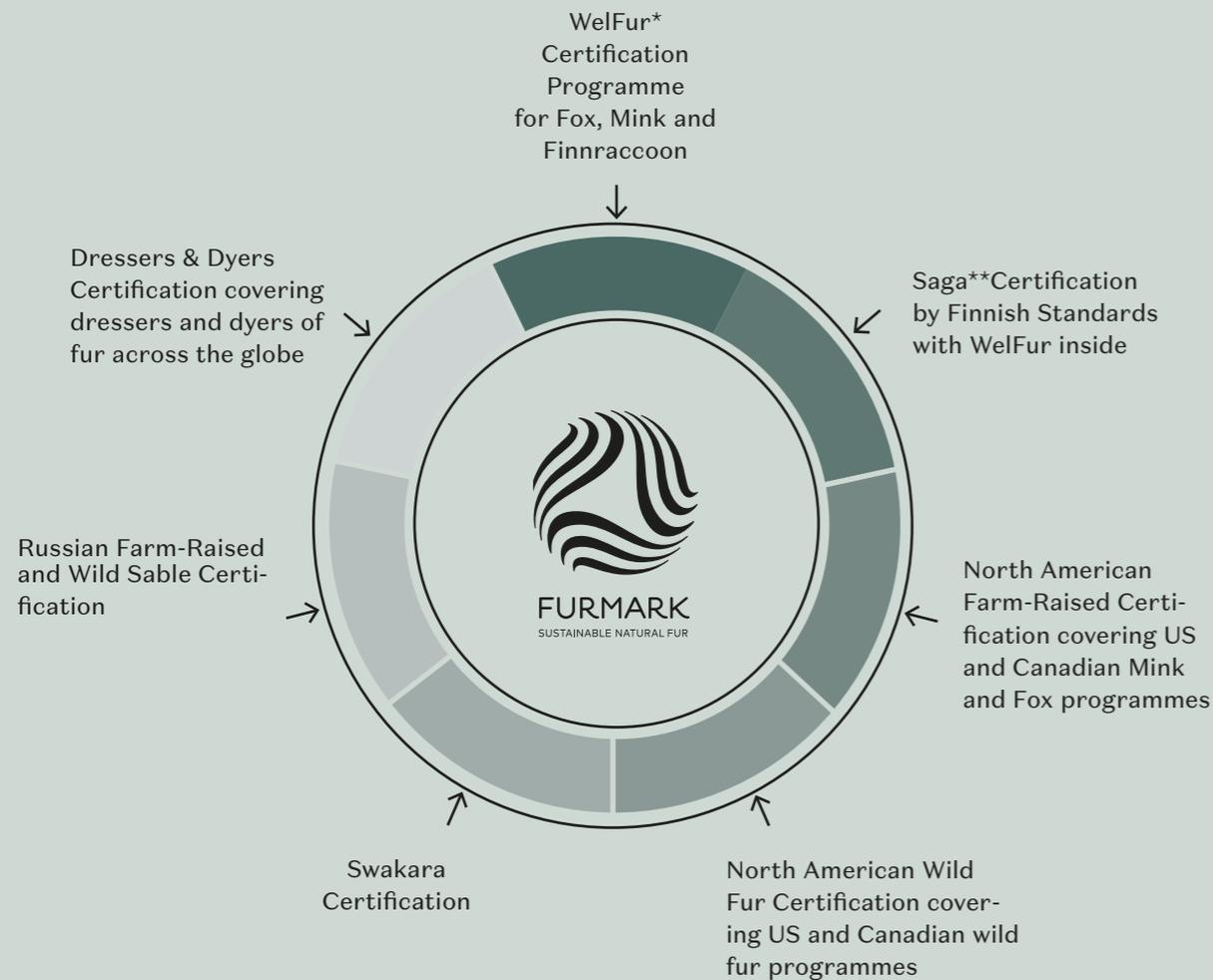
FURMARK means commitment. Across the entire supply chain, FURMARK ensures that each step of the production process meets strict requirements that reflect the strongest, globally-recognized animal welfare and sustainability standards. From farmers and trappers to dressers and designers, FURMARK ensures that everyone is working together to meet exacting practices and standards – for the good of the animal, the environment, and the public.

FURMARK reaffirms the status and value of natural, sustainable fur; FURMARK reaffirms the collective effort to deliver global standards. This brochure outlines how the fur sector, as a whole, will ensure the sustainable and responsible production of fur through systematic certification programmes.

FURMARK will launch in 2020 and is overseen by the International Fur Federation.

# FURMARK PROGRAMMES

At launch, FURMARK will include:



# Overview

FURMARK is the global certification and traceability scheme for natural, sustainable fur that ensures the highest animal welfare and environmental standards.

For consumers, FURMARK is a mark of guaranteed quality for the product they are purchasing.

For businesses, FURMARK is an industry-wide commitment to exacting practices and sustainability across the supply chain.

FURMARK draws together independently verified certified programmes under one umbrella: obtaining FURMARK certification means that an international, national, or regional programme has satisfied FURMARK's global standards.

With the introduction of FURMARK, all of the major auction houses are committed to selling FURMARK certified farm-raised and wild fur pelts from 2020. Under the FURMARK scheme, all stages of the supply chain are subject to comprehensive, transparent, and independently verified traceability systems.

Ultimately, FURMARK enables retailers, brands, and consumers to have complete assurance and confidence when buying fur - the premier natural, sustainable textile.

## FURMARK HAS THREE KEY PRINCIPLES:

- 1. Science:** certification programmes and their individual protocols must be science-based and approved by independent experts.
- 2. Independent inspection:** certification programmes must be verified by third parties and publicly available.
- 3. Transparency:** certification programmes must be sustainable, relevant, accessible, and traceable.

