Not your Skin

by Fiona Galbraith, Viva!

Viva!

THE BIG COVER UP

Not YOUR Skin

by Fiona Galbraith

Take a stroll into any British town centre or shopping complex and you will see leather for sale. Shopping for shoes in Clarks, New Look, Barratts or Schuh you will find an abundance of leather items. When searching for a fashionable jacket in Topshop, Burtons or River Island you will discover various styles of leather jackets on display. When desperately trying to find the perfect bag to match your outfit in Primark, Miss Selfridges or Oasis you have plenty of leather options to choose from.

Even your own living room can be invaded by the leather industry, when looking for a new sofa in DFS, Ikea or Argos you will find a wide range of wipe-clean leather sofas on display.

What is leather and where does it come from?

Leather is the name given to animal hides and skins which have been processed and tanned to create a durable material. Without tanning, the animal hides would begin to decompose immediately; tanning is the process of adding chemical preservatives to the skins and hides to ensure they do not biodegrade.

Most leather comes from cattle; both dairy and beef cattle hides are turned into leather after the animal is slaughtered. Eighty six per cent of all leather manufactured in the UK originates from bovine animals (National Statistics, 2007).

The softest leather, slink comes from unborn calves; slink leather is highly desirable and expensive because it is rare. This leather can only be obtained by slaughtering a pregnant cow; this soft leather is then often used for delicate products such as leather gloves. Almost 150,000 pregnant cows are killed each year in the UK. Slink can also be obtained from lambs who die at birth, this accounts for two per cent of all lambs born in the UK (Meat South West, 2007). Slink leather is only found on high-end products due to its rarity and expense.

As well as cows, leather also comes from pigs, goats, sheep and deer. In 2000 the UK produced 18.4 million sheepskins (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2008). Chamois leather is the inside layer of flesh from lambs and sheep. Due to its size it is rarely used for shoe or upholstery and is used mainly to produce clothing due to its softness and flexibility.

3 million kangaroo skins are exported from Australia every year for use in the leather trade

Leather also comes from alligators, crocodiles, toads, sharks, buffalos, eels, ostriches, lizards, snakes, salmon, seals, zebras, dolphins…the list goes on.

What is considered to be the extravagant end of the leather market is certainly not glamorous for the animals involved. "The European Union is the world's biggest importer of reptile skins. Between 2000 and 2005, it is estimated that 3.4 million lizards, 2.9 million crocodile and 3.4 million snake skins were brought into the EU." (Rawstorne, 2007) Ostriches, which are native to hot climates such as Africa and the middle east, are now farmed in the UK for their meat and skin; in the US alligators and crocodiles are clubbed to death or have a chisel smashed through their spinal cord to paralyse them before being skinned alive; and wild snakes are also skinned alive (Rawstorne, 2007). Wild species killed for their coats have very little protection and may also be endangered – try wearing that on your conscience as well as your feet!

Australia exports approximately 3 million kangaroo skins, worth more than £12 million, to Europe and the USA every year. The vast majority of these skins are used to make football boots. Products are often labelled 'K leather' or 'RKT' (rubberised kangaroo technology) to disguise the fact that they are made from the skins of butchered kangaroos. Each year, the Australian government sets a quota for the number of kangaroos the industry can kill; for 2008 it was 3.5 million (Australian Government, 2008).

Kangaroos are shot at night in the vast outback and hunters are supposed to adhere to a Code of Practice, a guideline which is neither legally-enforceable nor linked to the Australian Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. According to the Code, to kill kangaroos 'humanely' hunters should shoot them once in the head, but frequently the animals may be shot in the throat, the neck, or have their jaws blown off. An investigation by Viva! revealed that official numbers for the kill do not include the baby kangaroos who also die as the worthless 'waste' of the industry. Tiny joeys are pulled from their dead mothers' pouches and stamped on, clubbed or simply left to die. Older joeys hop away into the night invariably to die of starvation, predation, cold or neglect (Eckersley, 1989). Six species of kangaroo are already extinct, with four more species extinct on the Australian mainland and 17 species listed as endangered or vulnerable (Gellatley, 2006) and since 2001 kangaroo numbers have plummeted by 57 per cent in areas where they are hunted (Australian Government, 2008).

Ostrich is yet another wild animal forced to suffer because of the fashion industry. These amazing wild birds are now factory farmed in the UK. They are penned up; their eggs taken away and their chicks killed at one year old. Unable to shed rain from their feathers, here they are at risk from exposure and pneumonia. Slaughter bound birds are often starved for hours or days before they are killed. A hood is placed over the

bird's head before slaughter supposedly to calm him down. His legs are hobbled and the hood is soaked in water. An electric sheep stunner is clamped across his head, the bird is hoisted up and his throat cut. Another method of stunning is the captive bolt pistol. However, the UK government states that this is unsuitable for ostriches and should not be used. The bird's delicate skull can stop the stunner from working or it may be shot in the wrong part of his head – meaning agony to a conscious bird aware of his life blood draining away (Gellatley, 1999).

