ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

Contemporary Leathers has identified a set of ten criteria to communicate the environmental benefits of each leather hide. The environmental benefits are included with each leather hide product specification.

1. Rapidly-renewable / Agricultural by-product – Leather hides are rapidly-renewable as the resource is renewed within a short period of time. Leather hides are a by-product from the food industry.

2. EARTHSAFE™ (Sustainable + Accredited For the Environment) : EARTHSAFE™ leathers are a collection with the highest standard of quality, natural beauty and environmental responsibility.

   Only the best hides local to the tannery are sourced, ensuring less need for processing and chemicals.

   EARTHSAFE™ leathers are produced by World's Best Practice tanneries, operating progressive environmental management systems certified to ISO 14001. The production is free of toxic substances such as chromium, PCP, AOX and only water-based dyes and finishes are used. The tanneries are at the forefront of technology, able to reduce nitrogen emissions by 80%, compared to the typical 30% reduction by conventional wastewater treatment plants.

   EARTHSAFE™ leathers are recognised as the optimum in environmental responsibility by the Lederinstitut Gerberschule Reutlingen, the world's leading Training, Testing and Research Centre for leather.

   EARTHSAFE™ leathers are durable and have met or exceeded the performance guidelines of the Commercial Leather Association of Australia and New Zealand (CLA).

   As a natural product with minimal chemical input, EARTHSAFE™ leathers do not negatively affect indoor air quality. EARTHSAFE™ leathers are reusable, recyclable and fully biodegradable.

3. Environmentally Improved Production Process - Tanneries can reduce their impact on the environment through energy and water conservation measures, equipment efficiency, energy and water source and use of non-hazardous substances. Conservation measures include energy and water awareness, management programs, recovery and reuse of heat energy and water, maintenance of equipment and use of skylights. Renewable energy is a cleaner energy source than coal and gas. Renewable energy sources include solar power, wind energy and hydropower. Non-potable water is water such as bore and rain water that is not treated to drinking water standard and is not meant for human consumption. Production can also be free of hazardous substances such as pentachlorophenol (PCP), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), formaldehyde, benzidine, hexavalent chromium, cadmium and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

4. Low-emitting product – Natural products such as leather hides are low in volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions. Low emitters of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) can be further identified if the product has been tested in a dynamic environmental chamber to meet scientifically established standards.

5. Reusable / Recyclable – Uncontaminated leather hides are reusable and recyclable.

6. Biodegradable – The ability of a substance to decompose or breakdown through the action of micro-organisms (e.g. bacteria) or physical processes (e.g. sunlight). EARTHSAFE™ leathers are fully biodegradable.

7. Tannery operates an Environmental Management System – An environmental management system (EMS) provides a systematic and structured approach to managing environmental policy. The implementation of an EMS provides the framework to achieve the environmental policy. An EMS can be certified to a standard such as ISO 14001 or EMAS.

8. Tannery has Environmental Policy – An environmental policy is a statement of a tannery's intentions and principles in relation to its overall environmental performance.

9. Eco-Label - A third party seal or logo indicating that the product has met a set of environmental or social standards.

10. Tannery operates a Quality Management System – The tannery operates a quality management system (QMS). A focus on quality means less waste. Waste can be in the form of processes, what is not done right the first time, an incorrect invoice, a defective product, a misdirected shipment etc. A commitment to quality can positively impact the environment. A QMS can be certified to a standard such as ISO 9001.