

Textile Exchange responds to PETA allegations against the Responsible Down Standard

Updated: June 6, 2016



In the light on the ongoing pressure from PETA on individual brands, we feel that it is important to point out the facts as simply and clearly as possible.

While we are disappointed by PETA's efforts to undermine the RDS and the companies using it, we are more confident than ever that the standard is achieving what it was set out to do. Based on the information gathered from the investigations carried out by TE, Control Union, and the companies involved, it is clear that there is absolutely no RDS-certified product linked to any live-plucking.

RDS Farms

- RDS certified farms may not carry any non-certified ducks or geese
- There can be no live-plucking or force-feeding on RDS certified farms
- Evidence of live-plucking or force-feeding on an RDS certified farm would result in immediate revocation of the certificate, and the supply chain involved would be notified
- TE, through the certification bodies, has access to the list of all farms certified to the RDS

RDS Slaughterhouses

- It is possible for both certified and non-certified birds to be processed at an RDS-certified slaughterhouse as long as the certified and non-certified birds are clearly identified and separated by space and/or time.
- The down and feathers collected from the certified birds must be clearly identified and separated from non-certified down and feathers by space and/or time
- The TE Content Claim Standard sets out the physical and administrative segregation requirements, and has been in use with multiple standards for years.
- Only shipments of down and feathers with a corresponding transaction certificate issued by the Certification Body may be claimed as RDS certified product.

RDS Down Processors

- It is possible for both certified and non-certified down and feathers to be processed at an RDS-certified processor as long as the certified and non-certified down and feathers are clearly identified and separated by space and/or time.

- The TE Content Claim Standard sets out the physical and administrative segregation requirements, and has been in use with multiple standards for years.
- Only shipments of down and feathers with a corresponding transaction certificate issued by the Certification Body may be claimed as RDS certified product.

Down suppliers

In the case of PETA calling out any down supplier (and their customers) for receiving live-plucked down, we can comment on the following:

- It is possible for a down supplier to buy and sell both certified and non-certified products.
- However, they would not be able to sell products as RDS unless they have fully met the chain of custody requirements of the CCS.

PETA claim: *"Also troubling: None of the above companies appears to be violating the RDS, which actually allows companies like Sea Feather, Allied, and Down Decor to buy and sell live-plucked feathers, making already-complex supply chains even murkier and casting even more doubt on the effectiveness of the standards."*

[\(http://investigations.peta.org/eddie-bauer-lands-end-live-pluck-geese/\)](http://investigations.peta.org/eddie-bauer-lands-end-live-pluck-geese/)

- It is important to note that many of the down suppliers, such as Allied and Down Decor, already had procedures in place to prevent sourcing from live-plucked birds; they chose to work with the RDS as it provided additional rigor and credibility to their existing practices.
- Many RDS certified suppliers are working to only source 100% RDS certified down and feathers.
- The RDS is an important tool for consumers to make choices that align with their values, and to signal demand for ethical practices.
- The RDS logo is a consumer's assurance that the down and/or feathers in a given product have come from birds that have not been live-plucked, force-fed, and that have had their five freedoms respected.
- There has been no evidence that any RDS-certified product has originated, or could have originated, from live-plucked geese. So far, we have only found evidence that the standard has been fully effective in meeting its promises.