



CASHMERE



To find out more about fiber choices and how they relate to the four heaviest environmental impacts in the fashion industry, please see the Clean By Design website: www.nrdc.org/cleanbydesign



Soft Cashmere Is Hard on the Environment

Cashmere supply cannot keep up with demand in a sustainable way

A dramatic increase in cashmere demand has resulted in larger herd sizes on alpine grazeland that cannot withstand intensive grazing

Larger goat herds in sensitive terrain = extreme environmental stress

Cashmere goats are tough on the fragile land. They:

- Consume more than 10 percent of their body weight daily in roughage
- Eat very close to the roots, destroying plants
- Damage topsoil and grass root systems with their stiletto-like hoofs

The result has been desertification of the Inner Mongolian region, causing increasingly severe and frequent dust storms in China that travel around the world

Yield per cashmere goat is also very low:

- World production of coarse cashmere about 15,000 to 20,000 tons—as little as 6,500 tons of “pure cashmere” after scouring and de-hairing
- It takes a full year of growth from four goats to produce enough fiber for one sweater

There are new efforts in balancing herd ecology (see more info at www.ecologia.org), however currently the efforts are too small to counterbalance the rise in demand.

We recommend minimizing cashmere until sustainable supplies can catch up, and to seek fiber alternative whenever possible, like more environmentally-friendly Alpaca.

For detailed information on cashmere, please see our in-depth report and citations to research sources.