



Leather tanning: an environmentalist's nightmare

Animal hide is not wearable unless 'cured.' 'Curing' is the process of cleaning the hide of the flesh, blood, hair, etc., sticking to it, then softening the hide, and treating it to last permanently without decomposing. The process of giving

the hide a cure, however, ends up making everyone working on it need a cure themselves, because curing, or 'tanning,' requires the use of highly corrosive chemicals like chromium salts. Workers (children included) in tanneries contract life-long diseases from exposure to such chemicals and working conditions, which are known to be among the worst in the unorganised sector.

If you wish to avoid petrochemical pollution consider the humble canvas or corduroy. A good make will provide good formal office wear. Canvas breathes better than leather, is comfortable, washes in the machine, is inexpensive: what more can one want?



RECOGNISING REAL LEATHER



Fibrous reverse side of real leather.



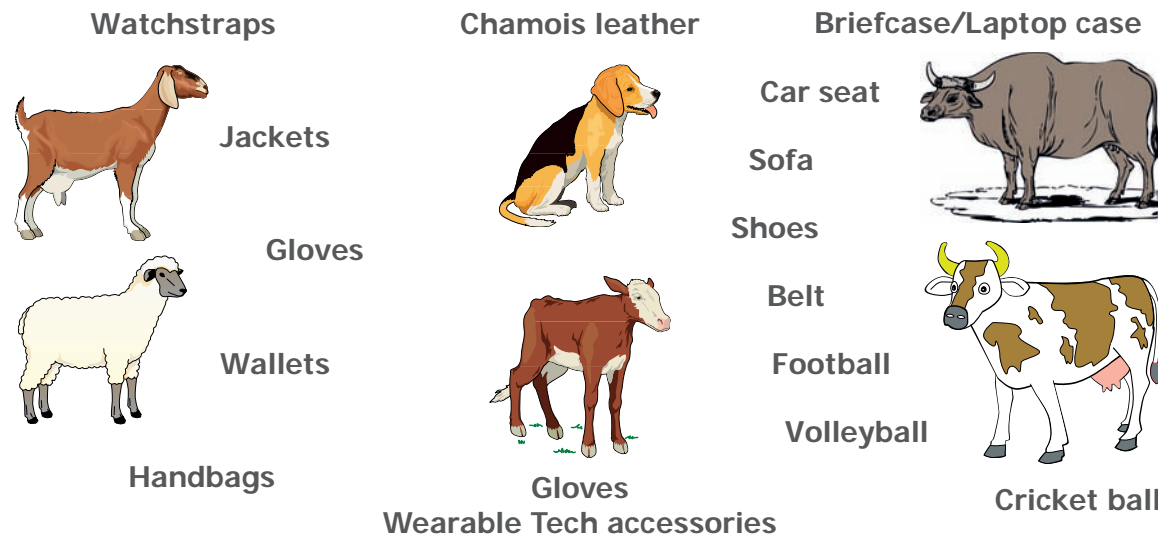
Real leather wrinkles and folds.



Unbroken uniformity of rexine.

- ★ Real leather has a fibrous reverse side; synthetics have a cloth backing.
- ★ Real leather is tough but can wrinkle and fold; synthetics tear more easily and are brittle.
- ★ Synthetics have an unbroken uniformity in pattern over their entire surface; real leather varies in patches.
- ★ Real leather has a typical smell and burns with the characteristic smell of burning hair.
- ★ Lastly, real leather is always much more costly.

So where DO our leather products come from?



Remember, Leather Subsidises Meat!

If we didn't use leather and other 'by-products', flesh would cost the meat-eater more per kilogram. That is, meat would become costlier. Or the butcher's business would become less profitable. Either outcome devoutly to be desired. Leather usage makes meat consumption more affordable. If we want less people to eat meat, let us (vegetarians) give up using leather.



Our stone age ancestors had no other alternative. For them, wearing skins of killed animals was a matter of survival. What is our excuse? Do we have to kill to clothe ourselves today?

GET SMART! GIVE UP LEATHER!



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**It is not beef eating alone
that kills the cow...**



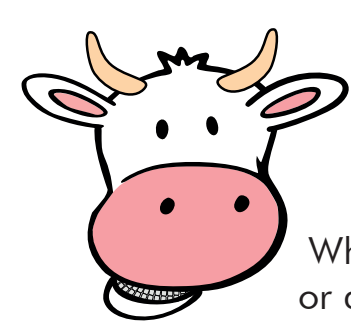
...it is the leather shoes as well.

And the wallets and purses and laptop cases.

And the jackets and belts.

And the car seats and sofa covers.

Learn about your leather...



Common myths about *Genuine Leather*

Whether used as a fashion statement or as a perceived need, whether used for making sofa covers or shoes, today leather is made from the skin of a butchered animal's back.

Butchered?! Did you say butchered? But doesn't leather come from animals that die a natural death?

Try to run a shoes business on raw material supplied that way. You will realise how mythical such hide-collection is, nowadays. 99% of all leather today comes from slaughterhouses.