To end the suffering of wild animals like those mentioned above, Viva! is urging the public to boycott products made from exotic leather and brands that sell the skins of these beautiful creatures.

The by-product myth

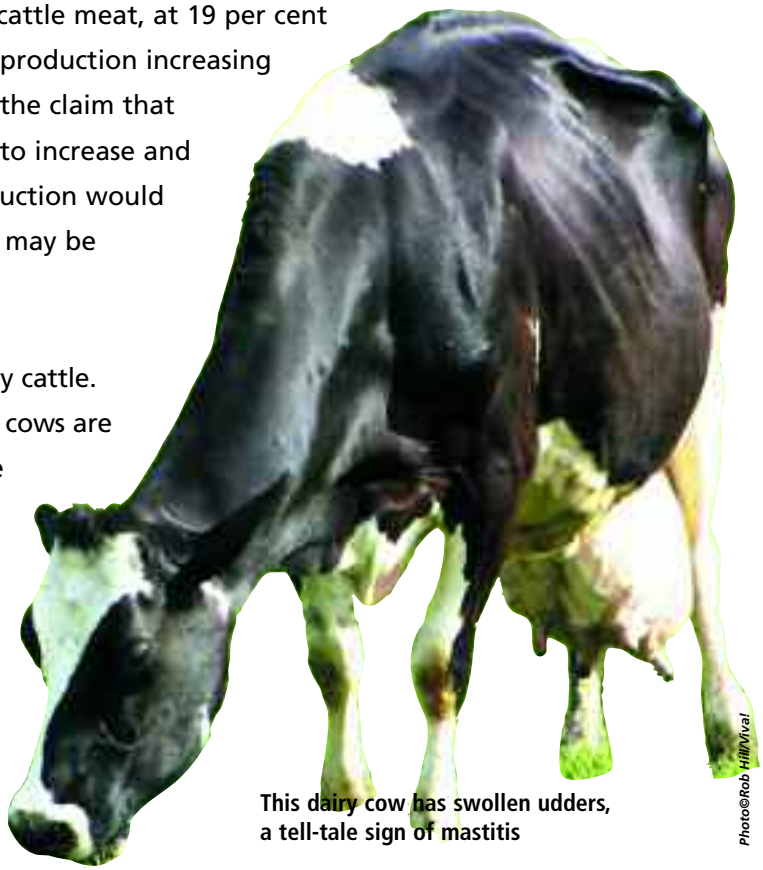
Most leather produced in the UK comes from cattle. Over two and a half million cattle were slaughtered in the UK in 2007 (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2008). The same year, sales of leather from UK manufacturers amounted to over £200 million (National Statistics, 2007). On top of this, £4 billion worth of leather goods (not including furniture) were imported to the UK in 2007 (HM Revenues and Customs, 2008).

These figures show that the leather industry is substantial, bringing in big money for its beneficiaries. For this reason, and the fact that leather accounts for between 7-10 per cent of the animal's total financial worth (Garnett, 2007, British Leather Centre, 2008), it should be looked at as an industry in its own right, not merely a by-product of the meat and dairy industries.

Tara Garnett of the Food Climate Research Network states: "The last 20 years have in fact seen rapid growth in leather production. Global production of raw cattle hides grew 24 per cent between 1984-2004 – a faster growth than the production of cattle meat, at 19 per cent over the same period" (Garnett, 2007). With leather production increasing faster than meat production, this brings to question the claim that leather is a by-product. If leather demand continues to increase and meat production decreases it is unlikely leather production would stop. Therefore, anyone buying and wearing leather may be encouraging the slaughter of more animals.

Leather is made using the hides of both beef and dairy cattle. Beef cows are bred simply to eat, grow and die. Dairy cows are among the most exploited animals on the planet. Like all mammals, cows only produce milk when they have offspring, so to increase productivity a dairy cow's life is a constant cycle of pregnancy and lactation.

This puts the cows under huge physical strain as well as immense mental distress. After being allowed to suckle her colostrum – the first milk produced by the mother – within days of being born their



This dairy cow has swollen udders, a tell-tale sign of mastitis

Photo©Rob Hill/Viva!


