



Hilary McGrady  
Director-General  
National Trust

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Via e-mail: [hilary.mcgrady@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:hilary.mcgrady@nationaltrust.org.uk)

Dear Ms McGrady,

I hope you are well. I'm contacting you from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) following news reports that the National Trust is looking for a "sustainable" alternative to the synthetic fleeces currently worn by your staff. In the interests of animal welfare and the environment, we urge you to refrain from using sheep's wool – or other animal-derived materials – and instead look into eco-friendly natural or recycled-synthetic options, which are now readily available.

Reports from within the clothing industry, including the groundbreaking "Pulse of the Fashion Industry" report, continue to identify the production of sheep's wool as more polluting – for cradle-to-gate environmental impact per kilogram – than that of acrylic, polyester, spandex, and rayon fibres. As with the production of other animal-derived materials, wool production gobbles up precious resources. Land has been cleared and trees have been cut down to make room for grazing sheep, which has led to increased soil salinity and erosion and decreased biodiversity.

Wool production's contribution to climate change – which scientists agree is *the* most pressing issue facing our world, even more so than plastic pollution – is undeniable. This is because sheep, like cows, release enormous amounts of [methane gas](#) into the atmosphere and have therefore been referred to as the "Humvees" of the animal kingdom. Manure generated by farmed animals – including the vast flocks of sheep in countries like Australia and New Zealand, which have been expanded to meet the world's demand for wool – [has significantly contributed to the increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases over the last 250 years](#). If you're looking for new materials on the grounds of sustainability, wool is far from a good choice.

What's more, PETA affiliates have now documented the systemic, violent abuse of sheep at 99 wool-producing facilities on *four continents* – even for "responsibly sourced" wool on self-described "sustainable" farms – in countries including Argentina, Australia, Chile, the US, and now, the UK. All show that far from being a mere "haircut", sheep-shearing invariably involves the same horrific cruelty: shearers punch sheep in the face, stamp and stand on their heads and necks, and beat and jab them with electric clippers. Workers repeatedly failed to give the sheep any pain relief before trying to use a needle and thread to sew up gaping, bloody wounds caused by reckless shearing. The exposés have also documented the routine mutilation of lambs, including workers' use of dull knives to

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- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands

cut off their tails – sometimes after as many as five attempts – all without pain relief and while the animals cried out in pain and struggled. **You can find each of the exposés [here](#).**

Luckily, it's never been easier to leave wool out of our wardrobes – and uniforms. As consumer awareness of the issues associated with animal agriculture grows, an increasing number of sustainability-focused brands are offering more animal-free outerwear and knitwear options. Just a few of the materials that can be used to create durable, high-quality clothing without wool are linen, organic cotton, and hemp (the latter can be grown with minimal pesticide use); Tencel, produced from wood cellulose through a closed-loop process in which the water and chemicals needed are reused; and soya-bean fabric, which is completely free of petrochemicals. Of course, there are also a multitude of "eco-fleece" materials made from waste such as recycled plastic bottles, which would keep your staff members warm and dry.

By choosing any of these options, the National Trust would be demonstrating that it is committed to environmentally friendly, sustainable practices. We truly hope you'll see the benefits – for both animals and the environment – of championing the plethora of resistant, warm, eco-friendly animal-free fabrics instead of wool.

Please let us know if you have any questions. We would be happy to discuss this matter further with you.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elisa Allen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elisa Allen  
Director, PETA Foundation