## WHAT DOES FURMARK MEAN IN PRACTICE?

- Independent Welfare Standards
- Traceability
- Sustainability
- Transparency
- External Validation
- Supply Chain Commitment
- Consumer Confidence

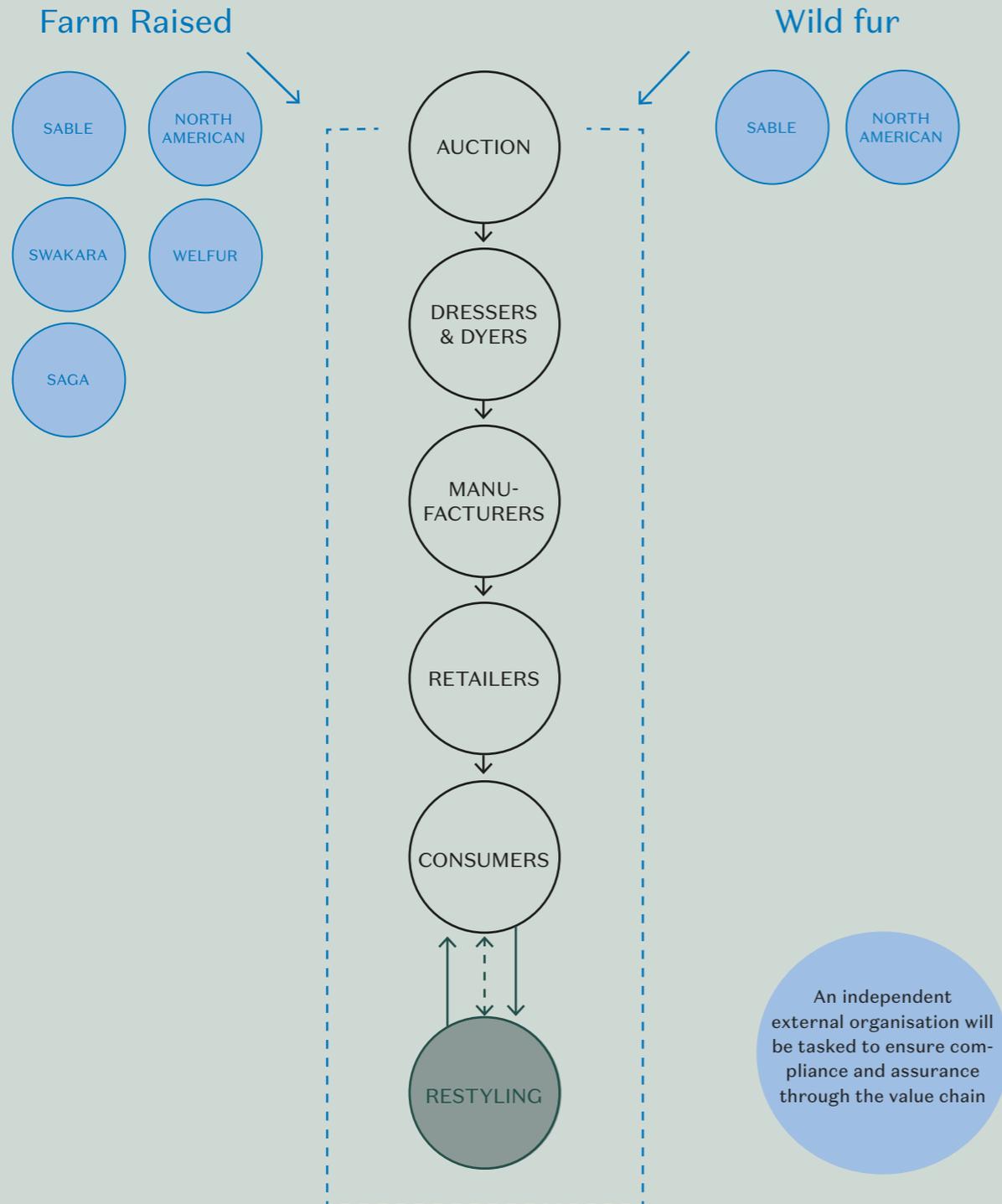
\*The first certified WelFur pelts were sold at auction in December 2019.

\*\*Saga certification has been in place since 2005. WelFur has recently been incorporated.

The remaining FURMARK programmes will be finalised during 2020 when they have completed the rigorous certification process.

FURMARK will continue to evolve beyond 2020 and will seek to incorporate new and emerging programmes: their accession to FURMARK is entirely dependent on whether they meet FURMARK's three key principles.

# FURMARK SUPPLY CHAIN



The ChainPoint system will capture movement of certified fur through the supply chain. The ChainPoint solution is interoperable with existing traceability solutions.

# Governance and Traceability

## GOVERNANCE

FURMARK is being developed in close consultation with major brands, including LVMH Group. This will ensure that FURMARK and the specific certification programmes align with the requirements and standards of these global businesses.

FURMARK has been developed by the International Fur Federation. A steering group of key members of the International Fur Federation's board – comprised of the CEOs of the major auctions, leading fur manufacturers, brands, retailers, and brokers – will have full oversight of FURMARK. Each programme under the FURMARK scheme has its own governance structure to support the implementation process. This includes engagement with scientists, government officials, farmers, hunters and trappers, and with third-party assessors, who are fully independent of industry influence. Farm-raised and wild fur programmes are also subject to independent review and checked to ensure that they are fully compliant with FURMARK principles.

Dedicated workshops, roundtables, and meetings have taken place in order to engage brands on the formulation of FURMARK. Dedicated working groups focusing on traceability, individual programme development, and communication are also in place.

