

# Stewardship in Canada's Mink Industry

## Environmental Regulations

Federal, provincial and municipal governments have strict environmental regulations in place. Regulations include the distance farms must maintain from waterways, the handling of manure and compost, bio-security and pest management. Regular application/assessment processes and inspections are often a part of these systems. Environmental regulations may vary from province to province.

## Use of Animal By-Products

By-products from food processed for human consumption are used to formulate healthy, balanced diets for farmed mink. In many cases, these ingredients would otherwise be discarded in landfills. Thus, mink farmstake materials that have very little value and transform them into products of much greater value.



## Waste Materials

Similar to other agricultural industries, the main waste materials associated with mink farming are manure, wood shavings (or other types of bedding material) and mink remains after pelting. All of these materials are very quickly and easily composted into a very usable and highly desired fertilizer. This fertilizer is often spread on hay fields or on vegetable farms or gardens, or used for landscaping. This material, when composted properly, is free of pathogens, and is high in nitrogen which is necessary for plant protein development and cellular reproduction.

In addition to the fur, valuable mink oil (from the fat) can be preserved during the pelting process. This oil is used for waterproofing and protecting leather shoes or garments. Mink oil is also prized for the making of fine soaps and lotions.

## Fur - Recyclable and Biodegradable

Today fur remains one of the most eco-friendly of fabrics. Not only is its warmth and luxury unequalled, but it is completely recyclable and reusable. Environmentalists demand that products need to be durable and functional, making fur even more appealing. Fur garments can, with proper care and fashion savvy, be used for decades. A fur garment can transform from coat to jacket to vest, to liner. In the past they were even handed down from generation to generation! While that may not be in your future, fur coats, jackets and vests can be reinvented as fashion and home accessories, collars, linings, hand bags, pillows even the ultimate luxury a fur bedspread, making them good financial and fashion investments; the ultimate in eco-friendly fashion. ([www.nafa.ca](http://www.nafa.ca))

Real fur is an organic material. Faux fur and most synthetics are made from petrochemicals. Like other plastics, these materials do not break down easily and will remain in landfills for centuries. The "dressing" process (tanning) helps to preserve the pelts for some time, but after many years of use they will eventually dry out and begin to deteriorate (i.e., biodegrade), returning to nature. Old fur apparel can even be composted for your garden! (Visit [FurisGreen.com](http://FurisGreen.com) for more information)



**furisgreen**.com 



## Student Reflection Questions

**Name:**

Recycling plays a big role in mink farming. How so? Give examples.

Did you know that today most of our clothing is made of plastic? Why is this a problem?

Fur is long-lasting and is 100% biodegradable. Do you think this is important? Why or why not?

How can fur garments be reused?

