

although economic recession was mainly due to over-production of furs caused by themselves!?

Trapping in Finland

Almost all furs come from fur farms in Finland. During hunting season 1990-91 (from Aug to July) 83,000 muskrats, 75,000 raccoon dogs, 62,000 minks, 47,000 red foxes, 12,000 martens, 1,700 beavers, and 1,100 ferrets were trapped in Finland.

Trapping is a method used mostly for "preservation of game", and for that reason trapping occurs as well in summer time as in winter. The summer fur of animals is not of sufficient quality for fur industry. Unfortunately, we do not know how many furs of trapped animals are sold in fur auctions in Finland but the percentage must be very small, especially when compared with Canada and the United States.

One exception is muskrat. All muskrat furs are from trapped animals. Again, we do not exactly know how many of them are sold in Finland, but we are able to guess that the number is no more than some tens of thousands.

Muskrats have been trapped by drowning leg hold traps and drowning box traps. All other fur animals have been trapped by killing traps. In the bill for a new hunting law the drowning leg hold traps for muskrat are forbidden as a hunting method, possibly the drowning box traps, too.

Legislation for fur farming

In many municipalities farmer does not need any licence to build fur farm houses because these are mentioned as "light buildings". To build a fur farm does not take a lot of money, and that is why farmers normally do not need subsidies from the government unlike farmers who build e.g. cow farms. Furthermore, to be able to establish a cow farm a person has to build a proper dung pit to prevent environment pollution - but not when establishing a fur farm. Finally, fur farms do not have an animal quota permission. The only demands the Finnish legislation sets up for farms deal with the size of cages and some other animal protection things such as ensuring proper shelter against different weather conditions, feeding of animals, drinking water etc.

To put these facts together there are hardly any ways how to keep farms in control or to "blackmail" them to make some efforts for e.g. nature conservation. Water protection authorities have set up many directions to improve environment conservation conditions on farms, but these directions do actually not provide any measures for the protection of environment. Certain regulations should be set up in a legislation for that purpose.

Animal protection legislation sets measurements for cages as follows:

- fox and other fox-sized animals (practically means raccoon dog): size of a basic cage is 240x105x60 cm. A basic cage could be divided into smaller cages as follows: to 2 cages of 120x105x60 cm when 3 animals are allowed to be put into each cage; to 3 cages of 80x105x60 cm when 2 animals are allowed to be put into each cage; and to 4 cages when 1 animal is allowed to be put into each cage. Normally 2-3 blue foxes are put into a cage, but only 1 silver or red fox (because these fight easily against each other in a cage).

- mink and other mink-sized animals (practically means ferret): size of a basic cage is 60x30x38 cm. Only one mink but more than one ferret are allowed to put into a cage.