



Frequently Asked Questions

Where do down and feathers come from?

Down and feathers are a natural byproduct of the enormous and highly-regulated global poultry industry. The ducks and geese from which down and feathers are procured have been farmed or raised for food, not their feathers. As such, down and feathers come from countries where ducks and geese are a dietary staple — the largest of which is China.

What are down and feather products used for?

Down and feathers are nature's best insulator, providing incredible warmth, without weight, to help regulate body heat in bedding, apparel and outdoor gear. Down and feather is also long lasting, so the insulating ability of these products will not diminish.

What makes down and feather products sustainable?

More than a byproduct, down and feathers are also a waste product of the food industry and would otherwise end up in our world's landfills. By cleaning and sanitizing down and feathers to be used in bedding, clothing and outdoor gear, these products help to reduce the amount of agricultural waste and contribute to the overall sustainability of our world.

Why are down and feather products more sustainable than synthetic materials?

Since down and feather products derive from nature, they are environmentally sensitive, with the manufacturing process leaving a lower carbon footprint than that of synthetic materials. In comparison, synthetic materials are often made from non-renewable resources like oil, whereas down and feathers are biodegradable, decomposing back into the earth.

Are there laws that protect animal welfare in the down and feather industry?

Animal welfare laws exist in the food and agriculture industry, and many producers and suppliers of down and feather sign pledges to abide by these rules in order to become members of industry organizations. Although animal welfare laws differ worldwide, the International Down and Feather Bureau (IDFB) and its members— which include the American Down and Feather Council (ADFC), the China Feather and Down Industry Association (CDFIA) and other country trade associations across Europe, as well as individual companies from around the globe— neither support nor condone the illegal harvesting of feathers and down from live birds.

Do inhumane practices of procuring down and feather exist?

Inhumane practices of procuring down and feather from live birds are forbidden by law. Countries within the European Union are permitted to harvest down and feather from live birds during molting season, under clearly defined legal stipulations. Molting is the period of time in which a bird naturally changes its feathers; during this period, the molting of geese allows for down and feathers to be gathered after they have fallen off the geese, or for the geese to be gently brushed or combed to remove loose down and feathers. This harvesting process is governed by a number of provisions, including the *European Convention for the Protection of Animals Kept for*

Farming Purposes. According to this standard, harvesting feathers absolutely may not take place outside of the molting season.

What does the industry do to ensure these humane practices are followed?

As previously mentioned, industry members sign pledges to ensure that humane practices for procuring down and feathers are adhered to. Additionally, companies throughout the industry independently monitor their supply chains – and engage independent auditors, as well – to make sure humane practices are followed. There are several auditing agencies across the world work on behalf of the down and feather industry to conduct these audits.

Audit work includes all parts of the down and feather supply chain, including farms and other raw material sources; slaughterhouses; synthetic fiber processors; down and feather processors; and finished product sewing factories. The efforts by producers and buyers to document this supply chain have yielded very positive information about the ethical sourcing of down and feathers.

Since documentation of the down and feather supply chain has started, it has been confirmed that the so-called practice of live plucking of ducks and geese is far from prevalent—in fact, it is estimated that the practice is so rare that it represents less than one percent of the industry.