## TRACEABILITY

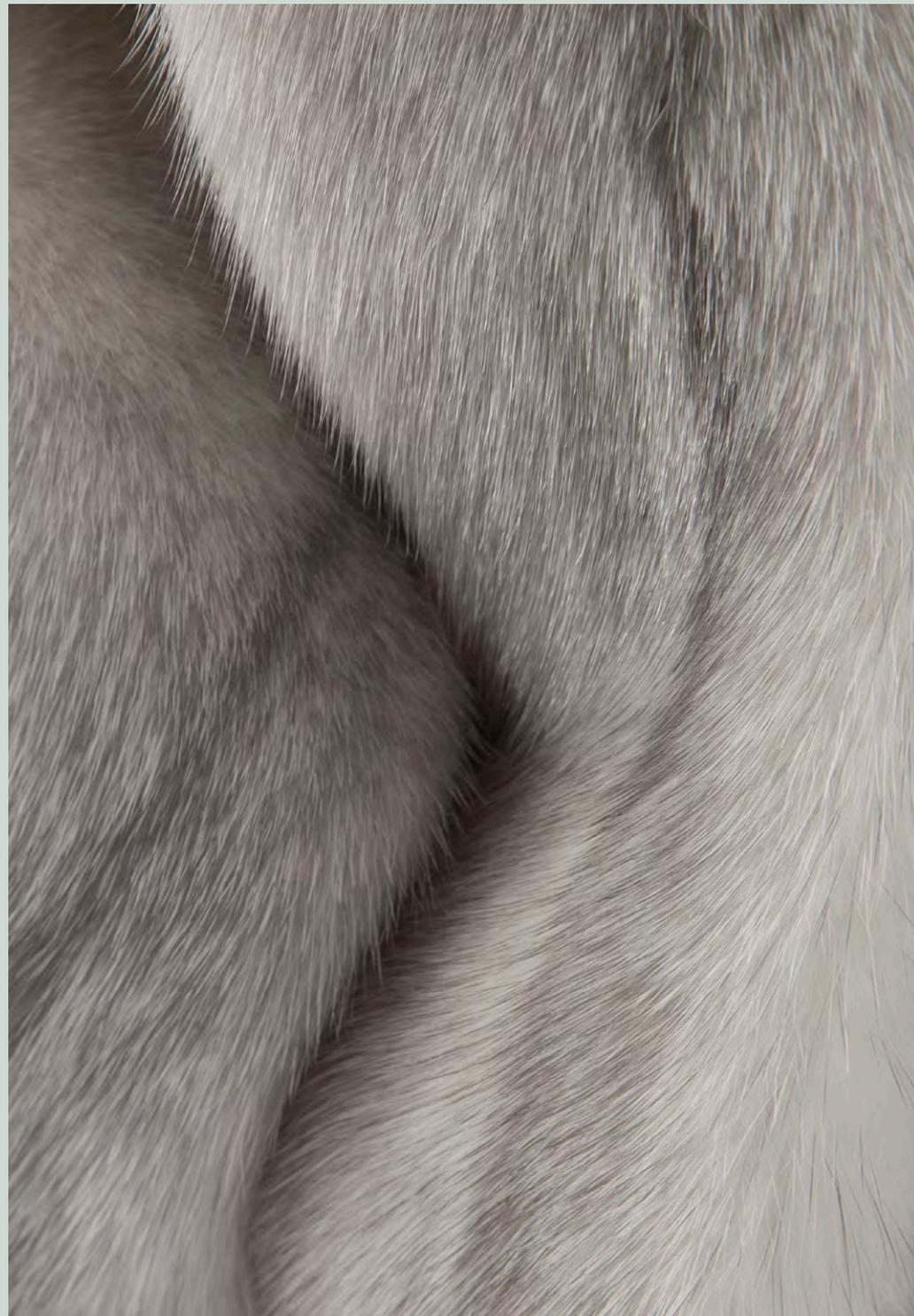
Species-specific traceability systems are in place with fur auction houses such as Saga Furs. Under FURMARK, a traceability system will be introduced across all major auctions ensuring compatibility with existing processes. To guarantee the robustness and transparency of this process, FURMARK will incorporate a traceability system that links the various processes through each stage in the supply chain. This traceability system is based on ChainPoint

technology, a multilingual web-based platform that allows multiple supply chain stakeholders to be registered so that they can collaborate across their chains.