Two calves denied maternal contact by the industry

Photo©Damian Bird

calves are taken away to maximise the amount of milk available to humans. Female calves may follow the same fate as their mothers but many male calves, unable to produce milk and too scrawny for beef, are deemed useless to the farming industry and are killed at a few days old. Others are killed for veal or lower grade beef. A 'productive' dairy cow will supply 12,000 litres of milk a year – an unnatural amount 10 times more than her calf could require. Such an excessive burden leads to protruding pelvic and rib bones, constant hunger and massively distended udders. The energy dairy cows expend is so great, most only manage three lactations before being killed (Vernelli, 2005).

The majority of cattle are stunned with the captive bolt pistol. Penetrative captive bolt stunners drive a bolt into the skull and cause unconsciousness both through physical brain damage and the concussive blow to the skull. The bolt on a non-penetrative stunner is 'mushroom-headed' and impacts on the brain without entering the skull. Unconsciousness is caused by the concussive blow (Vernelli, 2005).

If an animal is not accurately stunned or the correct cartridge strength is not used, the stun will not be effective. In an attempt to improve accuracy, legislation requires that cattle are either confined in a stunning pen or have their heads 'securely fastened'. However, head restraint systems can cause great distress. The Meat Hygiene Service says that 17 per cent of abattoirs either do not use a restraint or use an "inefficient" restraint which can result in the stun being delivered ineffectively (Meat Hygiene Service, 2000).

Abattoir vet Gabriele Meurer said: "Not many animals stand still. They are all upset, some very frightened and some move violently. The animals are never given time to calm down. Sometimes the slaughterman misses, wounding the animal terribly instead of stunning it. It may happen that the second shot cannot be done immediately and the animal is suffering for quite some time." (Smith, 2000)

In addition to the stress of being in an unfamiliar environment, the electric goad can legally be used on the hindquarters of cattle if they are refusing to move forwards (Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs, 2008). This cruel device is intentionally designed to cause pain.

Once the animal has been stunned (or not as the case may be), the legs are shackled and the animal is lifted into the air; once upside down, the throat is cut and the cow is left to bleed. If any blood remains in the veins, it will discolour the meat and also reduce the quality of the hide.

This is how cattle are slaughtered in the UK, those slaughtered abroad may suffer an even less humane death

(for a full investigation by Viva! into the slaughter of farmed animals in the UK, see http://www.viva.org.uk/campaigns/slaughter/index.htm). Developing countries are heavily involved with the leather industry; this includes raising and slaughtering cattle. However, developing countries do not have the same animal welfare standards as Britain ineffectual as they are; in fact some countries such as China and India barely enforce the very few welfare standards in place.

Most tanneries are situated abroad where environmental regulations are lax and wages are low

From hide to leather

After slaughter, the animal is left to bleed, then a cut is made through the belly from the throat of the animal to the tail, right angle cuts are made perpendicular to this line and across to the inside of each of the legs. A flaying machine is used to strip all of the skin from the animal in one movement. Next, the hide is cured to avoid putrefaction or bacterial damage which could reduce the quality of the finished leather. Curing can be achieved by soaking the hides in a saturated brine solution for up to 16 hours. Once the hides have been penetrated by the salt they are preserved and can be transported to the tannery.

Upon arrival at the tannery (which can be on the other side of the world), the curing process must be reversed. Batches of hides are soaked inside drums of cold water solutions which include salt, detergent and biocide; this process can last from several hours to several days depending on the method used. The water inside the drum is changed once it becomes contaminated and clean solution is added, this is repeated until the water runs clean.

The next process, known as liming, removes the hairs and unwanted layers of skin from the hide. Sodium sulphide or sodium hydrosulphide is added to the soaked skins and begins to deteriorate the hairs, strong alkalis such as lime and caustic soda are then added to dissolve the hair root and epidermis (the outer layer of skin). The skins must then be washed to remove any unwanted chemicals.

The hides are then put through a fleshing machine which removes any fat and tissues from the skin; this allows maximum penetration during the tanning stage. Ammonium chloride is then added to the skin to neutralise the pH.

Bacterial enzymes are added to the hides to deteriorate muscle fibres; this relaxes and softens the hides. The hides are then put through a scudding machine which drags a dull blade over the surface of the skin to remove any remaining hair rot, skin pigmentation and surface fats.

The hide must be then be tanned to create a material which will not putrefy. There are various types of tans available; the preferred tanning method will depend upon the eventual use of the leather (Lanning, 1996).

Vegetable tanning is often touted as environmentally friendly because plant-sources are used in the process. The idea that plant sources are natural and therefore the leather must be green is being exploited by companies to cash in on the eco-consumer. However, a report from the International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists Societies found that vegetable tanning should not be considered more environmentally friendly due to the high pollution load in conventional systems. The report also found that vegetable tanned leather is less easily biodegraded than chrome leather due to the differences in the tanning stages (International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists Societies, 2004).

