

Leather:

THE INFORMED CHOICE

Leather Knowledge Websites

www.leathernaturally.org/

www.nothing-to-hide.org.uk

www.leatheruk.org/

www.usleather.org/

Made from waste

People still believe animals are raised for leather –
this is simply not true!

Hide and skins are a by-product of the meat and
dairy industries and serve as the raw material for
leather making. If these hides and skins are not
used by the leather industry, they become waste
and end up in landfill.

For millennia, leather manufacturers have been
upcycling these hides and skins into a variety of
desirable and durable products. In today's
environmentally conscious society, leather ticks
many boxes, first and foremost the reduction
of waste!

Vegan leather is not leather

Leather is of natural origin and made from the hide or skin of an animal.

'Vegan leather' does not exist according to the above definition and only materials from non animal origin can be referred to as vegan.

'Vegan leather' is usually plastic based. These synthetic alternatives are made from highly polluting oil-based fossil fuels and often described as –

PU Leather • Leatherette • Synthetic Leather
Ultrasuede • Faux Leather • Pleather
Artificial Leather

Most plant based 'Vegan leathers' are predominantly plastic based – don't be fooled by words such as apple, cactus, pineapple etc, these only constitute a small proportion of the overall composition. All require a plastic-based structure for durability and wearability.

Leather products are likely to last longer and be replaced less often, meaning they will have a lower environmental impact across their lifetime.

And when at last you do throw that leather product away, perhaps decades after you bought it, it will biodegrade without shedding microplastics into the environment.

Better for the environment

From the global cattle herd of 1.5 billion head, it has been calculated that 340 million hides could become available for leather making every year.

However, not all these hides are used by the leather industry and further calculations suggest that 40% of them end up in landfill. So, let's stop using plastic based materials and make use of these excess hides instead!

Furthermore, studies show that turning one hide into leather produces considerably less CO₂ emissions than if it goes to landfill. So, the process of turning hides into leather actually reduces the amount of CO₂ emitted to the atmosphere, a significant environmental benefit.

Does not drive deforestation

Campaign groups continue to link meat and leather production to deforestation, particularly in the Amazon region. What is not understood is that leather production is not the driver of deforestation. If we stopped making leather, we would not see a reduction in the amount of animals killed nor a reduction in deforestation. So it is clear that action must be targeted on those parts of the supply chain that drive deforestation – the meat industry.

The global leather industry supports all actions aimed at reducing deforestation around the world. We also recognise the need for greater transparency and traceability in our supply chains in order to eliminate hides from animals that have been reared on illegally deforested areas - giving further reassurance to consumers that leather products are not contributing to deforestation.

Sustainable

Whilst the population continues to eat meat, the leather industry has a constant supply of raw material and, as such, leather can be deemed today as one of the most sustainable materials. We start with a 100% biobased raw material (the raw hide) and by the time this has been processed into leather, a biobased content of around 85% is retained.

Chemical products are used in leather manufacturing and are constantly being improved by reducing fossil based content and replacing with biobased alternatives. All leathers are biodegradable with some even being suitable for composting so the potential of achieving full circularity is close on the horizon.



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