



Describing your involvement with the Furmark® certification system

Introduction

There are a range of organisations involved in delivering Furmark®, the comprehensive global certification and traceability system for natural fur.

Furmark® products are traceable, verified, and have met recognised standards. Crucially, however, the International Fur Federation (IFF) needs to ensure that those organisations delivering Furmark® certification are able to make effective and codified claims *about* their contribution towards Furmark® certification.

That is: organisations need to be able to promote their involvement in an accurate, evidence-led way that a reasonable person would understand and appreciate. Descriptions and claims made should reflect the positive impact of Furmark® at their specific stage of the supply chain. The certification system ensures that every step of production meets strict, globally-recognised standards and it is vital that businesses and the public are clear on the benefits.

The IFF recognises the need for support here and this brief memo functions as guidance. It aims to provide some examples of claims that can be made by participants.

Organisations making claims about Furmark® (e.g. a dresser and dyer noting that “this fur has been processed by a Furmark® certified dresser and/or dyer” or “Furmark® ensures natural fur is processed by certified dressers and dyers who are subject to third-party checks”) can only do so if they are currently a certified participant. In the example quoted, for instance, the participant could no longer make either claim if they are found to be non-compliant in the future.

Fur types covered

Furmark® includes a range of fur types/fur-bearing animals.

Farm-raised fur types/fur-bearing animals included in the Furmark® certification system (programme(s) in parenthesis):

- Mink (WelFur AND North American Farm-Raised)
- Fox (WelFur AND North American Farm-Raised)
- Finn raccoon (WelFur)
- Swakara (Swakara)
- Sable (Farm-Raised Sable)

Wild fur types/fur-bearing animals included in the Furmark® certification system (programme(s) in parenthesis):

- American Marten/Sable (North American Wild Fur)
- Arctic Fox (North American Wild Fur)
- Bobcat/Lynx Cat (North American Wild Fur)
- Canada Lynx (North American Wild Fur)
- Coyote (North American Wild Fur)
- Ermine/Stoat/Weasel (long-tail, short-tail) (North American Wild Fur)
- Fisher (North American Wild Fur)
- Grey Fox (North American Wild Fur)
- Mink (North American Wild Fur)
- Muskrat (North American Wild Fur)
- North American Beaver (North American Wild Fur)
- North American River Otter (North American Wild Fur)
- Nutria/Coypu (North American Wild Fur)
- Raccoon (North American Wild Fur)
- Red Fox (North American Wild Fur)
- Sable (Wild Sable)

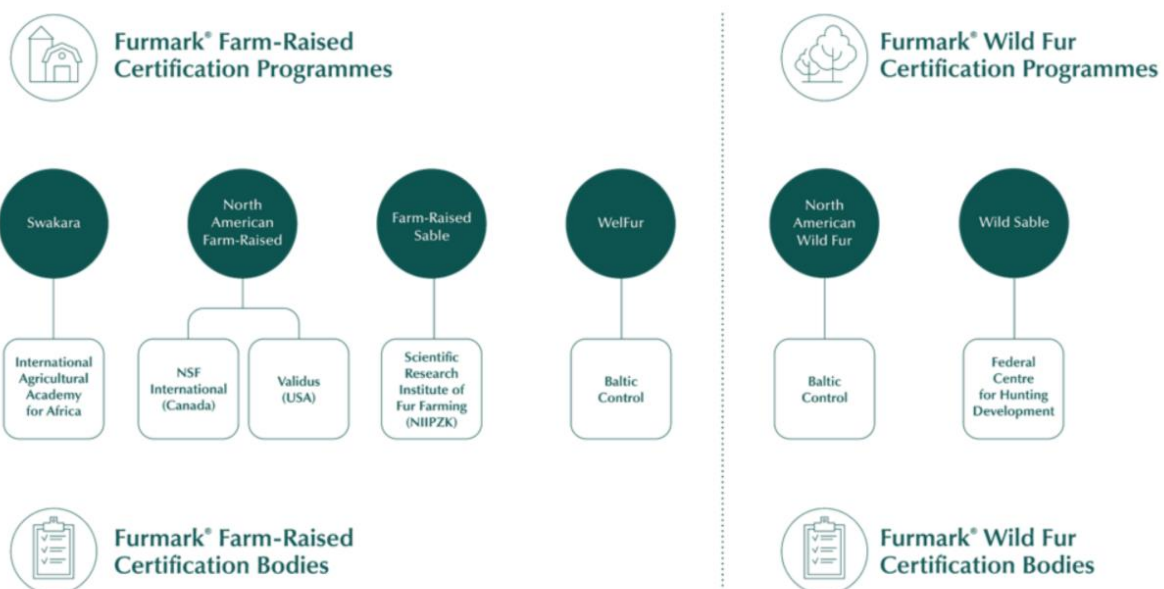
Furmark® farm-raised and wild fur certification programmes claims