Chrome tanning is the most commonly used method for tanning hides; more than 90 per cent of global leather is chrome-tanned (Sunday et al, 2002). Chrome tanning takes place within large drums. Batches of hides are placed in the drums of chromium sulphate solution, and the process can take up to 24 hours which is quicker than vegetable tanning (International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, 2008). Once the chromium sulphate solution has penetrated the skin, an alkaline chemical such as sodium carbonate or bicarbonate is added to the drum to ensure the tan is permanent (HM Revenues and Customs, 2003).

The hide may then be split, but this will depend upon the final use of the leather. After tanning the leather is put through a shaving machine which levels out the thickness of the skin. The blades of the shaving machine can sometimes leave iron deposits on the skin and so they must be soaked in oxalic acid overnight to dispose of any iron. The final stages of leather production will depend upon the requirements of the finished product. Dyes are then added to large drums with the leather, synthetic dyes are most commonly used in today's leather production as there are many different colours available. Fat liquors are also added to the drums to replace the natural oils lost during the tanning process; this allows the leather to remain flexible. Fat liquors may contain fish oils or animal fats. Once the dyes and fat liquors have been given enough time to penetrate the leather, formic acid is added to the solution to ensure permanent penetration. The hide is then removed from the drums and left to dry, it is now leather and can be used to create products.

The chemicals used in leather production include biocide, sodium sulphate or sodium hydrosulphate, lime and caustic soda, ammonium chloride, bacterial enzymes, chromium sulphate solution, sodium carbonate or bicarbonate, trivalent chromium and oxalic acid – however these may vary at different tanneries. Some of these chemicals can be very dangerous if not handled properly. Due to the high levels of toxicity, some of these chemicals can cause skin burns, blindness and scarring. Some of the chemicals are known carcinogens and can be fatal if swallowed or inhaled.

Leather Workers

Many studies have been done to investigate the effect of the chemicals on those employed in leather production. Tannery workers have an increased risk of suffering from skin and melanoma, kidney, bladder, testicular, lung and pancreatic cancers (Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 2007).

European and UK regulations regarding leather production, effluent, and environmental damage are much

stricter than those implemented in developing countries. This is one of the reasons why the tanning industry is relocating to countries such as China and India where environmental regulations are much less strict. Zhang Jingjing is a lawyer at the Centre for Legal Assistance to Pollution Victims, she said that in China, the Guo He River: "Has become polluted with waste from a nearby leather tanning factory. A few years ago, villagers could swim in the river. Now they get blisters on their hands and feet from touching the water. … When you stand close to the river you can smell rotting flesh because the leather factory dumps its sewage, made up from animal skin and meat, untreated into the river." (*New Scientist*, 2007)

The film *Hell for Leather* (2008) found that leather tanneries in Bangladesh (India) were pouring 50 tonnes of tannery effluent and waste water untreated into the Buriganga River every day. The film also shows footage of the tannery workers wearing no protective clothing, wading through vats of solutions containing toxic chemicals. The film claims that 90 per cent of the tannery workers in the film are estimated to be dead by the time they are 50 years old due to the abuse of toxic chemicals (*Hell for Leather*, 2008).

Another reason that the tanning industry is based outside the developed world is the low labour costs. Developing countries have less (if any) laws governing employment. This means tannery owners are able to put their workers in situations which may be hazardous to their health knowing it is unlikely they will be held accountable for any problems which may arise as a result. Some countries allow child labour, some of the leather workers in Colombia are children as young as five. Working with toxic chemicals these children are exposed to health hazards including burns, intoxification, fumigation, injuries, fractures, amputations and vision impairment (Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2008).

It's not just tannery workers who are suffering skin problems because of the leather industry, there have been at least 1,000 complaints from within the UK (Bracchi, 2008). The BBC's Watchdog consumer programme discovered that hundreds of people in the UK were suffering itchy skin, blistering and burns after they came into contact with leather sofas from a company called Linkwise (BBC Consumer, 2008). After investigation it came to light that a fungicide called dimethyl fumarate was the problem. The fungicide was placed inside the sofas to prevent mould during transportation from China. Upon contact with skin, the fungicide caused swelling, burns, blisters and irritation to people across the UK, one victim was only six months old (Bracchi, 2008).

