



23 March 2026

To whom it may concern

Brush-tail possum fur recovery and animal welfare in New Zealand

In New Zealand the common brush-tail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) is an introduced animal that has become a pest, with significant impacts on agriculture and the country's ecosystems.

The New Zealand Government recognises that responsible possum fur recovery is one of many solutions contributing to possum control. New Zealand's Department of Conservation supports the responsible recovery of possum fur on public conservation land. All possum fur trapping practices on public conservation land must conform to the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999. For more information, I would encourage you to visit www.doc.govt.nz.

While effective pest control is essential to protect New Zealand's environmental and economic values, the challenge is to ensure that techniques used are effective and humane. Animal welfare is extremely important to New Zealanders, including the welfare of wild animals. The New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy has two aims: care of animals – we meet the needs of our animals and avoid causing unreasonable or unnecessary harm to animals through our activities; and reputation for integrity – New Zealand's animal welfare practices add value to our exports and contribute to our reputation as a responsible agricultural producer. This acknowledges that animal welfare matters to animals and to people, that we have responsibilities towards animals in our care and that are affected by our activities, and that using animals is acceptable as long as it is humane. The Animal Welfare Act 1999 is the main legislation covering animal welfare in New Zealand. It covers all animals, including animals in a wild state, and it sets standards for traps and trapping.

There has been a focus over the years in New Zealand on understanding the impacts of pest control and hunting on animal welfare, and on improving techniques to make them more humane, and finding more humane alternatives. This work is supported by the government, and by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee – an independent body charged with advising the Minister on animal welfare matters.

The New Zealand Fur Council has developed an industry wide Trapper Best Practice Guideline for possum trappers that contributes to this aim. The Guideline is intended to validate and lift environmental, animal welfare, and product standards. This includes actively engaging with the trapping industry to further educate and encourage best practice trapping procedures. The Fur Council promotes visibility and transparency of fur procurement information through on-line media.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Patricia Mead'.

Patricia Mead
Acting Director Animal Health and Welfare