



RESPONSIBLE FEATHER AND DOWN SOURCING POLICY

Latest Version Date	April 2021	Doc Ref	Responsible F&D Sourcing Policy
Version Number	2.0	Page	1 of 9
Public Copy			

BACKGROUND

Marks and Spencer are committed to using responsibly sourced raw materials, including the responsible sourcing of feather and down. Known for its highly insulating properties, it is estimated that 70-90% of down and feather is produced from China¹. M&S recognises two key principles in the responsible sourcing of feather and down: animal welfare and traceability.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Feather and down is a by-product of the waterfowl (duck and geese) meat industry and is associated with the two critical animal welfare concerns of force feeding and live plucking.

Force-feeding refers to any form of human-intervened (mechanical or manual) assisted feeding which causes an animal to eat more than it naturally would consume. This is commonly done to produce foie gras (fatty liver) in some ducks and geese. It is mainly a risk in sourcing feather and down from France, Spain, Bulgaria and Hungary², but force feeding can exist anywhere. Live plucking refers to the removal of feathers and down from live animals, which causes distress and often leaves animals with torn skin. This policy defines M&S' position in opposition to the use of both force feeding and live production in the sourcing of feather and down.

It is important that the sourcing of feather and down is underpinned by the Five Freedoms of Animal welfare, more information regarding this can be found in the M&S C&H Animal Welfare Policy.

TRACEABILITY

Although the production of feather and down is fragmented, with many small and medium producers, it is important that traceability is maintained throughout the supply chain to ensure the welfare of animals in M&S supply chains.

SCOPE

This policy covers products sold in all Clothing and Home areas that contain feather and down. Traditionally most feather and down is sourced from geese or duck species, however this policy applies to all natural feathers that may be used for M&S production.

This policy is intended to complement the M&S C&H Animal Welfare Policy and the M&S Recycled Materials Sourcing Policy.

¹ Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2019, Textile Exchange

² FOIE GRAS: How animals are tortured to produce this delicacy, 4Paws, Available at: <https://www.four-paws.org.uk/campaigns-topics/topics/farm-animals/foie-gras>

Latest Version Date	April 2021	Doc Ref	Feather & Down Sourcing Policy
Version Number	2.0	Page	2 of 4
Public Copy			

RATONALE AND OBJECTIVES

- To ensure M&S meets its long-standing commitment to improve animal welfare in its supply chains and ensure all feather and down is sourced from farms with the highest animal welfare practices to protect birds from live plucking and force feeding. M&S is committed to not source feather and down from birds reared for the foie gras industry
- To lay out a set of uniform principles around the sourcing of feather and down into product that must be adhered to by all business units consistently
- To ensure due diligence is undertaken with regards to the provenance of feather and down and animal welfare practices on farms

M&S MANDATORY PRINCIPLES FOR SOURCING

All product containing feather and down must adhere to the following principles:

PROHIBITED SOURCES

1. No animal must be slaughtered specifically to produce any non- food M&S products. Only by-products of the meat industry must be used
2. M&S prohibits the use of material from any **endangered species**, defined as those which appear on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) (see www.cites.org/ for list of species) or the IUCN red list as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable (www.redlist.org/)
3. M&S prohibits the use of Feather and Down must not be obtained from the live plucking of birds – see appendix A
4. M&S prohibits the use of any feather and down material that has come from birds who have been reared for the Foie Gras industry. If the feathers are sourced from bird species other than ducks or geese, then the Foie Gras risk is not relevant, but the species and source must be identified and stated.
5. Feather and Down must not be obtained from birds subjected to Force Feeding – see Appendix A

MINIMUM STANDARDS

As a minimum standard, all M&S feather and down suppliers must be certified to either the **IDFL Down Standard (IDS)**, the **Responsible Down Standard (RDS)** with or the **Traceable Down Standard (TDS)**

- Feather and down must be verified through the standard's own verification system
- The scope of the Responsible M&S feather and down policy begins from and includes the raising farm(s). Raising Farms are defined as farms where birds live in preparation for meat production

Latest Version Date	April 2021	Doc Ref	Feather & Down Sourcing Policy
Version Number	2.0	Page	3 of 4
Public Copy			

- In addition to the raising farm, it is a minimum requirements that the certification includes all downstream supply chain actors involved in M&S production – including the final garment/product manufacturer
- In the case where down and feather are sourced from small farms (<100 waterfowl) or poultry markets (usually collector-based supply chains), then a representative sampling of the farms must be taken in those areas.

SUSTAINABLY SOURCED FEATHER AND DOWN

Within feather and down sourcing, M&S defines more sustainable sources as recycled and meeting the **Global Recycled Standard (GRS)** or **Recycled Content Standard (RCS)**. For more information and verification guidance, see the M&S Recycled Materials Sourcing Policy.

DEFINITIONS

Animal derived material: Materials including ingredients that have an animal origin, regardless of whether they have been harvested from live or dead animals.

Force Feeding: Refers to any form of human-intervened (mechanical or manual) assisted feeding which causes an animal to eat more than it naturally would consume. This is commonly done to produce foie gras (fatty liver) in some ducks and geese.

Live Plucking: Refers to the removal of feathers and down from live animals, which causes distress and often leaves animals with torn skin.

Latest Version Date	April 2021	Doc Ref	Feather & Down Sourcing Policy
Version Number	2.0	Page	4 of 4
Public Copy			