Leather and the Environment

Leather production is an inefficient use of water; a cow can drink up to 127 litres of water a day (Wardle, 2007). Agriculture uses 70 per cent of the world's fresh water (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2008). Leather production uses large volumes of it because water is used in raising and slaughtering the animal, and then during the tanning process. The world's water is in short supply. Water scarcity affects four out of 10 people on the planet (World Health Organisation, 2008); developing countries suffer the most. Leather tanning is mostly outsourced to developing countries which means that the limited water they have access to is being used industrially instead, it also puts people at risk of contaminated water due to the unsafe disposal of effluent.

When considering the environmental impact of meat, industry scientists do not separate cattle rearing into meat and leather greenhouse gases, they merely look at the cow as part of the meat industry. However, as

previously discussed, leather is an industry in its own right not simply a by-product of the meat and dairy trades. Therefore, when considering the water used to create leather, the entire lifecycle of the cow shall be considered. On average, one cow hide will provide 18 pairs of leather shoes (North American International Livestock Exposition, 2008), and each pair of shoes is accountable for the use of over 1.4 million litres of water. This figure includes the water used to rear and slaughter the cow, and to process the hide into leather. Put simply, each time you purchase a new pair of leather shoes you are responsible for using as much water as having a bath every day for over 40 years! In a world where we are told the benefits of showering over bathing for water conservation, should we not have been informed about this grossly inefficient use of water?

Around 80 per cent of the world's raw hides are produced in developed countries, however it is the developing countries where the hides are processed and tanned to create leather (Garnett, 2007). Leather production involves transporting various elements across the world. Firstly, the UK imports animal feed from across the globe to feed livestock. Once the animals have been slaughtered, the hides and skins are transported from the UK to countries such as India and China where the tanning industry is based. Once tanned the leather is transported as a final product back to developed countries including the UK for sale in shops. One pair of leather shoes could require numerous trips around the globe until they are finally ready to sell. No matter how cheap you can buy real leather these days; it is the cost to the planet we should be worried about.

Life without Leather

Some people have the misguided view that leather is the only choice for shoes and if you are crazy enough to opt for vegetarian alternatives your feet will sweat, or the shoes won't fit properly, this is simply not true! Advances in science mean that non-leather shoes now last a long time, stretch to your feet (like leather) and let your feet breathe. Leather-free shoes aren't ugly or unfashionable either, in fact, with companies like Beyond Skin they're quite the opposite: beautifully made and deliciously fashionable vegan shoes are the answer for any cruelty-free fashionista!

Beyond Skin offers beautifully designed, high fashion shoes for cruelty-free fashionistas

Photo©Beyond Skin

Synthetics shoes are often seen as bad for the environment because they may involve plastics. Although it is true that plastics are harmful to the environment due to the toxic chemicals used in their manufacture and the fact that they do not biodegrade, these problems are also true of leather and at least synthetics are cruelty free. One way to offset your green guilt for buying plastic shoes is to buy less or buy eco shoes (see below)! The UK throws away two million pairs of shoes a week (The Recycling Consortium, 2008) – that's a lot of waste! It is important to see your clothes as an investment, buying good quality clothes means they will last longer so try to buy leather-free shoes that you can wear with different outfits for years to come.

Thanks to the wonders of technology and design there are now high-quality, practical, animal-free materials

Brighton-based shop, Vegetarian Shoes offers a wide variety of cruelty-free shoes

available for everyone. Vegetan Uppers, for example, (used by companies such as Vegetarian Shoes) are great for every day wear, being breathable, water-resistant, 70-80 per cent biodegradable and easy to clean. Or those who need something tougher can get Vegetan Micro – hard-wearing, water-resistant, breathable, exceptionally like high-quality leather in performance and has a distinctive grain. Also used by Vegetarian Shoes is Stretch Fake Suede, which is elasticated, breathable and soft to the touch!

There are lots of eco-shoes available too though! Hemp shoes are great for the environment because they are made from a fast growing plant which can be used to create strong, durable and breathable shoes which are especially good in hot weather. Sativa makes hemp shoes and bags.

Another way to save the environment while looking irresistibly fashionable is getting your hands on some sandals made from recycled car tyres from Ethical Wares. Fashion is using more and more recycled products each season, so keep your eyes peeled for more vegan-friendly recycled shoes in the future!

Boycott Leather

One justification people often use for wearing leather is that it is natural; this report shows why this theory is wrong. Another excuse often given is that leather shoes date back to the cavemen era. This may be so, but it hardly excuses wearing leather now does it? We are not cavemen, we live in a 'civilised' society in the middle of an environmental crisis and we should act accordingly. Leather is not a by-product, it generates profit for the meat industry and is therefore an integral cog in the killing machine, and if you believe animal slaughter to be wrong then surely exploiting their carcasses is equally offensive?

