

Welfare of animals kept for fur production

EFSA scientists looked into how well current fur farming conditions support animal welfare. The goal was to understand if the welfare issues observed in mink, foxes, raccoon dog and chinchilla can be avoided or significantly reduced in the current cage system— and to provide a solid scientific basis on fur animals farmed in Europe.

Which animals are farmed for fur?



AMERICAN MINK

Agile, solitary animals that explore both land and water. Most active at dawn and dusk



RED FOX

Energetic and curious, these solitary hunters like to dig and explore their surroundings



ARCTIC FOX

Solitary predator built for the cold, they have a more compact body and smaller ears than red foxes



RACCOON DOG

Sociable, like to hunt and eat plants and fruit. During cold winter they may go into prolonged sleep



CHINCHILLA

Sociable nocturnal rodents that like jumping, chewing, and rolling in sand for grooming



What are the main challenges?

The most common in current cage-based farming system include:



Not enough room for the animals to move freely



Little chance to do what they'd normally do — like explore, dig, chew, or search for food



Either too little or too much sensory stimulation (light, noise, smell)

Improving welfare: What to focus on?

Experts explored whether these issues could be addressed. Some small improvements are possible with current cages, but to make a real difference, more space and stimulation are needed. Substantial improvements would require a system that allows:



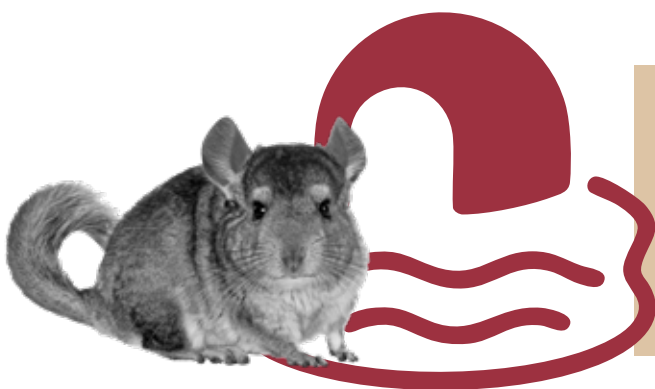
More space, larger floor area and height



Proper food and things to chew (like hay or bones)



Platforms to move up, explore and look around



Safe hiding spots and stimulating things to do (like open water for mink, sand for chinchillas, or digging spots for foxes)

Solid floors, not just wire mesh



Current cage-based systems make it hard to meet the physical and behavioural needs of fur animals. Not much is known yet about alternative systems, thus scientists identified some key aspects to consider. These findings will support evidence-based discussions on animal welfare in the EU for animals kept for fur production