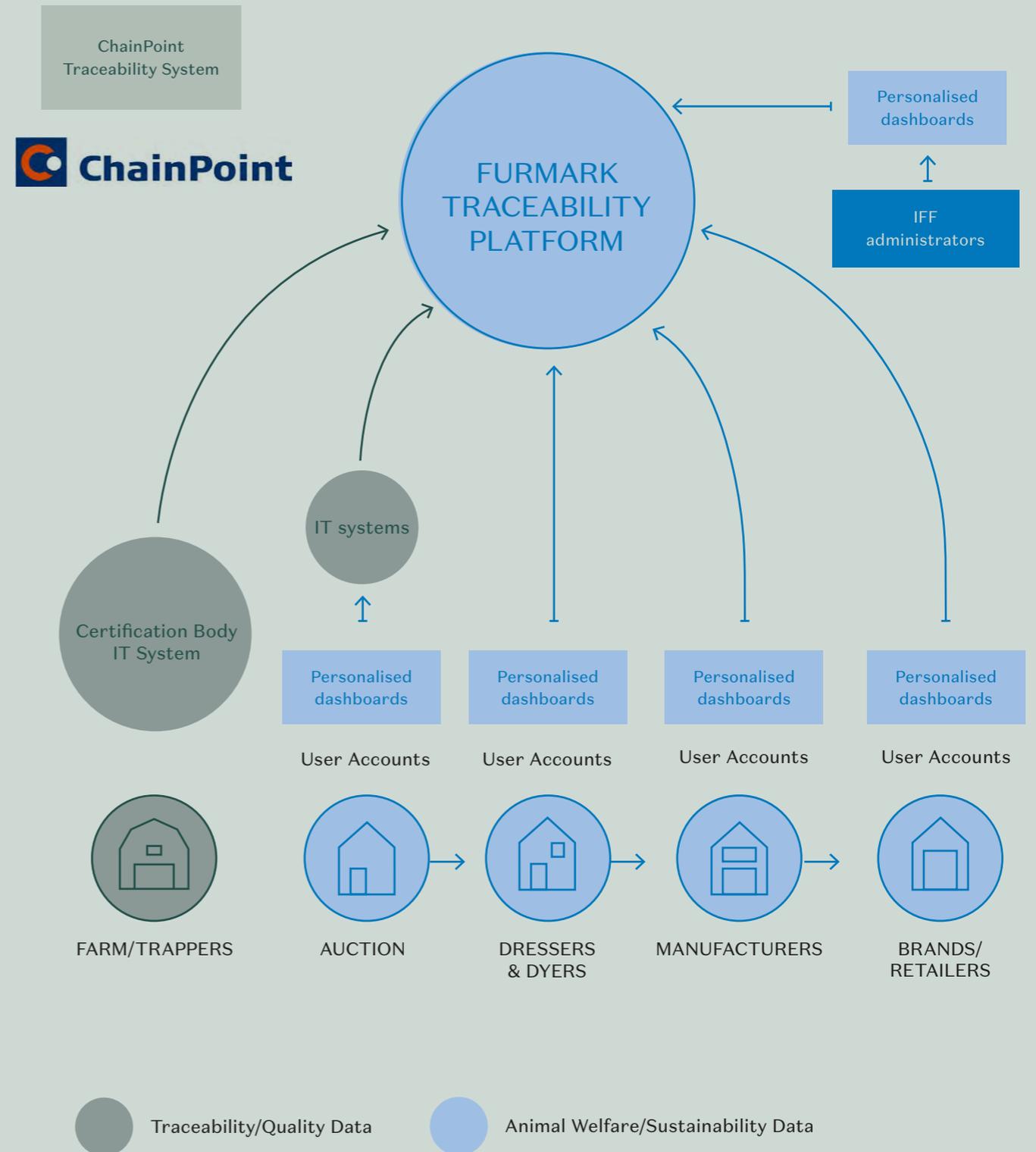
FURMARK certified fur can be traced back through the supply chain to the source. This follows pilot traceability schemes which were put in place (testing the robustness of the process as fur moves through the supply chain) in autumn 2018 with the main auction houses as well as targeted manufacturers and dressers and dyers. The traceability system has been designed and developed by a team of independent experts experienced in textile traceability. The objective is to trace fur from its origin to its endpoint, ensuring the same level of confidence and assurances exist across every stage of the supply chain. The FURMARK traceability platform is – rightly – designed to work in harmony with existing systems.

The ChainPoint system will be fully integrated with a labelling solution to ensure that garments carry the relevant information and provide a level of security and transparency that meets customer needs. Although many commercial brands will go with a standard solution, IFF recognizes that some high-end brands will wish to tailor their FURMARK communications. The approach to labelling and other forms of on-garment communication reflect this perspective. This project is being piloted in Q1 2020 ahead of full implementation later in the year.





# TRACEABILITY SYSTEM MODEL





## Farm-Raised and Wild Fur Programmes

### FARM-RAISED FUR PROGRAMMES

Farm-raised fur has deep roots in the agricultural traditions and histories across the globe. FURMARK encapsulates a number of existing and developing fur programmes. Central to each programme is animal welfare and environmental standards. Rigorous, evidence-based programmes, subject to independent inspection, provide that critical reassurance at the first stage of the fur supply chain.

### WILD FUR PROGRAMMES

Wild fur is subject to a comprehensive system of laws, regulations, checks and controls that emphasise the sustainability and welfare of all fur-bearing species and protect endangered species. Third-party verification of the management system in Russia and North America will begin in early 2020.

From 2020 fur sold by major auction houses – whether farm-raised or wild – will be FURMARK certified through the farm-raised fur programmes and wild fur programmes that come under the FURMARK scheme.



# WelFur Certification

WelFur is a science-based animal welfare assessment programme designed to certify mink, fox, and finnraccoon fur farms across Europe. Inspections are performed by third-party assessors, with the inspection protocols centred on the four principles of animal welfare: good housing, good feeding, good health, and appropriate behaviour. These principles have been adapted by independent scientists from seven European universities to create the WelFur programme.

The aim of WelFur is to ensure that best practices are applied to animal welfare across the fur supply chain. The certification programme is designed to provide an objective, reliable animal welfare assessment. It also aims to ensure transparency for customers and enable an overall animal welfare improvement. WelFur allows parties to evaluate and assess the animal welfare standards on fur farms; it simultaneously serves as a tool for farmers to improve practices and farm management.

Certification assesses and grades fur farms on four principles and 12 specific animal welfare criteria. There are 25 measurements to assess the welfare of foxes and 22 measurements for mink. Data on the required criteria is collected during farm visits conducted by qualified, independent third-party assessors. That is: neither the fur farm itself nor the wider fur industry makes the decision - it is solely down to the independent third-party assessors.

In order to obtain WelFur Certification, each fur farm must undergo three visits to evaluate the whole production cycle: the winter season (with breeding animals only), whelping and nursing (when dams and kits are looked at), and growth season until pelting. Once a fur farm obtains a WelFur certificate, it is a continued condition of the certification programme that they maintain these standards and they are therefore visited once a year.