Being vegetarian or vegan saves lives, but so does going leather-free! Vegans and many vegetarians refuse to buy or wear leather because of the animal suffering and killing involved. The leather industry is big money, and by boycotting leather products they are using their consumer power to tell companies that animal abuse is unacceptable.

It is not only the animals who suffer for leather, the trade workers are more likely to suffer illnesses, those who live near tanneries in developing countries find their fresh water supply infected with effluent, and the environmental damage caused by leather is appalling, when you take these facts into consideration it is hard to justify choosing leather over more eco-friendly materials.

What you can do:

- Don't buy or wear leather
- Don't buy leather upholstery for your home or car, always choose the cruelty-free option
- Educate your friends and family about leather and ask them not to buy it in future
- Order a free pack of Viva!'s leather leaflets for door to door delivery and raise awareness in your area
- Write to businesses and ask them to do a non-leather version of your favourite shoe
- Write to businesses and ask them to label their non-leather shoes as vegan
- Write to your local newspaper regarding the environmental damage caused by leather production
- Visit www.thebigcoverup.org.uk for more ideas of how you can get involved

Animal-free Stockists

Alternative Stores
Brunswick Industrial Estate, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear NE13 7BA
Tel: 0191 236 8519
W: www.alternativestores.com
E: cservices@alternativestores.com
Alternative Stores offers a wide range of vegan, ethical products and has shoes for all the family including ballet and tap shoes for all ages. A great variety of shoes suitable for school, work, sports, casual and even wellingtons for rainy days.

Bourgeois Boheme
Hydrex House, Garden Road, Richmond, TW9 4NR
T: 020 88 788 388
W: http://www.bboheme.com
E: info@]bboheme.com
An ethical fashion label who believe style and ethics are not mutually exclusive. Offers a variety of products including shoes, boots, bags, belts, purses and wallets.

Beyond Skin (mail order only)
34 Westbourne Gardens, Hove, East Sussex BN3 5PP
Tel: 0845 373 3648
W: www.beyondskin.co.uk
E: info@beyondskin.co.uk
An exclusive ethical footwear label producing beautiful, classic, hand-made shoes that combine style and fashion with a cruelty-free lifestyle. Sell a variety of fashionable and stylish, high-quality ladies shoes, stilettos and boots.

Ethical Wares (mail order and selected stockists)
Caegwyn, Temple Bar, Felinfach, Ceredigion SA48 7SA
Wales
Tel: 01570 471155
W: www.ethicalwares.com
E: vegans@ethicalwares.com
A great range of footwear, clothes and accessories suitable for the more mature vegans, vegetarians and all those who care about the environment. Ranges include walking shoes, dancing shoes, clogs, trainers and many more.

Ethletic
The FairDeal Trading Partnership, 83a Mill Hill Road, London W3 8JF
Tel: 0845 330 7599
W: www.ethletic.com
E: info@fairdealtrading.com
Log onto the website for a variety of ethical sneakers which look great and tick all the boxes for fashionable, affordable, fair trade, vegan and organic.

Freerangers (mail order only)
87 Derwent Street, Chopwell, Tyne & Wear NE17 7HZ
Tel: 01207 565 957
W: www.freerangers.co.uk
E: info@freerangers.co.uk
Small mail order catalogue with comfortable shoes and sandals – all cruelty-free made with a breathable, durable synthetic material called Lorica.

No Bull Footwear (mail order only)
15 Chichester Drive East, Saltdean, Brighton BN2 8LD
Tel/Fax: 01273 302979
W: www.veganstore.co.uk
Sells a variety of dress and casual shoes, hiking boots, jackets, belts and wallets among Veganstore's usual array of animal-free treats.

Stella McCartney
W: www.stellamccartney.com/
Leather-free shoes from a high fashion catwalk name.
Veganline (mail order only)
2 Avenue Gds, London SW14 8BP
Tel: 0208 286 9947
W: www.veganline.com
Call or log on to the website for a catalogue of animal-free shoes, trainers, hiking boots clothes and belts.

Vegetarian Shoes
12 Gardner Street, Brighton BN1 1UP
Tel: 01273 691913
W: www.vegetarian-shoes.co.uk
E: information@vegetarian-shoes.co.uk
Send name and address for free mail order colour brochure; or buy online or visit their popular shop in Brighton (open 10am-6pm Mon-Sat). Their wide, high-quality and excellent range includes men's and ladies' shoes and boots, leisure shoes, walking boots, safety boots, jackets, belts etc...

