



About Canada's Fur Trade Facts and Figures



The fur trade is part of Canada's resource-based economy and one of Canada's oldest and most historically significant industries. Four hundred years following its start, the commercial fur trade continues to use a plentiful sustainable Canadian resource in a responsible manner and is an important contributor to Canada's economy and ecology.

Economics

Canada's fur trade contributes more than \$800 million annually to the Canadian economy.¹

"It is recognized that on the same area of land over a 100-year time period, the value of fur production is higher than forestry value." - Fur Institute of Canada

Income Values

Canadian trappers and fur farm owners earned more than \$135 million in pelt sales in 2007.²

Government Revenues

Provincial and territorial governments receive nearly \$1.6 million in annual royalty and licence revenues paid by fur trappers. Of this, 42% goes directly to government managed wildlife and habitat conservation programs.

Canadian Market Values

Estimated domestic annual retail fur sales: \$300 million.³

International Trade Value

In 2006, fur exports contributed \$226 million to Canada's balance of trade.⁴

Exports of pelts and fur apparel exceeded \$430 million in 2008,⁵ World fur trade activity totalled \$15 billion in 2007.⁶

Canada's most important fur markets are China, Russia and the Ukraine, Europe (Italy, Germany, UK, Greece, France, Spain) Turkey and Korea.

Employment

The Canadian fur trade directly employs 70,000 Canadians.⁷ Roughly 250 families, or 750 individuals and family members per federal riding are directly reliant on the fur trade for their income.

Full and part-time employment in various fur trade sectors is additional to spin-off employment in the supply and services sector, including feed and equipment suppliers, veterinary and research services, by-product production, marketers, business services, transport, crafts and design sectors.

Canada's fur industry provides high skilled jobs and is a significant source of employment income for people in rural and remote areas.

Active trappers: 60,000 (including 25,000 Aboriginal peoples)⁸

Number of licensed fur farms: 292⁹

Fur-dependent businesses: 815¹⁰

Regional Significance

The highest numbers of fur farms are located in Nova Scotia, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The highest level of fur trapping occurs in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta.

More than 85% of fur garment manufacturing is located in Montreal.

Canada is home to two internationally attended, producer-owned auction houses, both located in Ontario.

Fast Facts

Wild Fur

Trapping occurs in virtually every country in the world; the trapping of furbearing animals occurs in every region and municipality in Canada.

Fur products are exported to Europe, Russia, Asia and the USA.

More than 25 Canadian wild fur species are listed for use in the trade; the most common are muskrat (25%), beaver (20%), marten (16%), coyote (9%) ermine (6%) and raccoon (5%).¹¹

Beaver garments are the single most important Canadian fur garment exported.¹²

Many Canadian families rely on beaver, muskrat and other wild fur bearing animals for food as well as income.

In addition to operating their registered private or public trap lines, professional trappers provide a valuable wildlife control service to private landowners and local municipalities across Canada.

Fast Facts

Fur Farming

About two-thirds of furs produced in Canada (and as much as 85 percent worldwide) come from fur farms.¹³

In Canada, fur farms produce approximately 1.7 million mink pelts annually.¹⁴

In addition to fur, farms provide valuable oil as leather treatments and fertilizer by-products such as bone and blood meal.

Regulation

The farming and trapping of fur animals are provincially licensed and regulated. Farming and trapping are also consistent with international agreements such as CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the IUCN (World Conservation Union).

Provincial and territorial wildlife biologists establish regional biodiversity plans to ensure healthy furbearer populations.

“Trappers receive training, and trapping is carefully regulated through registered trapping areas, harvest quotas, hunting seasons, and other measures to prevent over-harvesting and to ensure that the best available methods are used to promote responsible conservation.” - Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

An international agreement signed by Canada, Russia and the European Union in 1997 establishes scientific protocols for humane trapping standards. The United States signed a separate, but similar, agreement with the EU. Following ten years of testing, implementation of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) began in Canada in the fall of 2007. The Agreement requires that wild furs be taken in accordance with scientifically verified and internationally accepted humane systems.

Research

Since 1984, more than \$20 million has been invested in the internationally recognized Canadian trap research and development program, coordinated by the **Fur Institute of Canada** and contracted to the Alberta Research Council at the Institute's facility in Vegreville and in conjunction with veterinarians and professional trappers.¹⁵

Trappers participate in ecological field studies, wildlife distribution and population studies, wildlife relocation projects, forestry management planning, wildlife vaccination programs, trap testing, and disease monitoring.

The **Fur Institute of Canada** is the official trap-testing agency for the Government of Canada and all provincial/territorial governments.

“Fur-animal research results have in many instances been incorporated into law and/or trapping and farming practices.” - International Fur Trade Federation

Farmed fur associations have initiated or contributed to Canadian research and development in furbearer health, nutrition, behaviour, housing and management. The Nova Scotia Fur Institute (NSFI), in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) and Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Marketing (NSDAM), has been funding published fur research and demonstration initiatives since its inception in 1984. The Fur Research Chair position at the NSAC was created in 1994 and has a national mandate.

References

- ¹ International Fur Trade Federation
- ² STATISTICS CANADA, Agriculture Division, 2008 Census of Wildlife Pelt Production and “Fur Farm Report”
- ³ Fur Council of Canada, 2006
- ⁴ STATISTICS CANADA, International Trade Division, 2006
- ⁵ Fur Council of Canada, 2008
- ⁶ International Fur Trade Federation 2008 State of the Industry Report
- ⁷ Fur Council of Canada, 2006
- ⁸ ibid
- ⁹ STATISTICS CANADA, “Fur Farm Report”, 2008
- ¹⁰ Fur Council of Canada, 2006
- ¹¹ STATISTICS CANADA, 2007 Wildlife Pelt Production
- ¹² ibid
- ¹³ International Fur Trade Federation and STATISTICS CANADA, 2008
- ¹⁴ Statistics Canada, “Fur Farm Report”, 2008
- ¹⁵ Fur Institute of Canada, 2007

For more information on Canada’s Fur Trade visit: www.fur.ca