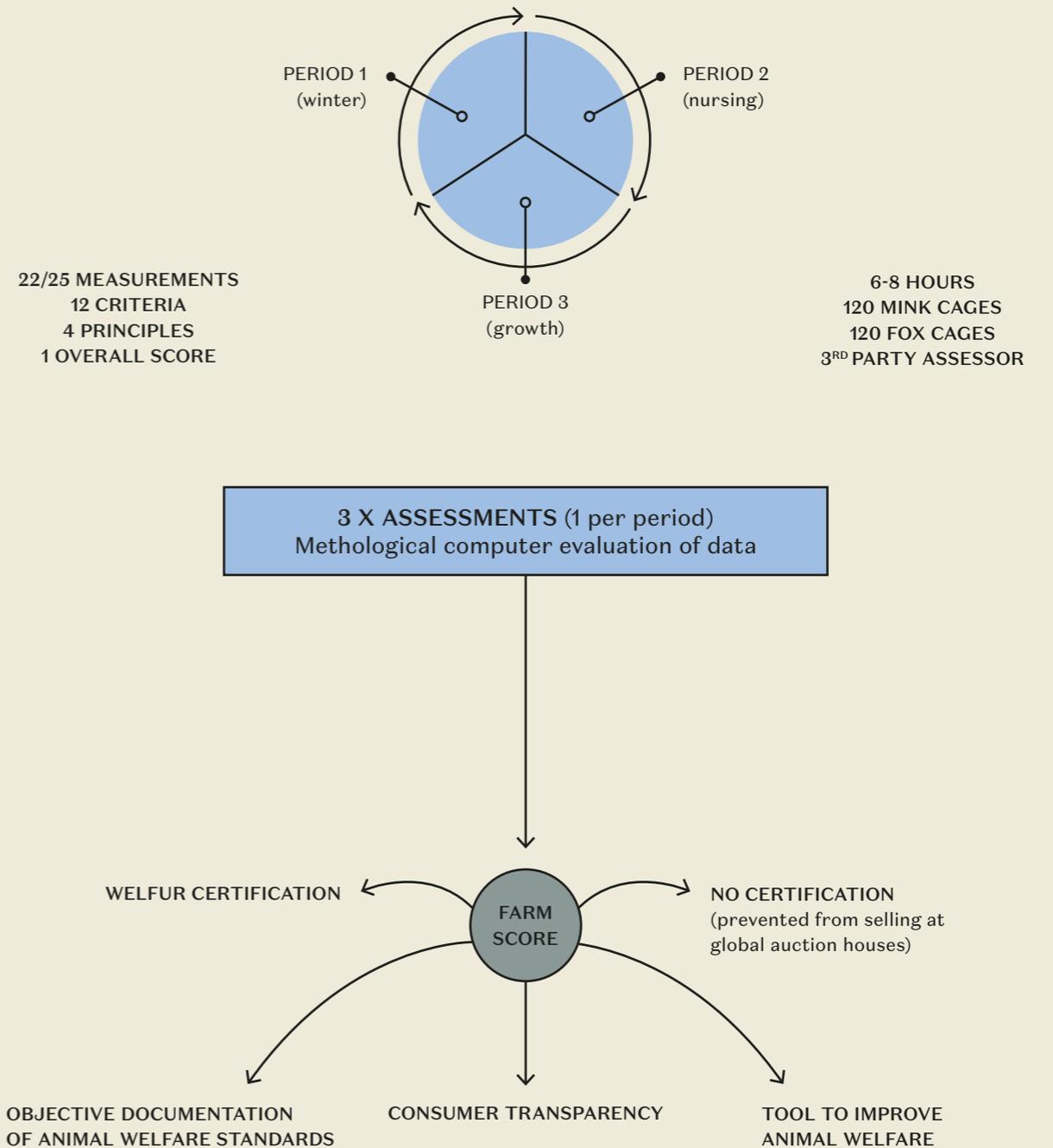
The data collected for WelFur Certification on the farm is combined to calculate criterion scores, allowing a standardised process across every country involved: WelFur Certification sets a standard that must be adhered to, regardless of where the fur farm is located. Under no circumstances are standards lowered for an individual fur farm or individual country: certification means universal application and animal welfare relies on a standardised approach.

WelFur has been endorsed by the European Commission as a Self-Regulation and Co-Regulation Initiative: it is the first ever animal welfare programme to be promoted by the Commission through their database of 'soft law' initiatives. 2,918 fox and mink farms across 22 European countries were assessed in the period 2017-2019, which concludes the implementation phase.

The first WelFur certified skins were sold at auction in December 2019.

With an increasing interest in WelFur, the programme is being expanded to individual fur farms outside Europe.

## WELFUR IN PRACTICE



# Saga Certification by Finnish Standards with WelFur inside

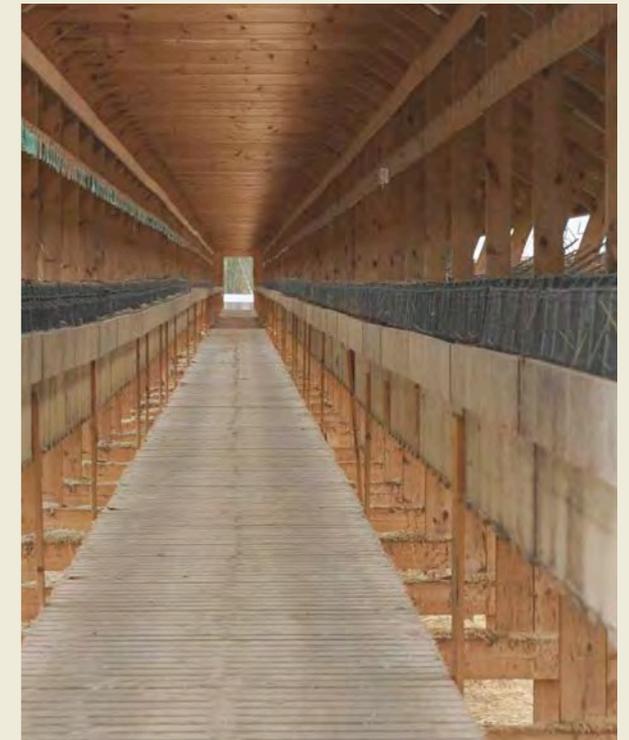
Saga Certification by Finnish Standards is a fur farm certification programme that focuses on both animal welfare and the entire farm operation and environment: there are 32 criteria and 80 sub-criteria. These criteria include animal health and welfare; conditions for rearing animals; farm hygiene; breeding; environmental management; feed management and training; and preparation for exceptional situation.