Viva! & VVF (mail order only)
8 York Court, Wilder Street, Bristol BS2 8QH
Tel: 0117 944 1000 / 0117 970 5190
W: www.viva.org.uk/shop
E: info@viva.org.uk
W: www.vegetarian.org.uk/shop
E: info@vegetarian.org.uk
Viva!, the vegetarian and vegan campaigning group, sell a wide range of merchandise in their Gifts for Life catalogue, including leather-free belts. The VVF has a Vegetarian Shop catalogue. Contact them for a free copy or shop online.

The following companies sell all-synthetic shoes but do not stock vegan products exclusively:

Brantano
www.brantano.co.uk
This shoe superstore has shoes for all occasions. You'll be able to find shoes to please all the family and at affordable prices.

Dorothy Perkins
www.dorothyperkins.com
Dorothy Perkins offer a small selection of reasonably-priced fashionable non-leather women's shoes each season, visit your local store to view the current range.

Green Shoes
69 High Street, Totnes, S. Devon TQ9 5PB
Tel: 01803 864997
W: www.greenshoes.co.uk
E: info@greenshoes.co.uk
Handmade non-leather footwear to order for adults and children. Send SAE for catalogue.

Kate's Skates
www.kateskates.co.uk
This online site offers a great selection of skater shoes, all you have to do is type "vegan" into the search engine and it will compile a list of shoes suitable for vegans! Brands sold include Vans, Odessa, Emerica, Macbeth and Circa.

Lyme Leisure
South Street, Axminster, Devon EX13 5AD
Tel: 01297 631133
E: axevegans@yahoo.co.uk
Vegan shoe repairs and shoes. Ranges of ladies, gents and children's footwear and boots, and camping equipment – other vegan products made to order.

New Look

W: www.newlook.co.uk

This high-street store stocks an impressive variety of affordable non-leather women's shoes. If you're looking for the perfect shoes to match a particular dress, bag or hair grip…you'll find it here! Average price around £20 for a pair of evening shoes.

Next

www.next.co.uk

Next stocks a wide selection of affordable, good quality non-leather shoes for all size feet. From tiny feet, to teens, to yummy mummies (and daddies), Next can dress your family's feet.

Sativa

Unit 6, Westmoreland House, Cumberland Park, 80 Scrubs Lane, London, NW10 6RE

Tel: 0845 43 007 01

W: www.sativabags.com

E: info@sativabags.com

Eco-friendly range of affordable designed bags and comfortable shoes.

Schuh

www.schuhstore.co.uk

With a large variety of fashion teen brands sold in store you're bound to find some leather-free shoes to fit your requirements.

Shoezone

www.shoezone.net

This chain stocks shoes for all the family; a great range of affordable synthetic shoes, wellies, boots and many more. Average cost is under £30 for a pair of ladies fashion boots.

Topman

www.topman.co.uk

Stocks a variety of fashionable men's synthetic shoes including smart, casual, sports and summer shoes. Average price is £30 a pair.

Woolworths

www.woolworths.co.uk

Shoe-shopping for little veggies has never been easier with a wide range of vegan shoes for school including trainers, wellies and smart shoes right on your high street. Pop down to your local store to pick up a cruelty-free pair of children shoes for under £10.

References

Australian Government (2008) Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Quotas in 2008 [on-line] http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/wild-harvest/kangaroo/quota/2008.html [Accessed July 2008]

BBC Consumer (2008) Itchy Sofas [on-line] http://www.bbc.co.uk/consumer/tv_and_radio/watchdog/reports/consumer_goods/consumer_20080218.shtml [Accessed August 2008]

BLC Leather Technology Centre [on-line] http://www.blcleathertech.com/default.asp?id=107 [Accessed 2005]

Bracchi, P. (2008) This baby was burned red raw by a sofa giving off toxic fumes. As our investigation reveals, there are hundreds of other victims. Published by the Daily Mail on 21 June 2008 [on-line] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1028097/This-baby-burned-red-raw-sofa-giving-toxic-fumes-As-investigation-reveals-hundreds-victims.html [Accessed August 2008]

Bureau of International Labor Affairs. The US Department of Labor. Colombia. [on-line] http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/media/reports/iclp/sweat/colombia.htm [Accessed August 2008]

Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs. Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock. Cattle. [on-line] http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/farmed/cattle/booklets/cattcode.pdf [Accessed September 2008]

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs First Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources [on-line] http://lprdad.fao.org/cgi-bin/getblob.cgi?sid=80c3b954195e9a10a957cde4cda7955b,50005626 [Accessed July 2008]

Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (2008) United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics 2007 [on-line] https://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/datasets/slaughm.xls [Accessed July 2008]

ECKERSLEY, R. (1989) Regreening Australia, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. Paper 3