At this stage of the supply chain, only natural fur sold through the auctions and trading bodies that comes from one of the recognised certification programmes (see diagram below) included in Furmark®.

Examples of claims that can be made include:

- “This fur can be used within the Furmark® certification system.”
- “This fur is Furmark® certification system approved.”
- “This fur comes from a leading animal welfare certification programme.”
- “This fur is recognised as having met the Furmark® standard.”
- “The protocols and standards that govern the production or harvesting of this fur are science-based, independently-verified, and relevant.”
- “This fur belongs to an animal welfare programme incorporated in Furmark®.”

These claims might typically be made in marketing material, including in brochures and other collateral, as well as in written agreements.



Furmark®dressing and dyeing certification programme claims

Moving through the supply chain, Furmark®certification demands that the fur can only be processed in dressing and dyeing companies that follow the SafeFur Chemical Standards, are members of the International Fur Dressers and Dyers Association (IFDDA), and are subject to independent testing certification and are certified.

Examples of claims that can be made include:

- "This fur has been processed by a Furmark®certified dresser and/or dyer."
- "Furmark® means natural fur is processed by certified dressers and dyers who are subject to third-party checks."
- "Only chemicals from the agreed SafeFur Chemical Standard list should have been used in processing this natural fur."
- "This dresser and/or dyer has undergone Furmark®-approved third-party testing."
- "The chemicals present in this natural fur product are REACH-compliant."
- "This fur meets the Furmark®recognised SafeFur Chemical Standards and has been dressed and/or dyed by a member of the International Fur Dressers and Dyers Association."

Dressers and dyers might make these claims in their marketing or new business materials. They must ensure, however, that no reasonable person is misled by these claims.

Furmark® manufacturing due diligence claims

A due diligence programme operated by FACT is in place at the manufacturing stage. As an oversight framework, the process scores manufacturers on key areas and any issues are escalated to the IFF. Only approved manufacturers can be onboarded to the Furmark® system and ChainPoint traceability system.

Examples of claims that can be made include:

- “[Company] has successfully completed the Furmark® due diligence process.”
- “[Company] is authorised to use the ChainPoint traceability system for Furmark®.”
- “[Company] is authorised to use Furmark® labels in garments.”
- “[Company] has the authorisation to manufacture Furmark®-certified products.”
- “[Company] is recognised as an approved manufacturer of Furmark® products.”

The due diligence is not a recognised form of organisational certification: it does not confer a “certify” status on the business. Instead, it authorises them to create products inside the Furmark® system (i.e. using the labels in garments, using the traceability feature, and making Furmark® garments from compatible fur).

Furmark® product stockists and retailers claims

It is important to note that Furmark® does not certify stockists and retailers: there is no dedicated programme, third-party assessment, or due diligence process, because Furmark® certification is attached to the product only (e.g. the garment is certified, the organisation selling it is not).

Stockists and retailers can have confidence that the crucial previous stages of the supply chain are subject to oversight, monitoring, and verification — and their customers can have confidence in the products, given the traceability element attached to the garment.

Crucially, the fact that stockists and retailers are not required to undergo a dedicated certification does not mean they are any less central to Furmark® or to the success of natural fur more generally. Across a variety of channels, including online and at the point of sale, retailers proactively and reactively inform, advise, and assist those opting to purchase natural, sustainable garments, accessories, and home furnishings. Additionally, furriers play a vital role in repairing, remodelling, and refreshing fur garments and educating new and existing fur customers.

