

## Fur Farming in North America

- About half the furs produced in North America come from small, family-run farms while the rest are trapped in the wild. Mink are the most commonly farmed, with smaller quantities of fox and chinchilla.
- Fur farming provides important **employment for rural communities** at a time when many forms of agriculture are difficult for small operations.
- Fur farming completes the agricultural production cycle. As carnivores, mink and fox eat leftovers from our own food production, such as parts of pigs, chickens and fish that we do not eat. Manure, bedding and carcasses are composted to produce organic fertilizers to replenish the soil. Carcasses are also used to produce bio-fuel, and mink fat produces oil used to condition leather, in cosmetics, and as a fine lubricant. Nothing is wasted.
- Farmed furbearers are **domesticated animals**. Mink have been farmed for 160 years, are much larger and more docile than wild mink, and have been bred in a wide range of colors. Fox farming

began in the 1880s. Like mink, farmed foxes are larger and more docile than wild foxes, and have been bred in many colors.

• North American farms produce the world's finest fur by providing **excellent nutrition and care**. This is assured by national codes of practice based on years of scientific research.



Beautiful fur

Fertilizer

- Though raised in pens, farmed furbearers can express natural behavior. Wild mink spend up to 80% of their time in small, underground dens. Farmed mink spend a similar time in their nest boxes, entering their larger pens to eat, drink and exercise. Unlike many of our food animals, farmed mink mate naturally. Females also nurse and raise their young until they are weaned.
- Unlike their wild cousins, farmed furbearers enjoy constant access to nutritious food and clean water, protection from predators and extreme weather, and veterinary care when needed.
- Mink and foxes adapt well to farm life. Wild mink are generally solitary, so farmed mink are housed in individual pens, or sometimes with a sibling. Each pen has an enclosed nest box, mimicking the dens where wild mink spend most of their time. A famous experiment showed that tame foxes with little fear of, even affection for, human handlers could be bred in as few as 10 generations.
- Strict biosecurity protocols are followed on fur farms to protect livestock from diseases that might be introduced from outside.
- Mink are euthanized using bottled carbon monoxide gas. A mobile unit moves between pens to minimize handling. The mink lose consciousness and die quickly and humanely. Foxes are stunned and euthanized using electricity, just as abattoirs stun pigs and poultry.







Photos: Ted Parkinson; Truth About Fur; Tom McLellan.

**TRUTH ABOUT FUR** brings together leading fur authorities in North America to provide accurate information about this remarkable heritage industry. We give a voice to the people who carry on this unique artisanal tradition, working as farmers, trappers, traders, processors, designers, craftspeople, and retailers. For more facts about fur farming, please visit <a href="https://www.TruthAboutFur.com">www.TruthAboutFur.com</a>. September 2025.