The certification programme also includes the WelFur standard.

In order to obtain Saga Certification, fur farms must meet all criteria and production must be carefully documented and transparent. Certified fur farms are audited regularly to ensure animal welfare and environmental well-being. In consecutive years, the auditing is performed in different seasons. If the audit highlights any shortcomings, the fur farm is obliged to take action and remedy the situation within a set timeframe. Only fur farms that meet all the criteria receive Saga Certification. The Finnish Fur Breeders' Association is responsible for the development of the Saga Certification by Finnish Standards quality system.

The Saga Traceability System has been in place since 2017 and is an automated process for cross checking the country of origin and for valid certifications. Saga Furs provides all of the documentation needed by international fashion houses to inform their customers on fur origins.

Over recent years, Saga Furs has been developing tracing with RFID technology. The Saga Furs Traceability System is integral to implementing transparency and traceability: it discloses the proportion of certified farms, dates of farm certification and the countries of origin. All furs sold by Saga Furs include STS documentation.



# North American Farm-Raised and Wild Fur Certification

## Farm-Raised

### MINK

The American and Canadian farm-raised mink sectors have a long history of working together. By aligning their welfare programmes and associated certification assessments, both the USA and Canada aim to support quality welfare practices and meet supply chain requirements.

The sections in the standard guidelines for US and Canadian mink farms are broadly the same covering a range of topics: management of the farm, accommodation, food and water, health, environmental quality, transportation, humane euthanasia, biosecurity, and animal husbandry.

Third-party verification for the Canadian mink sector is being conducted by an internationally recognised, professional auditing company, NSF International. As of December 2019 around 85% of Canadian farms were either certified or in the process of certification under the NSF assessment scheme.

The USA's standard guidelines will be verified by Validus an independent animal auditor organization and implemented during Q1 2020.

### FOX

The Canadian code of practice for the care and handling of farm-raised fox contains seven sections detailing the responsibilities of the producer: accommodation and housing, biosecurity, food and water, health and welfare management, animal husbandry, humane euthanasia, and transportation.

Third party verification of the Canadian fox sector is being conducted by an internationally recognised professional auditing company, NSF International.

### WELFUR IN NORTH AMERICA

The WelFur programme is also operating in North America and a number of farms are part of this programme.

## Wild Fur

Wild fur in North America is subject to a wide-ranging system of laws, regulations, checks, and controls that emphasise the sustainability and welfare of all fur-bearing species and protect endangered species. Ensuring population and environmental sustainability is key to how wild fur is harvested. The system of checks and balances operates at local, state, regional, and provincial levels of government and also through far-reaching international agreements.

As a result of the different reasons for trapping, all of the wild fur harvest from North America is part of government wildlife management programmes. These programmes are controlled by government, including by species, by seasons, or by quotas. The programmes are managed under the careful supervision of wildlife scientists and are subject to continuous research input and improvement.

The Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS), which is a trilateral agreement between Canada, the EU, and Russia, along with the parallel agreement between the EU and US, ensures that animal welfare is paramount in the wild fur harvest. Canada and the US both comply with the terms of the aforementioned international agreements and meeting.

In 2020 a third-party verification of the wild fur management process will commence. The third-party assessor will engage government officials in the USA and Canada as well as Fur Harvesters Auction Inc to verify the management system. This will also require field visits to meet trappers. The third-party assessor will also call on the expertise of wild fur experts as part of this process. It is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.



# Russian Sable Certification

## FARM-RAISED SABLE

For farm-raised Saltykov and Chernyi Sobol sable the relevant rules for keeping farmed fur animals in Russia have been in place since 2018. The scientific basis for these regulations are set by the Moscow Veterinary Academy and the rules have been integrated into the certification of fur farms in Russia. As part of this process, fur farms are assessed by third-party experts and the assessment criteria includes living conditions, nutrition, health, and behaviour.

For a sable farm to meet the Russian Sable Certification, it must be assessed three times within the first year - 100 sable cages are examined on each occasion. Certification is valid for one year.

## WILD SABLE

In terms of wild Saltykov and Chernyi Sobol sable (around 80-90% of the total sable market), trapping is highly regulated by the Russian Federation's Ministry of Natural Resources and its regional equivalents. Russia is a signatory to the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards and a humane trapping memorandum of understanding was established with the Fur Institute of Canada in 2017. Trapping is of paramount importance to the socioeconomic stability of the indigenous populations in Siberia, the Russian north, and the Russian east; hunting regions range from the Taiga zone to the Pacific coastline.

Sable trapping is conducted under licence and in accordance with quotas and permitted numbers. In each region, there is a hunting supervisory authority that conducts spot checks on hunting grounds, hunters and trappers, and their humane traps. Once a pelt is harvested, a veterinary certificate is issued by the state body and a tag is applied. The certificate is stored on an electronic database Mercury and

the database tracks the fur from trapper to auction house. In 2016, the Eurasian Economic Union introduced mandatory labeling of fur products with RFID chips: violation results in significant fines, confiscation, and criminal liability. Crucially, a trap certification system was established in the same year and requires laboratory tests alongside field tests.

In order to provide further clarity and transparency of the management system that is in place to record movements of furs from trapper to auction, it was agreed in Q4 2019 that an independent assessment would be made. This would comprise a third-party assessment company with specific knowledge of hunting and trapping engaging government officials, as well as the two main auction houses in Russia to test various aspects of this management system. The assessor would also be required to conduct random visits of several trapping areas in order to meet trappers and effectively verify that the process is working at ground level. This certification of the management system will begin in Q1 2020 and be completed during Q2 2020, although the expectation is that field visits to trappers would take place later in 2020 to coincide with the beginning of the season.