Communication around this final stage of the supply chain must be clear and consistent: it is an opportunity for stockists and retailers to promote themselves as sources of certified natural fur that meet recognised global standards. Given the unique dynamic of Furmark® stockists and retailers (who sell certified products, but are not themselves required to undergo a separate certification process).

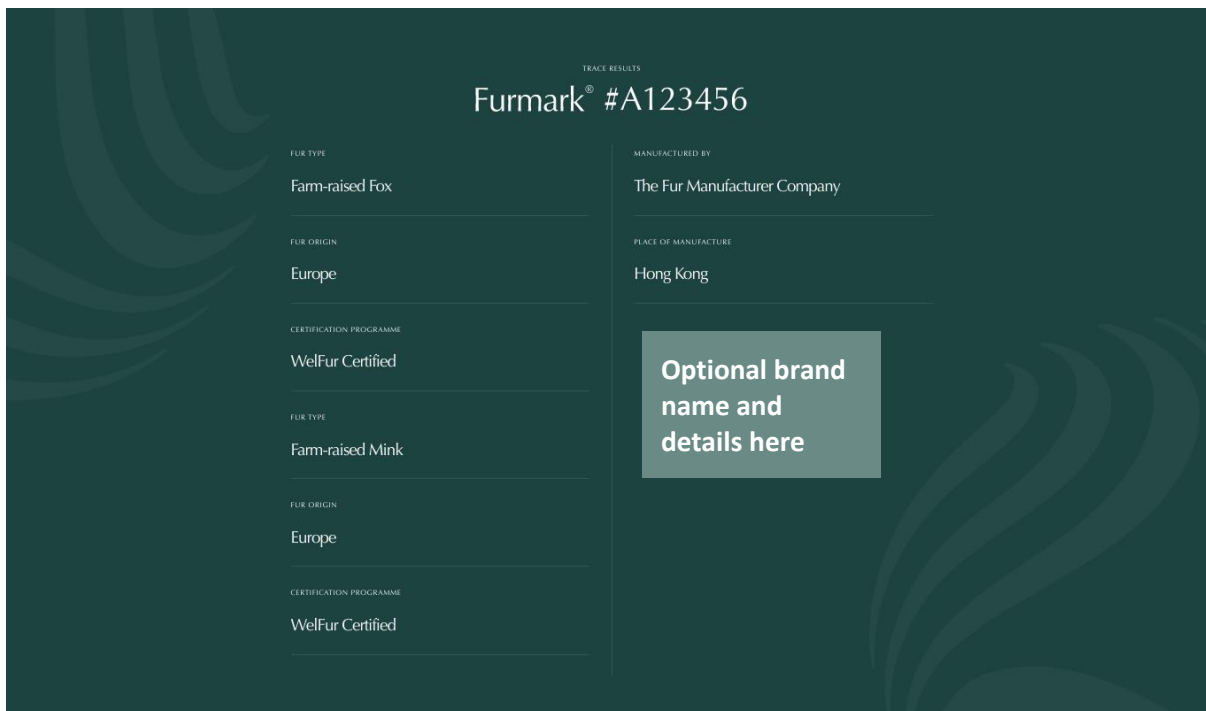
Examples of claims that can be made include:

- “[Retailer] is a stockist of Furmark®certified products/garments.”
- “[Retailer] trades in Furmark®certified products/garments.”
- “[Retailer] is a recognised seller of Furmark®certified products/garments.”

Evidently these claims only apply if a retailer is currently stocking and selling Furmark® certified products and must not be presented in a way that a reasonable person would be misled. Retailers and stockists are responsible for ensuring that Furmark® is used in the proper way and no such misrepresentation or potential misrepresentation occurs and IFF cannot be held liable if and when such misrepresentation occurs.

Furmark® product stockists and retailers and the traceability system

Given their centrality to Furmark® and crucial role in delivering certified products to the market, there are also a range of opportunities for retailers to be recognised within the traceability system. Each product comes with a unique alphanumeric code which provides the prospective buyer or owner of the product traceability information. The below examples shows a product made with two different fur types (both from the WelFur certification programme) and manufactured in Hong Kong:



The screenshot displays the 'TRACE RESULTS' for Furmark® #A123456. The interface is divided into two main columns. The left column lists product details for two different fur types, while the right column shows manufacturing information. A callout box on the right indicates where optional brand name and details can be added.

