

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

PETA India  
PO Box 28260  
Juhu, Mumbai 400 049  
(22) 4072 7382  
(22) 2636 7383 (fax)

Info@petaindia.org  
PETAIndia.com

9 July 2021

Shri Sanjay Leekha  
Chair  
Council for Leather Exports  
No 1, Sivaganga Road, Nungambakkam  
Chennai 600 034

Dear Shri Leekha:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India with a suggestion that will allow your members to support India's farmers, protect the environment and workers, and spare the lives of countless cows, buffaloes, and other animals. Please continue to produce leather, but follow the lead of other progressive companies by doing so using exclusively plants or other vegan materials, not slaughtered sentient beings. A vegan leather industry is one everyone in the country could support and be proud of. After all, protecting cows and other cattle, protecting the natural environment and having compassion for animals are all requirements under our country's Constitution.

The global demand for humane materials is so strong that Infinium Global Research estimates that the market for vegan leather will reach nearly USD\$90 billion by 2025, enjoying a compound annual growth rate of 49.9%, in the forecast period (2019 to 2025). Meanwhile, Grand View Research reports that the global vegan women's fashion market size – already valued at USD\$396.3 billion in 2019 – is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 13.6% from 2020 to 2027. Like melting ice caps, the rate is usually underestimated!

Vegan leather is already revolutionising the fashion industry, and trailblazers in the field are making leather from bananas, grapes, pineapples, coconuts, and other plants that are grown in abundance in India. One innovative Indian company is even making a biodegradable leather out of discarded temple flowers, which would otherwise end up in waterways.

Meanwhile, tannery waste water has often been discharged directly into the Ganges, helping to make this holy river one of the most polluted rivers in the world. Earlier this year, nearly 100 tanneries in Kanpur were shut down for choking sewer lines with contaminated water and polluting the Mother Ganga. Switching to environmentally friendly plant-based leather would eliminate the need for this kind of closure and help protect workers' jobs and health.

As you know, ensuring that animals' skin doesn't start to decompose after it's stolen from their bodies means using a toxic brew of chemicals including chromium, a human carcinogen which is known to make agricultural land unviable. As is well known, *leather tannery pollution affected 17,170 hectares of farmland in Vellore and Dindigul districts, having an impact on 36,056 farmers.*

**Affiliates:**

- PETA Asia
- PETA Australia
- PETA Foundation (UK)
- PETA France
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA US

Registered Office:  
F-110, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Jagdamba Tower  
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In addition to those downstream from tanneries and those who depend on water from the rivers where the tanneries are set up, tannery workers themselves are regularly exposed to harmful substances. As a result, they commonly suffer from skin diseases, respiratory disorders, and other ailments, including various types of cancer.

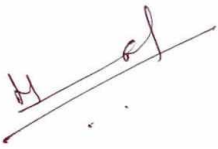
It's no wonder the 2017 "Pulse of the Fashion Industry" report, published by the Global Fashion Agenda in collaboration with the Boston Consulting Group, concluded that *cow leather is the single most polluting material in fashion*.

Vegan leather spares cows and other animals a horrifying death. PETA India has visited slaughterhouses with your representatives, where they saw for themselves that cattle are crammed onto vehicles in such high numbers that their bones break and many suffocate to death and that the throats of cows and buffaloes are slit in full view of others. Of course, these animals feel pain and fear, value their lives, love their families, and don't want to be killed any more than we do. Fortunately, there are kinder options.

We ask that the Council for Leather Exports advise its members to start exploring a switch to vegan leather production, even if only for their own survival.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,



Dr Manilal Valliyate  
CEO

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