# Swakara Certification

Swakara (the contemporary nomenclature South West African Karakul) has been farmed in Southern Africa for more than 110 years; 70,000 pelts are now produced each year. These are sourced from rural farmers, as Swakara thrives in the arid, desert-like conditions. As a result, Swakara production directly supports indigenous communities and contributes towards socioeconomic stability.

The Swakara programme is overseen by the industry's regulatory body, the Swakara Board, and ensures production of pelts and wool is conducted in accordance with Namibian Karakul Pelts and Wool Act (14) 1982. A distinct range of statutory and industry regulations apply, including the dedicated Farm Assured Namibian Meat initiative. The Swakara Board Code of Practice Standards for the Production and Marketing of Pelts sets standards on the humane euthanasia of Swakara, environmental management, husbandry practices, quality control, traceability and record keeping, animal protection, and other areas.

The World Organisation for Animal Health and the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Guidelines for Animal Welfare have acted as a basis for the Code. The Code is based on global principles for animal welfare - better known as the Five Freedoms. These production guidelines are embedded into various national laws.

There are four parts to the programme's audit process. Certified auditors conduct on-site inspections of the care and handling of lambs, pelt production, and of the marketing processes, facilities and equipment. All members are also required to conduct an annual internal audit of their management system.

Farms are also subject to inspection by the Namibian government (through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Forestry - MAWF) and private veterinary services; these inspections

include the care and handling lambs, facilities, equipment, management systems, and records.

In Q4 2019, it was agreed that an independent audit of the 20 largest farms would be conducted in 2020. It was agreed that the remaining farms would be subject to a random 'square root' audit. Audits are expected to be completed during Q2 2020.

## 1. SWAKARA BOARD INSPECTION:

Certified auditors from the Namibian Swakara board will conduct on-site inspections of the care and handling of lambs, pelt production and of marketing processes, facilities and equipment.

## 2. SELF-AUDIT:

All members are required to conduct annual internal audits of their management system.

## 3. INSPECTION BY MAWF AND PRIVATE VETERINARY SERVICES:

This includes inspections of the care and handling of lambs, facilities, equipment, management systems and records.

## 4. EXTERNAL AUDITS:

The CoP is audited by external, certified auditing bodies.

# Dressers and Dyers



Dressers and dyers working with fur are committed to operating to the highest standards: that is why, under the FURMARK scheme, a new chemical standard has been developed with a third-party testing institute.

Dressing refers to the process that preserves unprocessed fur; dyeing refers to the process that changes the colour of fur. Both of these processes, by their very nature and in-line with the wide fashion industry, require industrial and chemical methods. The fur sector has therefore spent time and effort working with these skilled dressers and dyers to find sustainable solutions that deliver for the customer, respect the fur product, and preserve our natural environment.

The International Fur Dressers and Dyers Association (IFDDA) is the result of that work and those considerations.

All FURMARK certified dressers and dyers must be part of the IFDDA and must, therefore, satisfy three key criteria. The IFDDA are committed to ensuring that the protocols are transparent. In order to be part of the FURMARK scheme, IFDDA members must record the movement of FURMARK certified fur.

1. Government oversight of the environmental footprint of the facility.

As part of the FURMARK scheme, IFDDA members must demonstrate that their factories receive national government oversight of the footprint of their factories and that they meet all local, national, and regional requirements, legislation, and regulation (such as REACH in Europe). IFDDA will also review the national Government requirements for factories around the world to ensure that the application of the FURMARK scheme is consistent.

2. Declaration of approved chemical use within specified facilities and validation by onsite assessment.

The IFDDA have developed a chemical standard for the fur industry with oversight from a third-party testing institute, FILK. The standard includes agreed chemicals and limits for said chemicals. IFDDA members are also required to declare chemicals not in use. The standard covers three types of business: fur dressers, fur dyers, and businesses that are both fur dressers and fur dyers. As part of the FURMARK scheme, there is also a supplementary on-site visit by the independent third-party testing institute to ensure that declarations are correct. Sample submission began in Q4 2019 and the monitoring visits are expected to be completed by Q3 2020.

3. Laboratory assessment to ensure the safety of the end product

IFDDA members must submit samples to the independent testing institute. If the chemicals are not within the agreed limits, then the factory will be subject to further follow-up assessments. If it cannot meet the chemical standard, then the factory will be excluded from the FURMARK programme.

