

THE

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118th Annual Convention

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Hershey Lodge

325 University Drive

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For more information go to:

[leatherchemists.org/
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**REAL
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LEATHER BY NUMBERS:

FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE US LEATHER INDUSTRY AND BEYOND

Note: All figures as of January 2021 or latest available.

ZERO cattle are killed to make US leather. US hides have been valued at **JUST 1-2%** of a cow's total value for the last two years, which is why they are considered a by-product and often end up as waste. The average price per head of US cattle is \$2,000-2.200, while hides vary in price from **\$5 TO \$35 PER PIECE**, if sold at all. ⁽¹⁾

330M hides come from the meat and dairy industries around the world. Approximately **34M** were processed the US. ⁽²⁾ **AS MANY AS 2.4M US HIDES** ended up as landfill in 2019, this is **7%** of the national total.

Worldwide the waste figure is approximately **40%** or **132M** hides. With the average hide weighing 25Kg this means that **3M TONNES** are thrown away ever year.

Leather production turns more than **4.5M TONNES OF** potential waste, every year, into usable, durable goods. This saves **2.7M TONS OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** from landfill sites. ⁽³⁾

Production, processing and distribution of hides and leather products directly employs an estimated **5,486** individuals, who collectively earn more than **\$384M**. US exports of hides and leather was over **\$1.5BILLION** in 2021. ⁽⁴⁾

The US exports approximately **95%** of all cattle hide and wet blue leather products it produces, worth **\$2.85BILLION**. ⁽⁵⁾

Around **45%** of global leather production is used to make footwear, **22%** for clothing, bags and accessories, **18%** for car upholstery, and about **15%** for furniture. ⁽⁶⁾

Water consumption for the production of leather from cattle hides has fallen by more than **35%** in the past 25 years, down from **60 CUBIC-METERS** per ton of hides to **38 CUBIC-METERS** per ton. US tanneries are required, by law, to connect to effluent treatment plants to prevent pollution. ⁽⁷⁾

Leather will biodegrade in **LESS THAN 50 YEARS**. In contrast, it can take **500 YEARS** or more for synthetics, made from petrochemicals, to degrade. ⁽⁸⁾

ReFed's conversion rate for food waste is for **EACH METRIC TON OF WASTE DISPOSAL** there is **9.8 7MT** of **CO2 EQUIVALENT** emitted. In this case, mostly as methane. ⁽⁹⁾

This factsheet is produced by the Leather and Hide Council of America (L&HCA), established to promote the US leather industry which is responsible for a significant proportion of the international trade in hides. The L&HCA works to establish best practice in US leather production and to share this worldwide. Figures quoted refer to the USA unless otherwise stated.

SOURCE:

- (1) <https://downloads.usda.library.cornell.edu/usda-esmis/files/rx913p88g/w0893g25p/5d86qb66f/1stk0223.pdf>
- (2) <https://downloads.usda.library.cornell.edu/usda-esmis/files/r207tp32d/pg15cj85z/hd76t466z/lsan0422.pdf>
- (3) 2020 LHCA Infographic
- (4) John Dunham & Associates, Economic Impact of the Meat Industry (2016)
- (5) <https://thesustainabilityalliance.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/US-Hide-Skin-and-Leather-Factsheet-0420.pdf>
- (6) TBC
- (7) 2020 LHCA factsheet
- (8) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leather#:~:text=Leather%20biodegrades%20slowly%20E2%80%94taking%2025,or%20more%20years%20to%20decompose>
- (9) <https://insights-engine.refed.org/impact-calculator?inputs=%207B%22sector%22%3A%22manufacturing%22%2C%22type%22%3A%22fresh-meat-seafood%22%2C%22unit%22%3A%22tons%22%2C%22alternative%22%3Afalse%2C%22destinations%22%3A%20%22key%22%3A%22refuse-discards%22%2C%22current%22%3A1%7D%5D%7D>

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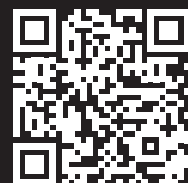
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