Food and Agriculture Organization The salt of the earth: hazardous for food production [on-line] http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/newsroom/focus/focus1.htm [Accessed August 2008]

Gabriele Meurer Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (pers. comm..) quoted in SMITH, R. (2000) Sentenced to Death. A Viva! report on the slaughter of farmed animals in the UK. [on-line] http://www.viva.org.uk/campaigns/slaughter/sentencedtodeathreport.htm [Accessed August 2008]

Garnett, T. (2007) Meat and Dairy Consumption and Production. Food Climate Research Network [on-line] http://www.fcrn.org.uk/frcnResearch/publications/PDFs/TG%20FCRN%20livestock%20final%206%20Nov%20.pdf [Accessed June 2008]

GELLATLEY, J. (1999) Nowhere To Hide. A Viva! report on ostrich farming. [on-line] http://www.viva.org.uk/campaigns/exoticmeat/ostrichreport.htm [Accessed July 2008]

GELLATLEY, J. (2006) Under Fire. A Viva! Report on the Killing of Kangaroos for Meat and Skin. [on-line] http://www.savethekangaroo.com/resources/KangarooReport.shtml [Accessed July 2008]

Godrej (2006) The No-Nonsense Guide to Climate Change. Verso. Page 65.

Hell for Leather (2008) Film. The Ecologist. [on-line] http://www.theecologist.org/pages/ecologist_media.asp?podcast_id=87 [Accessed August 2008]

HM Revenues and Customs (March 2003) 3.26 Code 026: Leather tanning. Notice AGL2 Industrial and Agricultural Processes Relief [on-line] http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pageVAT_ShowContent&id=HMCE_CL_000507&propertyType=document [Accessed July 2008]

HM Revenues and Custom (2008) Imports by Industry Annual [on-line] http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=annualTrade [Accessed June 2008]

Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (2007) Occupational Cancers in Leather Tanning Industries: A Short Review. [on-line] http://medind.nic.in/iay/t07/i1/iayt07i1p3.pdf [Accessed August 2008]

International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement [on-line] Tanneries. http://www.inece.org/mmcourse/chapt5.pdf [Accessed 22 July 2008]

International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists Societies (2004) IUE Assessment for Chromium Containing Waste from the Leather Industry 2004 Updated document. [on-line] http://www.iultcs.org/pdf/IUE.4-logo.pdf [Accessed July 2008]

Lanning, D. (1996) The Manufacture of Leather [on-line] http://www.hewit.com/sd1-leat.htm [Accessed June 2008]

Meat Hygiene Service (2000) Animal Welfare Review.

Meat South West (2007) The Great Sheep industry and its Juicy Fifth Industry [on-line] http://www.realsheepskin.org.uk/downloads/Sheep_Industry_Report_M.pdf [Accessed July 2008]

National Statistics (2007) Product Sales and Trade. Tanning & Dressing of Leather [on-line] http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_commerce/PRA-20070/PRA19100_20070.pdf [Accessed July 2008]

North American International Livestock Exposition. Beef Information. [on-line] http://www.livestockexpo.org/docs/shoolTours/Beef.pdf [Accessed August 2008]

RAWSTORNE, T (2007) Pythons skinned and left to die. The shocking reality behind fashion's new obsession. The Daily Mail, 20 September 2007 [on-line] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-482849/Pythons-skinned-left-die-The-shocking-reality-fashions-new-obsession.html [Accessed July 2008]

Scientific Veterinary Committee Animal Welfare Section (1996) Report of the Slaughter and Killing of Animals. Directorate-General for Agriculture; European Commission.

Sundar J. & Raghava Rao J. & Muralidharan C. (2002) Cleaning chrome tanning – emerging options. Journal of Cleaner Production, Volume 10, Issue 1. Published February 2002. Pages 69-74.

The Recycling Consortium. [on-line] http://www.recyclingconsortium.org.uk/recycling/ [Accessed August 2008]

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (1994) State of the World: Fisheries and Aquaculture

VERNELLI, T. (2005) The Dark Side of Dairy – A report on the UK Dairy Industry. [on-line] http://www.milkmyths.org.uk/report/index.php [Accessed August 2008]

Wardle, T. (2007) Diet of Disaster, Viva! [on-line] http://www.viva.org.uk/campaigns/hot/dietofdisaster/index.php [Accessed June 2008]

World Health Organisation (4 June 2008) 10 Facts About Water Scarcity. [on-line] http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/water/en/index.html [Accessed August 2008]

Zhang Jingjing quoted in New Scientist Vol 193 No 2586 (13 January 2007) Win or lose, it's fighting back that counts. Page 46.