

China's Fur Trade

and its Position in the Global Fur Industry

Executive Summary Update 2024/2025

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In recent years, public health, environmental, and animal welfare awareness around fur farming and trade has heightened. Many countries, especially in Europe, have banned fur farming, and numerous non-profit organisations are urging consumers not to support fur production (Fur Free Alliance, 2025a). Fur used in fashion often conceals its negative impact, and reducing demand for fur fashion – and eventually phasing out fur production worldwide altogether – could help protect and preserve wildlife and the environment.

While tens of millions of wild animals are still killed annually for fur, production has fallen sharply over the past decade, particularly in Europe and North America, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (FIFUR, 2025; Fur Free Alliance, 2024). Since fur farming is banned in most European countries, China now dominates fur farming, processing, consumption, and global trade almost exclusively. However, China's fur industry has experienced a dramatic contraction, with total mink, fox, and raccoon dog pelt production falling from 87M pelts in 2014 to 8.53M in 2025 (CLIA, 2026). Although modest rebounds occurred in mink and fox production in 2024, the long-term trajectory remains downward, with profits declining and the industry accounting for only around 0.01% of China's GDP (China Briefing, 2025; CLIA, 2025). While the industry has not disappeared, all structural indicators point firmly downward — by any meaningful economic measure, it is an industry in decline.

Still, fur production in China remains a major concern due to its vast scale and recent trend reversals in production trends for certain species. Although the industry has experienced a long-term overall decline, annual production figures remain in the millions, and recent years have seen renewed growth in the farming of some animals. After years of decline, mink

pelt production increased by 8.76% in 2024, reaching 4.22M pelts, and rose by a further 15.40% in 2025 to 4.87M pelts (CLIA, 2026). Fox pelt production also rebounded sharply in 2024, growing by nearly 34% in a single year to approximately 4.05M pelts, before declining again in 2025. Shandong province was the leading producer of both mink and fox pelts. Raccoon dog pelt production has shown the most consistent recent decline; however, production volumes remain substantial, decreasing from 2.49M pelts in 2024 to 1.50M in 2025, with Hebei province remaining the main production centre.

Legislative momentum is clearly moving against fur. More than 20 European countries, multiple U.S. states and cities, and leading fashion capitals have enacted bans or restrictions on fur farming or fur sales (Eurogroup for Animals, 2025). It is worth noting that Poland, which was formerly the second-largest fur producer worldwide after China, as well as Europe's largest fur producer, banned fur farming in December 2025 (Fur Free Alliance, 2025b). Its fur farming ban will eliminate the suffering of an estimated three million animals annually. This outcome shows that fur farming is no longer economically viable and persists partly due to government subsidies, active lobbying, and greenwashing.

In China, regulatory contradictions persist, in the “2024 National Catalogue of Livestock and Poultry Genetic Resources”, mink, foxes, and raccoon dogs are excluded from wildlife protections and are classified as “non-edible” special livestock (www.nahs.org.cn, 2025). This classification risks encouraging further breeding. Categorizing wild species like mink as “special livestock” risks legitimizing the fur trade and threatening biodiversity. This policy choice places China at odds with an accelerating global legislative trend toward phasing out fur farming.

Fur market supply and demand are also evolving towards more sustainable alternatives. Over 1,600 brands and retailers globally have committed to be part of the [Fur Free Retailer](#) programme, major fashion weeks and media groups have banned fur, and consumer surveys show strong and growing opposition to fur. At the same time, next-generation material innovations, including plant-based alternatives, are demonstrating viable, scalable pathways toward a fur free fashion system with less damage.

Building on ACTAsia’s past research from 2022 and 2024 to track trends in Chinese consumer purchasing behaviours and attitudes toward fur, the latest ACTAsia’s 2025 Consumer Demand Survey showed that, despite an overall decline in annual spending due to China’s economic slowdown, there is demand driven by younger millennials (ages 31–35) (ACTAsia, 2025). This age group was also the primary buyer of full fur coats. This is in contrast to the findings of the 2022 Consumer Demand Survey, which showed that participants aged 26 to 30 years had the most purchases of full fur coats across all age groups (ACTAsia, 2022). In contrast, consumers aged 41–60 show the strongest preference for fur accessories (hats, scarves, and keychains) and are the top buyers of fur home decor (carpets and blankets). The top three reasons for why consumers do not purchase fur are that fur 1) causes suffering to the animals, 2) damages the environment,

and 3) harms human health. Over 90% of respondents prefer shopping at fashion retailers that completely reject the sale of animal fur. Furthermore, there is overwhelming public support for legislative reform, with 87% of consumers agreeing that fur-bearing animals should be removed from the national livestock list to restrict their commercial exploitation.

