

# THE GLOBAL TRACEABLE DOWN STANDARD



The Global Tracable Down Standard (Global TDS) ensures that down in garments and other household and commercial products comes from a responsible source that respects animal welfare and can be transparently traced.

## DOWN AS A PRODUCT

The global sourcing of down is complicated as down typically comes from the food industry and then goes through multiple cleaning and sorting processes to get to the final product form. In this down supply chain, birds may be force fed to enlarge the liver for foie gras production or even live plucked to get more than one harvest of down from a single bird. Collector based supply chains run the same risk through small holder family farms. Therefore, animal welfare is a critical issue to manage in the down production process.



## THE STANDARD

The Global TDS establishes a framework for a down supply chain, animal welfare and traceable content claims assurance program. Recognizing the multiple channels brands and suppliers may source

from, the standard covers both industrialized supply chains in the food sector, and collector based supply chains involved with multi-family farms. The standard includes criteria for animal welfare and prohibits the practices of force feeding and live plucking. It also

defines traceability requirements, from parent farm to factory, to ensure that compliant down is the only down material used in finished, certified goods. Every link in the supply chain is reviewed from the parent farm to the finished goods factory for:

- > Animal welfare, including non-force feeding and non-live plucking.
- > Traceability management systems, including all documents, showing an unbroken chain of custody of the verified down.

This standard was developed in an open, consensus-based process with stakeholders representing industry, animal welfare, trade associations and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The consensus development process means that a broad range of interested parties had the opportunity to jointly establish the requirements of the standard and the assurances in protecting animal welfare and providing full traceability.

## KEY REQUIREMENTS

**Animal Welfare:** The standard helps assure that down and feather material used in products are produced without causing unnecessary harm to animals. Producers must conform to existing local animal welfare laws and adopt best practices based on the International Finance Corporation Good Practice Note on Animal Welfare in Livestock Operations. These best practices are based on well-established protocols such as:



- > Protocol on Improved Protection and Respect for the Welfare of Animals
- > Treaty of Amsterdam 1997
- > The European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes
- > UK Farm Animal Welfare Council, the “Five Freedoms”
- > United Kingdom’s Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
- > World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Guidelines
- > The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
- > A continuous chain of custody documented from parent farm to finished goods factory.
- > Label tracking of the traceable down at every stage of the supply chain.
- > Segregation/separation of traceable down at every level of the supply chain to avoid mixing with non-certified down.
- > Management and worker training and education at every level of the supply chain.

The down and feather material cannot come from farms that engage in force feeding or live plucking. Animal welfare is evaluated by visually inspecting animals and verifying handling practices from the parent farm to the slaughterhouse through (including but not limited to) veterinary documentation reviews; as well as interviews with farm workers and owners.

**Traceability:** The Global TDS involves a chain of custody component that verifies traceability systems are in place throughout the entire supply chain. Full transparency is required in order to evaluate all levels of the supply chain including parent farms, hatcheries, breeding and intermediary raising farms, slaughterhouses, collectors, down processors, down wholesalers, transport vessels and finished goods factories. NSF will facilitate the supply chain mapping process prior to certification.

Important areas of this requirement include:

- > Presence of traceability management systems including: policies, procedures, accountability, training, implementation, communication, monitoring, and continuous improvement.

**Education:** The Global TDS includes education and training on animal welfare and traceability requirements at each level of the supply chain. It is only through education that the industry will be able to move away from poor animal welfare practices and realize the importance of causing no unnecessary harm to the birds.

## THE NSF DIFFERENCE:

Not only is NSF International a fully accredited certification body for the Global TDS, we actually wrote the standard.

- > Full traceability of down means customers can be assured no other non-certified down has been mixed in during the process.
- > Auditing starts at the parent farm, whether or not the parent bird down is used in products. This is critically important as birds at the parent farm are at the highest risk for live plucking since the birds there live longer – for up to 4 years.
- > Certification is provided not only at the product level but as a whole to the full supply chain feeding into a particular line of product.

## CONTACT US

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