



ANIMALS AND MONEY

This part of BioS Reports unravels relationships between animals and the economy.

Fur-midable Dilemma: Economic Ramifications of Banning Fur Farms in Poland

Aleksandra Brylant

Animal fur has long been prized for its ability to protect against harsh weather conditions. Over time, it has also gained commercial value and has even been used as a form of currency or social status during different historical periods.



Today, furs are used to make coats, jackets and other accessories, and are an important part of the fashion industry. European countries are the most important producers of fur pelts. In terms of the number of animals kept for fur, Poland ranks second (20.8% of the European market) after Denmark (41.3%) [1]. Poland's farms are dominated by mink farming with almost 9 million animals, representing 98% of the total fur production in the country.

Fur farming has consistently ignited heated debates. On one side are animal rights activists and local communities protesting against the negative impact of the industry, on the other are fur farmers, expressing concerns about their livelihoods [2]. Concerns regarding animal welfare relate to farming conditions, including overcrowding and lack of access to fresh air and natural light. In addition, the industry produces significant amounts of waste, which can harm the environment by contributing to pollution. In the face of significant public opposition, many countries have opted to close fur farms or to implement partial restrictions [3]. Although no legislation has been passed in Poland yet, a survey in 2021 revealed that 72% of its citizens support ending fur farming [3].

Despite widespread social support, the sudden closure of fur farms could pose a challenge, particularly in economic terms. Poland does not play a significant role as an intermediary in the sale of raw animal skins or in the production of fur garments [2]. More than 90% of the production is destined for export, accounting for 0.16% of total exports and generating revenues of approx. 350 million euros per year [3]. Farmers also argue that their business allows the use of leftovers that are not suitable for human food production. Furthermore, phasing out the farms could lead to an increase in the price of food of animal origin.

At present, mink and fox farms effectively use around 400,000-420,000 tonnes of by-products from the fish and meat industries, which they buy from companies [4]. The average price by-products is around 0,1€/kg for poultry and 0,19€/kg for fish, adding to a price of 0,14€/kg for companies to render animal by-products [4]. As carnivorous fur farms are phased out, these costs would have to be added to the meat price. Ultimately, closure of the industry would entitle fur farmers for compensation. Based on compensations of around 140 € per animal paid in countries where a ban has been introduced, such as the Czech Republic, the size of the Polish market would lead to compensation claims of around 1.3 billion € [4].

In conclusion, the ethical and economic considerations of this extensive industry make a quick agreement on closing fur farms difficult. In the light of the arguments and calculations set out above, any decision on the future of fur farming in Poland must carefully weigh various factors to ensure a balanced solution.

EXCURSIONS AND OTHER NEWS

Small insights in BioS points of view, field trips, and other stuff we do.

The Biology Pub Quiz

Patience Blossfeld Dodgson

The eighth edition of the Bio Faculty Pub Quiz was on July 31st. As always, the quiz masters Oliver Zierau and Aaron Anselmi provided seven rounds of varying difficulty. The categories varied from which Nick the question was referring to, to recognizing the two songs in a mash up, to a picture round of various cities. The quiz certainly tested participants on a wide variety of topics!

The competition was fierce, with teams puzzling to figure out how many balloons it would take to actually lift a house or the names of eight Disney princesses. In the end, though, gold went to *Ethikkommission* along with medals for the team. Silver went to *Reviewer 2 Hates Us*, and bronze went to *Quest in Peace*.

All proceeds from the Pub Quiz were donated to this year's iGem team MOCHI, totalling to 370 Euroes.

Register your team next time if you want to try your luck!



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A Bittersweet BBQ

Philine Lea Hampe



On a perfect summer evening in July, we were greeted by the delicious smell of a BBQ already in full swing. The generous spread of food and drinks provided by Prof. Reinhardt was a welcome reward after all our hard work on last month's special edition. To complete the picture, we hung up some balloons and called it a party - celebrating 50 issues of BioS Reports!

Naturally, at BioS Reports, we also mean business, so we spent some time planning our upcoming projects. After enjoying our semester break, we look forward to returning with fresh energy. Who knows, you might even see some new faces joining our team soon!

As the sun set, we gathered around a small bonfire - the perfect setting to say our goodbyes. After all, our celebration was also a farewell to our long-standing team member Simon, who recently completed his Master's degree. We took this opportunity to thank him for his dedication, mentorship and hard work over the years. We wish Simon the absolute best for his next chapter and can't wait to feature his post-graduation journey in one of our upcoming issues!

