REAL LEATHER IS GREENER THAN IMITATIONS

Processing hides from livestock into leather is one of the oldest practiced forms of recycling. Hides are natural and inevitable by-products of meat and dairy consumption. In fact, in the U.S., every hide used in leather production comes from animals that were raised for food; the leather industry does not slaughter a single animal. Rather, the industry purchases these hides—which otherwise would go to waste—and transforms them into durable, versatile, and beautiful real leather.

RISE OF SYNTHETICS

But the recent rise of synthetics—mostly plastic—in consumer products risk disrupting this sustainable recycling process—and our environment. Let’s take a closer look:

33 Million
In 2019, the U.S. processed more than 33 million head of cattle for food.

In 2019, 27.5 million hides were used in domestic or global leather production.

27.5 Million

5.5 Million
In 2019, an estimated 5.5 million (17%) U.S. cattle hides failed to enter into the leather supply chains.

WHAT DO THESE FIGURES TELL US?

Most of those 5.5 million cattle hides were either destroyed or discarded in landfills.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

These 5.5 million hides could instead be used to produce leather for:

- 99 million pairs of shoes
- 110 million footballs
- 2 million sofas

WHY?
The rise of synthetics, the vast majority of which are made from plastics and other non-renewable sources, has caused a shift away from utilizing hides to produce natural, sustainable, real leather products.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?
Meat and dairy consumption will continue even in the absence of the leather industry. The replacement of natural leather with synthetics or other alternatives will not keep a single food-producing animal from being processed. And, without the leather industry, nearly 2 billion pounds of unused cattle hides will be diverted to landfills annually. Plus, whereas real leather is naturally biodegradable and may degrade in less than 50 years, it could take as many as 500 years for synthetics derived from petrochemicals to degrade.

THERE’S SIMPLY NO SUBSTITUTE FOR REAL LEATHER

#ChooseRealLeather

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