

ANIMAL WELFARE & PREFERRED MATERIAL POLICY

BIRGER CHRISTENSEN
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PREFERRED MATERIAL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Materials sourcing plays a key role in the total impact of our garments, both on a social and environmental level.

At Birger Christensen Collective (BCC), we are committed to choosing more sustainable and circular material, to increasing our traceability and to onboarding and testing innovative materials. Following our Preferred material guidelines, we commit to increasing our traceability, preserving animal welfare & biodiversity, and mitigating social and environmental impacts for affected communities.

PURPOSE

This policy defines how we apply our Sustainability strategy to our sourcing & production practices. It is following the recommendations of Textile exchange, international regulations, and standards, the five animal freedoms set out by the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) and the latest scientific research on materials and environmental sustainability. It is regularly updated to integrate the latest industry requirements and science knowledge.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the employees of the Sourcing and Design department and is supplemental to the Preferred material guidelines. A detailed Preferred material guidelines provides in-depth information per material type and is shared with our Sourcing & Design teams and with our Suppliers, during onboarding, and every time the document is updated.

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Our Preferred Material Guidelines help our sourcing team request, select, and develop garments that offer the best of what the textile industry can offer.

Our first focus is always durability in both the timelessness of our designs, and the quality of materials and the craftsmanship behind our garments.

We aim to switch to no virgin materials by 2030, as the market is evolving and offering better and better options. Yet, we are aware that today, recycled materials do not always mean quality and low impact.

For each unique material our collection covers, the Preferred Materials Guidelines help our sourcing team identify one to three options that are the best in the market today.

It also helps our customers identify garments in our collection that offer better options in the textile industry.

Our key sourcing principles are the following:

- Durability first* = our collections are made to last and maintain
- Made to be made again = we develop products that can easily be reused, re-made, recycled, in that order
- Safe for the communities that interact with the material throughout their life cycle, and from either recycled or renewable sources.
- Favor pure fibre & always avoid mixing organic and synthetic fibres in a blend.
- Favor recycled fibres (if the end product reaches high durability and performance criteria)
- If there is no recycled option available... preferred natural fibres and natural polymers

- Never source exotic or endangered animal-based material. ONLY buy certified & traceable animal-based material that are co-product of the food industry.
- All synthetic polymer elements must be perfectly sewed on = no bad quality synthetic sequins, glitter, or prints**
- You cannot make something initially not sustainable... sustainable = good sourcing cannot transform a bad fabric into a good one

* Except if the use is designed to be short, then biodegradability or recyclability come first

** to prevent dissemination in water streams

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Animal fibres have long been sought for their warmth and protection. Most commonly from sheeps and goats, animal fibres can come from various animal families, and their properties can vary largely even within a same species.

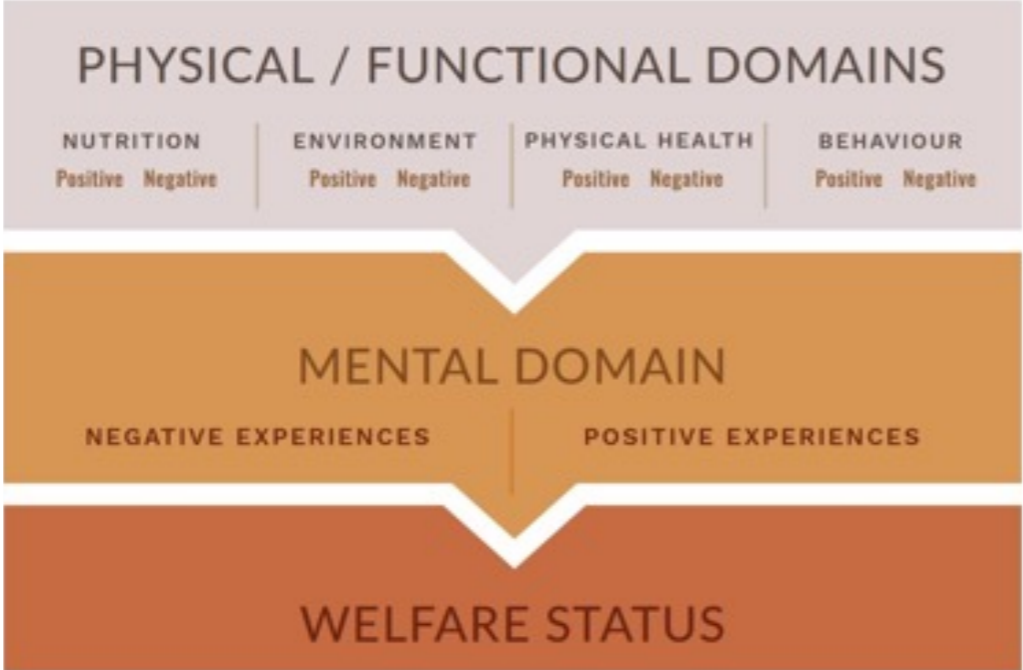
By nature, an animal-based material has strong positive impacts: leather or wool are durable materials that are worn longer, donated more and keep a strong value throughout their life cycle. Negative impacts of animal-based sourcing include GHG emissions, farm practices impact on biodiversity, deforestation, and local communities, and of course, risks on animal welfare.

In respect of the Five Domains Model, developed by Professor David Mellor, we recognise that animals can experience feelings, ranging from negative to positive. The first four domains (Nutrition, Environment, Health, and Behaviour) all help inform us about the animal’s various experiences, which make up the fifth domain, the Mental Domain.

To ensure animal welfare, we commit to only use certified materials to the best available standard, collaborate with selected suppliers and engaging with them to ensure good welfare as well as increasing traceability and transparency across our supply chain.

We ban yarns and skins obtained from wildlife, this includes materials derived from wild-caught animals and wild animals raised in farming environments, particularly those species classes classified as vulnerable or endangered, as listed on either the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) or the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) checklists.

We source exclusively from farms respecting animal welfare via either certified or audited processes. We partner with industry working groups to increase our knowledge base and awareness, and to participate in industry initiatives. We focus on yarns and skins from small animals, who are commonly bred for the food industry, such as sheep and goat, as we believe that killing animals only for the sake of fashion should be avoided.



*Image modified by [WAZA](#) from [Mellor and Beausoleil 2015](#)

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BCC commits to conduct all its operations in compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations. Moreover, as part of our Sustainability agenda, we commit to support our supply chain from design by prioritizing low impact materials and manufacturing techniques that mitigate our impacts on the following 6 areas of impact: chemicals and pollution, water, energy & climate impact, water resources, biodiversity, waste, and circular economy.

We aim to source only certified materials, with a focus on environmental impact.

BCC is committed to addressing deforestation and conversion in our supply chains. We will work within our own operations and through our suppliers to achieve the protection of forests and natural ecosystems through deforestation-free sourcing of leather and natural material such as cotton and linen. We commit to not cause or contribute to the loss of natural forest, through sourcing, production, or financial investment.

These commitments are aligned with the Accountability Framework definitions of deforestation, natural forest, conversion, and natural ecosystem.

In accordance with our Due diligence policy and our Code of conduct and Business ethics, BCC commits to mitigating social risks from design, and throughout our chain of value.

More specifically, we enforce mandatory social audits for our suppliers and favour material certification that includes a social component when available, such as GOTS.

APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is effective upon approval by the CEO. All employees are expected to adhere to and support the implementation of this policy.