

LEATHER AND HIDE

COUNCIL OF AMERICA

WE NEED TO STOP THE WASTE

Turning hide into leather is one of the oldest forms of recycling. Hides are the natural and inevitable by-products of meat and dairy consumption. In fact, in the U.S, every single hide used in leather production comes from animals raised for food: leather manufacturing does not kill a single animal. Rather, manufacturers purchase as many hides as they can - cutting down waste - and transform them into durable, versatile and beautiful leather.

WASTE RECYCLING IS UNDER THREAT

The recent rise of synthetics - mostly plastic - in consumer products and clothing is disrupting this sustainable recycling process; and damaging the environment. Let's take a closer look:



33 → **28.2** → **4.8**
MILLION **MILLION** **MILLION**

cattle were processed in the US in 2020 for food.

of the 33 million hides this created were used to make leather.

of the 33 million hides, or 14.5%, were wasted.

Those wasted hides is where the problem begins, and as we consume more it will only grow.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OUR PLANET



Most of those 4.8 million cattle hides were either destroyed by burning or sent to landfill.

In one year we wasted enough material to make:

- 96 million footballs
- 86.4 million pairs of shoes
- 1.6 million sofas



And in doing so we created more than 120,000 tonnes of unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. This happens every year. And it is avoidable.

THE RISE OF SYNTHETICS

Not only are we not using all the natural material we have available, but instead we are looking for new materials - and developing whole new industries - to support this artificial need.

The rise of synthetics, the vast majority of which are made from plastics, offers an appealing and cheap alternative, but with serious environmental consequences. We drill and frack to manufacture these materials, all the while wasting the freely available and natural materials we already have.



WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Meat and dairy consumption will continue, regardless of the leather industry.

Replacing hard wearing natural leather with synthetics, or other alternatives, will not stop a single farm animal from being processed to make our food. All it will do is divert nearly 7.5 million tonnes of unused cattle hides to landfill globally every year. And drain our planet's hard pressed resources to produce alternatives that lack the strength and durability of leather.

From greenhouse gases to plastics, this is a problem not only for the future, but for now.

Whilst leather typically biodegrades in less than 50 years, it can take up to 500 years for synthetics derived from petrochemicals to degrade.

So if you really care about the planet and its resources, stop to think about the importance of using the natural materials that we have.

Stopping using leather would create 6.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gases every year.



LEATHER AND HIDE
COUNCIL OF AMERICA