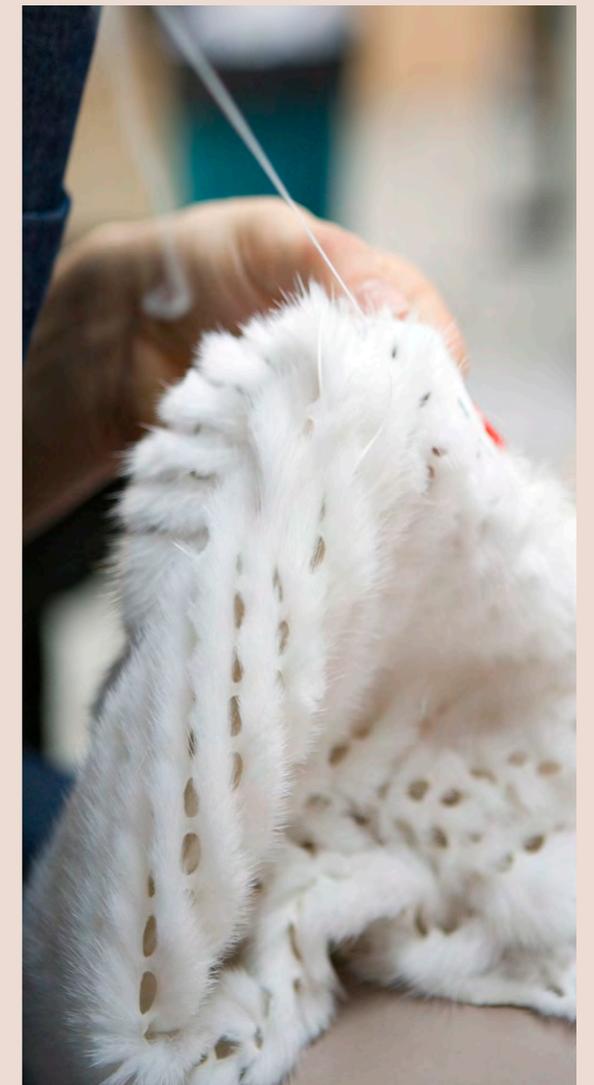
# Manufacturers and Retailers

## MANUFACTURERS

After manufacturers receive treated pelts from the dressers and dyers, fur can then be made into garments, accessories, or home furnishings. Manufacturers are highly skilled and individual, producing garments that have a timeless appeal, often using a mixture of traditional and modern techniques for hand cutting, stranding, and sewing fur.

A key part of the fur supply chain, manufacturers (and their processes) are an integral part of the FURMARK scheme, particularly when it comes to traceability. The final system, run by an independent third party, will protect the integrity of FURMARK.

Certification and traceability are key issues when it comes to manufacturing in the fashion and sportswear sectors. In this way, the FURMARK concept will fit into the general direction of these industries when it comes to meeting the growing demands regarding sustainability.



# Role of FURMARK at Manufacturer and Retail Level

The FURMARK label and symbol itself will be an identifiable mark of quality and assurance that will be displayed in-store and on garments. Based on consumer research, and in partnership with relevant retailers, the International Fur Federation has been developing this aspect of the FURMARK scheme to ensure it is fit for purpose ahead of the global launch in Q4 2020.

The labelling solutions are being developed with leading experts and will incorporate the ChainPoint traceability technology to ensure full integration and transparency.

To ensure that the FURMARK logo and strapline is appealing and that the brand message will come across strongly, the logo has been re-designed. The new version of the FURMARK logo has a high degree of functionality even when it comes to weaving and printing in small sizes. All materials will include anti-counterfeit measures to ensure security and credibility of the brand. IFF are developing plans that will ensure that post-implementation checks are in place across the supply chain. This supports objectives to deliver genuine garments to the market.

Research showed that over 80% of retailers welcome a scheme such as FURMARK. Retailers believe that, when introduced, FURMARK will support customers to more confidently choose natural, sustainable fur garments, accessories, and home furnishings.

Further details of the FURMARK at a manufacturer and retail level will be released at launch in 2020.



## RETAILERS

Retailers are an essential source of fur information for the public. Across a variety of channels, including online and at the point of sale, retailers proactively and reactively inform, advise, and assist those opting to purchase natural, sustainable garments, accessories, and home furnishings. Crucially, furriers play a vital role in repairing, remodelling, and refreshing fur garments and educating new and existing fur customers.

The retailers are also key in terms of positioning fur as a fashion item. Although FURMARK is focussing on certification and traceability, there is an opportunity for storytelling about the origin and process of creating beautiful styles in natural fur.

# Beyond 2020

The FURMARK scheme will continue to evolve beyond 2020. The ambition is to make the concept an industry standard for all quality production involving natural fur.

The majority of apparel brands are doing their best to increase the use of sustainable and recyclable materials. FURMARK will mean that natural fur can be strongly integrated in the production, although the use of natural animal-based materials in fashion is constantly under scrutiny.

FURMARK will seek to incorporate new and emerging programmes, providing they meet FURMARK's three key principles. Chinchilla is an example of one of these developing programmes.



# Key Sector Stakeholders

## FUR HARVESTERS AUCTION INC.

Fur Harvesters Auction Inc (FHA) is located in North Bay, Ontario, Canada and is the only trapper-owned and trapper-operated fur auction house in the world.

## KOPENHAGEN FUR

Kopenhagen Fur is the world's largest fur auction house and the undisputed world-leader within the global trade of quality mink skins.

Established in 1930 and cooperatively owned by the fur breeders in Denmark, Kopenhagen Fur sets world class standards for sustainability in the fur value chain from farm level and beyond. Kopenhagen Fur and the Danish fur farmers continuously strive to be even better tomorrow than yesterday. Therefore, Kopenhagen Fur prioritizes sustainability by engaging in constant scientific research to identify potentials for even better solutions. Areas such as climate footprint, animal welfare, environment and circular economy are essential focus points for Kopenhagen Fur as a responsible firstmover and trendsetter in the global fur trade.

## SAGA FURS

Saga Furs is a full-service auction house and the only publicly listed fur auction company in the world. It was established in 1938 and is situated outside of Helsinki, Finland. Saga Furs sources pelts from Europe and North America and oversees the world's broadest selection of superior farm-raised furs. Saga Furs is the fur industry pioneer in initiating, monitoring and reporting on sustainable practices, including its own farm-management certification program and a proprietary product traceability system. In 2008, the company introduced the first and most extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy in the fur business and joined the 'United Nations Global Compact'. Saga Furs is guided by a companywide code of conduct, launched in 2017, which sets out standards of behaviour for all employees, including Management Team members and the Board of Directors.

## SOJUZHPUKHNINA

Located in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Sojuzpushnina was established in the 1930s and was, until 2003, a unitary state enterprise (USE). It is currently an all-union, self-supporting, foreign trade association. There are three to five auctions a year in St. Petersburg selling a total of about 600,000 sable pelts. Russia is the only nation to offer sable (branded with the label 'Sobol').

## INTERNATIONAL FUR DRESSERS AND DYERS ASSOCIATION (IFDDA)

In April 2011, dressers and dyers from around the world decided to cooperate in order to enhance the role of their profession within the fur trade. The result was the International Fur Dressers and Dyers Association (IFDDA). All FURMARK certified dressers and dyers must be part of the IFDDA.



[furmark.com](http://furmark.com)

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