

Kangaroo Skin Factsheet

Viva!



Australia exports approximately 3 million kangaroo skins worth more than \$17.6 million to Europe and the USA every year. Although the vast majority of these skins are used to make football boots, some are used for golf gloves, baseball mitts and other sporting goods. Products are often labeled "K leather" or "RKT" (rubberized kangaroo technology) to disguise the fact that they are made from the skins of butchered kangaroos.

Each year, the Australian government sets a quota for the number of kangaroos the industry can kill. For 2003, the quota is 6.5 million. They use euphemisms such as 'humanely harvesting' a 'renewable resource' in an attempt to cloud the fact that they are authorizing the slaughter of their country's wildlife for profit. Kangaroos are shot at night in the vast outback, miles from civilization and away from public scrutiny.

Hunters are supposed to adhere to a Code of Practice, a flimsy guideline document that is not linked to the Australian Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. According to the Code, to kill kangaroos 'humanely' hunters should shoot them once in the head, but this frequently does not happen and the animals may be shot in the throat, the neck, or have their jaws blown off.

The Australian RSPCA released a report last year which concluded that at the very least 100,000 adult kangaroos each year are not killed

'humanely,' but admitted that number was a conservative estimate as it did not take into account the unquantifiable number of injured animals who escape only to die slow, agonizing deaths from their injuries.

Official numbers for the kill do not include the baby kangaroos who also die as a result, the worthless 'waste' of the industry. Each time a female kangaroo is killed, it is likely she will have two baby 'joeys' - one in the pouch and one 'at foot.' Tiny joeys are pulled from their dead mothers' pouches and stamped on, clubbed, decapitated, shot or simply left on the ground to die. Older joeys hop away into the night invariably to die of starvation, predation, cold or neglect. The industry and its customers refuse to discuss the plight of the joeys, knowing that the public is horrified by the senseless killing of these baby animals.

After years of misinformation distributed by the Australian government, the kangaroo industry and farmers, who the world over seem to have a thorough contempt for native wildlife, the Australian public has been brainwashed into thinking kangaroos are 'vermin' and 'need' to be culled. This is simply not true. Kangaroos are not in plague proportions and have actually been wiped out in many regions. At the moment there may be in excess of 50 million kangaroos but these animals are an essential and integral part of Australia's ecology who have evolved to live in harmony with the country's harsh environment.

Another excuse for the kill is the claim that kangaroos are pests who destroy wheat crops and compete with livestock for grazing. The largest study of kangaroos ever conducted, carried out by the University of New South Wales, found that the presence of kangaroos has no negative effects on sheep farms whatsoever. A study carried out by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization found that 95 percent

of wheat crops are never visited by kangaroos and furthermore, Gordon Grigg, one of the most avid supporters of kangaroo slaughter and author of Commercial Harvesting of Kangaroos in Australia, the kangaroo industry's bible, recently stated that kangaroos' grazing requirements may have been over-estimated by as much as 500 percent.

In some areas kangaroo populations may build up in order to withstand the regular droughts which can wipe out half the population. The kangaroo massacre destroys the process of natural selection as the largest and fittest animals, the 'alpha' males, are targeted. These animals are the ones who, ordinarily, would be the most likely to survive a drought. As they have been repeatedly picked off, the kangaroos who are left to breed are smaller and younger animals, causing the gene pool to be weakened. According to Dr. Ian Gunn of the Animal Gene Storage Resource Centre of Australia, "...the continued slaughter of kangaroos has the potential to cause the extinction of a number of remaining species."

Six species of kangaroo are already extinct, with four more species extinct on the Australian mainland and 17 species listed as endangered or vulnerable. Red kangaroos are particularly at risk. They are now being killed at a rate three times higher than they are reproducing. In the 1960s their

average age was 12; today it is two.

Despite a drive by the industry to popularize kangaroo meat for human consumption, most of it is still used for pet food. In England, Viva!'s exposé of kangaroo slaughter virtually ended the sale of kangaroo meat in Britain with over 1500 supermarkets pulling it from their shelves.

What about here in the U.S.? Although most grocery stores in the U.S. don't sell kangaroo meat, kangaroo leather is still sold here. The U.S. imported 60,337 whole kangaroo skins in 2000, not to mention the imported soccer cleats and other products produced from kangaroo skins and sold in this country! A majority of these kangaroos are killed for export, so international pressure is essential to ending this trade. The sale of the skins is vital to keep the industry profitable as a whole.