This report further finds that fur farms present serious public health threats, particularly as reservoirs for zoonotic diseases such as SARS-CoV-2 (Jahid et al., 2024). These risks directly contradict the principles of the One Health approach and undermine global pandemic prevention efforts (Sophie, 2025). The 2025 WHO Pandemic Agreement mandates a “One Health” approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health to prevent future outbreaks (Sophie, 2025). Specifically, Articles 4 and 5 require member states to proactively address the drivers of infectious diseases at the human-animal interface to ensure global pandemic prevention and equity. At the same time, fur production comes with severe animal welfare violations, chemical pollution, and environmental impacts from farming, processing, and waste disposal. Alarming, the improper disposal and repurposing of fur animal carcasses pose catastrophic global health risks, including the potential for zoonotic disease spillover and the emergence of pandemic-capable viral strains. While the EU and UK impose prohibitions on using these remains. Illegal trade and government-sanctioned pilot programs in China continue to integrate high-risk carnivore proteins into the food and feed chains (Shandong Provincial Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Bureau, 2024) – a practice that contrasts with EU prohibition on such use (Official Journal of the European Union 2019).

10 Key Findings of the Report

1. Global fur farming is in structural decline

Worldwide fur production has fallen sharply over the past decade, signalling an industry in decline (Carpenter, 2025).

2. Fur farming is no longer economically viable

In the EU, fur farming now generates negative gross value added of EUR 9.2M (US\$10.6M) — meaning it actively reduces rather than contributes to economic output (Carpenter, 2025). In both Poland and China the fur industry contributes to only around **0.01% of national GDP**, undermining any economic justification for its continuation (Anima International, 2025; China Briefing, 2025; CLIA, 2025).

3. China has become the global centre of fur — but at shrinking scale

China dominates fur production, processing, and consumption, yet total pelt output dropped from 87M (2014) to 8.53M (2025) (CLIA, 2026).

4. Legislative momentum is accelerating globally

More than 20 European countries, multiple US states and cities, and leading fashion weeks (London, Copenhagen, New York, Berlin) have enacted fur bans, signalling a clear global policy direction (Schulz, 2025). Notably, Poland, formerly the world's second largest fur producer, has banned fur farming in 2025 (Fur Free Alliance, 2025b).

5. Divided public opinion on fur: Pro-ban in the west, misinformed in China

The majority of survey participants across Europe, the USA and other regions support banning fur farming and sales (FOUR PAWS and YouGov, 2024). In contrast, ACTAsia's 2025 Consumer Demand Survey, conducted with over 6000 participants across six major Chinese cities, reveals that consumers in China have persistent misconceptions about fur's environmental and animal impacts, along with widespread misidentification of fur products (ACTAsia, 2025).

6. Fur farms pose serious public health risks

Fur farming creates conditions conducive to zoonotic disease emergence and viral mutation, as demonstrated by repeated SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks, directly contradicting One Health and pandemic prevention goals (Zhao et al., 2024). The widespread abuse of antibiotics in fur farming can drive the proliferation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, posing health risks to humans who can develop drug resistance through contact with fur animal meat (Mai, 2024).

7. Health risks of animal by-products (ABPs)

ABPs pose significant public health risks when improperly handled or introduced into the animal feed supply chain, as this can facilitate the transmission of dangerous toxins and fatal diseases from infected animals to humans (Official Journal of the European Union, 2019).

8. Animal welfare violations are systemic

Scientific evidence shows that mink, foxes, and raccoon dogs suffer chronic stress, injury, and behavioural deprivation in fur farms, conditions that are not addressed by certification schemes—a critical finding, as this independent European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) assessment was requested by the European Commission to determine whether EU fur farming should be phased out in response to the 'Fur Free Europe' citizens' initiative (EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare et al., 2025).

9. Greenwashing and lobbying are sustaining a failing industry

Industry-backed certifications (e.g. Furmark®, WelFur) and sustainability claims systematically obscure documented welfare and environmental harms (Eurogroup for Animals and Respect for Animals, 2023).

10. Fur free fashion is viable

Rapid growth in fur free brands, retailer commitments, fashion events, and next-generation materials demonstrates that ethical, sustainable alternatives can fully replace animal fur without economic or creative loss (Material Innovation Initiative, 2024).



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