MODERN LEATHER:
**NOT FROM
ANIMALS'
NATURAL DEATH**

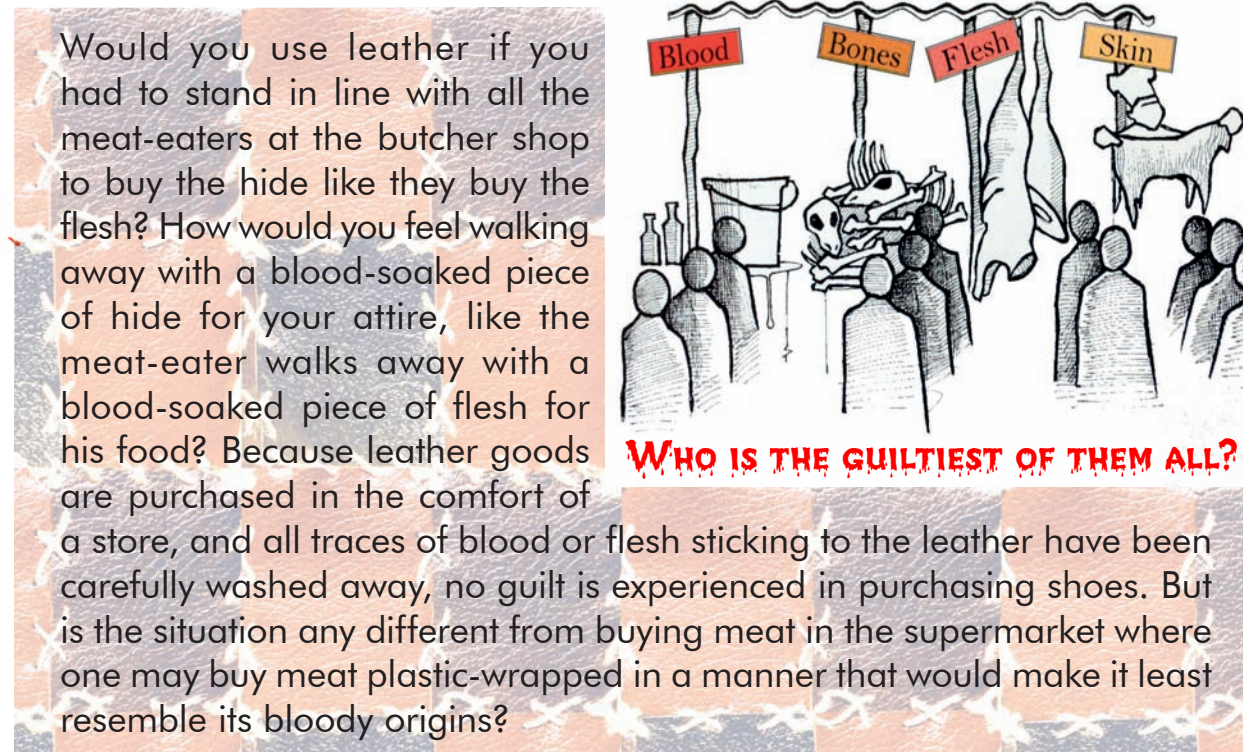
MODERN
LEATHER:
**NOT A
BY-PRODUCT**

OK, but what's wrong with using it? It is only a by-product of the meat industry, isn't it? It is not being killed for the skin, right?

Well, what it is being killed for remains a debatable point, with so many claimants dipping their fingers into its blood for its parts. But one look at India's emaciated cattle, especially those being marched hundreds of kilometres into states with no cattle-protection laws, should convince you that whatever else it is being killed for, it is not the flesh: there is hardly any on it. What is it being killed for, then? You guessed it: hide.

This ahimsak leather... is it really ahimsak?

Just because it came from Khadi Gramodyog Nigam (Khadi and Village Industries Commission) doesn't make it ahimsak. The KVIC stopped its only-natural-death-hide policy long ago. Their suppliers now openly include slaughterhouses and dairies, although their salesmen deny it upon being questioned, sensing a possible loss in business if people come to know.



Top 5 excuses people give to avoid leather alternatives

- 5 Synthetic alternatives are not easily available!**
Our response: Walk into any shoe store and ask for non-leather footwear. How more easily available do we want it than at a Bata shop?
- 4 Other materials don't 'breathe' as well as leather does!**
Our response: Well, the other materials let the cow breathe, which the leather doesn't. And materials like canvas or corduroy do 'breathe' perfectly.
- 3 Canvas and corduroy don't look as polished as leather.**
Our response: Looks 'polished' to have killed an animal? And sloppy to have chosen the ahimsak alternative? It's all in the viewer's attitudes.
- 2 Synthetic alternatives are not environment-friendly!**
Our response: Like the leather tanneries are? Leather production is the worst offender of a clean environment (read section on tanneries).
- 1 What will happen to the employment of the leather sector?**
Our response: They can switch over to making the same articles in alternative materials. We are talking of changing the material, not the article.

Stop making excuses. Ban leather from your closet.

Stop kidding yourself!

'Kid gloves' doesn't mean gloves meant for children to wear. 'Kid' is the term for the skin of a baby goat. Kid gloves are gloves made from butchering baby goats.

Names of cow progeny leathers that mislead are bovine hides, parchment, vellum, rainforest leather, nubuck, Clemence leather, Togo leather, Italian leather and slink leather which is the leather from unborn calves for which pregnant cows are killed.



Kick the Genuine Leather habit - Wear something that didn't kill anybody