While many Australian wildlife experts and animal protection organizations have spoken out against this massacre, they are virtually powerless to stop the decimation of their national emblem. It is important to remember that the commercial industry exists in its own right to supply international markets with kangaroo meat and skins. Farmers will still shoot kangaroos on their properties and recreational hunters will still kill them for fun, but the industry can - and must - be stopped if the future survival of kangaroos is to be ensured.



Take Action for Kangaroos!

www.savethekangaroo.com
www.vivausa.org
roos@vivausa.org



Adidas

The focus of our campaign is on Adidas, who have 70 percent of the market for professional soccer cleats and use kangaroo skin to make its Predator boot (amongst others). Last year, a spokesperson for the Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA) stated: "This [soccer boot] industry is vital to the kangaroo industry. Without it underpinning kangaroo skin prices the entire industry would be at risk." This proves that Adidas is a driving force behind the slaughter.

The original designer of the Predator boot, ex-Liverpool player Craig Johnston recently said: "The original model of the Predator was an all-rubber shoe. Synthetics, rubbers and new materials are definitely the future of football boots. I don't agree with killing kangaroos."

Other manufacturers make professional soccer cleats out of synthetic materials. Adidas even makes one itself! There is absolutely no excuse for them to continue using kangaroo skin.

Please lodge polite complaints with Adidas - by phone, fax or email. If you send an email, try to avoid using the word 'kangaroo' because this seems to generate their auto-response. Refer to 'wildlife' instead.

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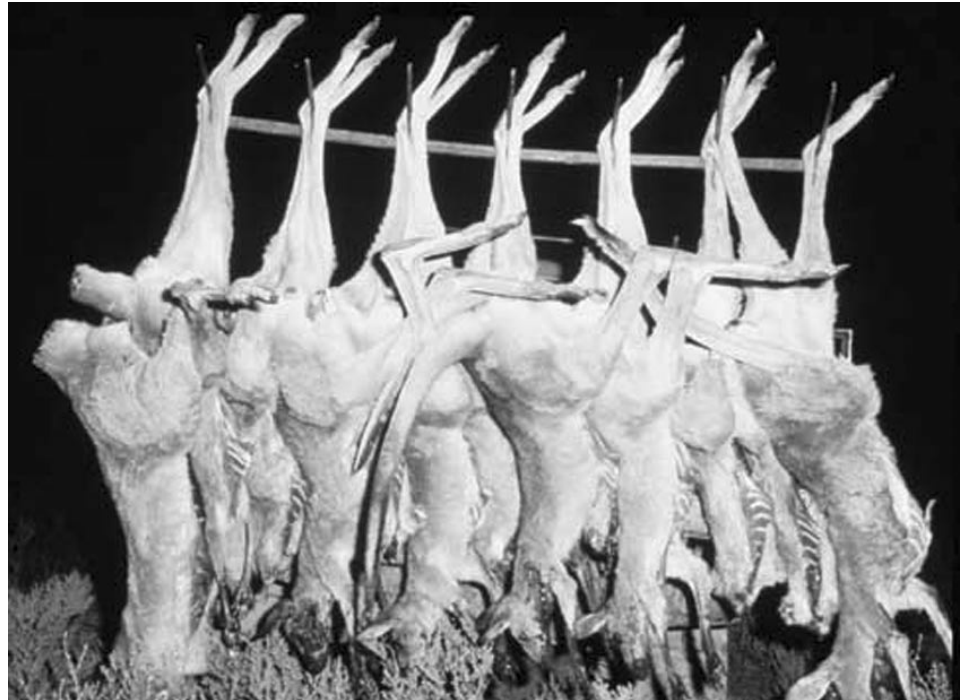


Please write to the following companies who also manufacture soccer cleats using kangaroo skins and urge them to use state of the art, synthetic microfiber instead.

Nike USA, Inc.
Consumer Affairs
P.O. Box 4027
Beaverton, OR 97076-4027
T: 800/806-6453 (ask to register the comment)
W: nike-store.custhelp.com

Reebok International Ltd.
1895 J. W. Foster Blvd.
Canton, MA 02021
T: 781/401-5000
F: 781/401-7402
Customer Service: 800/843-4444

PUMA Customer Service
5 Lyberty Way
Westford, MA 01886
T: 888/565-PUMA
F: 877/786-2329
E: CustomerEmail@puma.com



Order more campaign materials and help spread the word about kangaroo cruelty.

- Adidas Flyers (Under 100 free, then \$1 per 100)
- Postcards to Adidas (Free)
- Boycott Adidas stickers (50 for \$1)
- Petition to the Australian Prime Minister (Free)
- Video "Killing for Kicks" \$5

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/St/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please send orders to Viva! USA P.O. Box 4398 Davis, CA 95617 or fax to 530/759-8487