TRACE RESULTS	
Furmark® #A123456	
FUR TYPE	MANUFACTURED BY
Fam-raised Fox	The Fur Manufacturer Company
FUR ORIGIN	PLACE OF MANUFACTURE
Europe	Hong Kong
CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME	Optional brand name and details here
WelFur Certified	
FUR TYPE	
Fam-raised Mink	
FUR ORIGIN	
Europe	
CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME	
WelFur Certified	

Given the importance of retailers, the IFF is in discussion with manufacturers, retailers, and wholesalers and ChainPoint. We are exploring a solution to add the retailer and location of the retailer to the traceability information delivered directly to the consumer (the “front-end”). This would sit beneath the manufacturing details and complement existing information, adding another layer of transparency to Furmark® while confirming to the consumer that the stockist is recognised within the Furmark® certification system.

The traceability function (displayed above and available to consumers) is produced via an API. This is essentially “dynamic”, with a number of editable fields to show more or less information, depending on the needs of participants. Wholesalers and suppliers can — in agreement with the manufacturer — decide which name to present on the Trace Now platform. The information is drawn via API from the ChainPoint system and therefore agreement and alignment is clearly needed as this must be reflected in the data held by ChainPoint.

Similarly, retailers can also access the system itself (the “back-end”). This would allow them to, of their own accord, check the collated details of Furmark® certified products associated with the retailer.



Furmark® sustainability statements and sourcing guidelines claims for brands

The IFF recognises that brands will wish to make specific statements about Furmark®. It is important for consistency and accuracy that the IFF maintain a level of editorial control and input. As such, we welcome the opportunity to work with brands to generate the specific wording of their claim so as to best represent their involvement.

Some have already included this in internal sourcing guidelines, for instance, whereas others are already making communications to their supply chain, noting how and why they will be operating inside the Furmark® certification system.

To provide an example of the kind of sustainability statement and sourcing guideline claim that could be made:

[Brand] has an ambitious natural raw materials sourcing policy, one that respects resources and the planet.

As such, [brand] is supporting the International Fur Federation (IFF) to deploy Furmark®, the comprehensive global certification and traceability system for natural fur that guarantees animal welfare and environmental standards.

Furmark® is the international mark of responsible natural fur.

While Furmark® offers “end-to-end” certification (covering the entire supply chain and certifying the resultant product). Precisely because every stage of the Furmark® supply chain is certified, the system also incorporates “sourcing-level” certification (covering the start of the supply chain and certifying the natural raw material itself) because of the various industry-leading animal welfare and environmental programmes for farm-raised fur and wild fur.

These programmes cover a range of fur types, from mink, fox, and Finnraccoon (WelFur) to karakul (Swakara) as well as the process of dressing and dyeing, this guarantees that [brand] is sourcing fur responsibly.

Sustainable natural fur sourced from these science-based, third-party verified, and transparent programmes is recognised as such and is considered Certified under Furmark®.

Further information on Furmark® can be found on www.furmark.com



Representing and misrepresenting Furmark®

Use of Furmark® certification (and its trademark, branding, collateral, and associated material) in such a way as to potentially mislead the recipients of technical, commercial or advertising information would evidently be improper and would undermine the sector's positive, proactive work to bring about a single, easy-to-understand certification system.

Participants need to avoid advertising, marketing, and in-store materials that could potentially be misinterpreted in any way.

The IFF is working closely with its members to ensure that we have a clear, open system where participants can advertise the benefits of Furmark® certification and the benefits of opting for market-leading, certified products over non-certified products.

This document forms the basis of those discussions.

Given the need for an 'open' system and the fact that Furmark® does not directly certify sellers, retailers or stockists of Furmark® products, we have also developed broader, legalistic guidance — the regulations of use.

The regulations of use constitute the essence of communicating the Furmark® certification system, setting out and governing the use of the mark itself, the logo and the associated branding and collateral. The regulations of use have now been finalised and will be provided to participants.