



DOWNPASS 2017: The down and feather industry presents the new Zero Tolerance Standard

- **Standard for the exclusion of live plucking, of products from foie gras production and for the monitoring of breeding conditions, coming into force on January 1st**
- **60 companies, 16 countries: Best Practice international - DOWNPASS 2017**
- **Against mandatory seals**
The industry of down and feathers fights for free assortment policy of trading and industry

The idea of animal welfare plays an increasingly important role in the scope of activities of the down and feather industry. Already in the year 1995, the Association of the German Down and Feather Industry VDFI launched the first European agreement for the regulation of the rearing of geese and ducks in the agricultural livestock farming. After four years of intensive work with animal welfare organisations, scientists, expert groups and stakeholder, the agreement was released and was incorporated into national law. In 1999, through an initiative of the down and feather industry, live plucking became forbidden by law Europe-wide.

The industry of down and feathers which utilizes by-product from the poultry industry and which only make up 10 to 15% of their economic success, had to fight for a long period for more influence on the breeding conditions and the way of obtaining of down and feathers. Only because of the increasing public interest in animal welfare and the resulting demand for information changed the conditions: The industry of down and feathers could move forward and could exert influence.

The next milestone was the voluntary agreement of the enterprises to make the origin of the raw products traceable and to also have them be audited. Various initiatives of the industry of down and feathers like the TRAUMPASS certification, which dates back to the year 1974 and which excludes any products from living animals from 2012. The following DOWNPASS, in its first release, is following up on the task to ensure the origin of the down and feathers are from ethical correct sources. The number of the certified products has tripled since 2010.

In close cooperation with animal welfare organizations such as the “Deutsche Tierschutzbund (German Animal Welfare Association)” and dedicated expert groups and stakeholder, this commitment was expanded. In combination with a quality control, which only allows new down and feathers, this approach symbolises two guiding principles of the industry of down and feathers: animal welfare and quality. Because of this strong commitment from the industry of down and feathers, the traceability system was built up which becomes effective as the new Zero Tolerance Standard.

This new standard is the result of a continuous improvement process involving the public. Zero Tolerance means that the filling materials do not come from live animals or from the foie gras production. Moreover, the breeding conditions are monitored on the farms and the products have to be traceable back to the corresponding breeding area. In addition, the parent farms can be taken into account concerning the examinations. Down to the farm level, parallel production is prohibited to make sure that on an audited farm no live plucking and no foie gras production takes place. According to the DOWNPASS 2017, the mixing of audited filling materials with other down and feathers is also prohibited. Only under these circumstances the adherence of the Zero Tolerance Standard is guaranteed.



The standard is devised in a way that it can be applied worldwide. It takes into account any large farms to small poultry farms up to collecting companies to ensure that the obtaining down and feather is done correctly and comprehensively. In addition to the ethical component, there is also the quality control which guarantees that the products that are used are in accordance with the two highest classes of the EN 12934. To achieve this goal, the industry relies on mystery shopping and purchases of concealed products on the Point of Sale which are subsequently checked by accredited institutes concerning their ingredients and their declaration of the contents. By means of individual numbering on the sewn-in label the producer and the batch can be found out. This happens with notarial monitoring. The combination of animal welfare and quality assurance offers no other Zero Tolerance Standard on the market.

Imprinted on the product, the consumer finds the DOWNPASS 2017 label, which contributes to ensure the purchase decision, so that the purchasers know that he/she has bought a product which contains natural filling material and that it comes from controlled sources.

And the development continues with a pooling of the audits and quality monitoring. The companies still work on increasing the effectiveness and the efficiency of this system by avoiding double audits and open up new audit fields.

In the meantime, the chains of custody in 16 countries worldwide are currently monitored for the DOWNPASS 2017 by independent auditing organisations, this includes, for example a 100% control – announced of unannounced – of high risk areas which other standards do not have.

Because of the globalization of the down and feather industry, it was the first branches of the industry which had to meet this challenge. The chains of custody are branched out: Textiles, filling material, production of ready-made articles and packaging take place normally at various production sites. The DOWNPASS auditing covers all of the above mentioned. An auditing process only for filling material takes about five working days on average to complete.

In December 2016, the industry of down and feathers has created a new web page: the bilingual web, 40facts.org, is represented in German and English. The key elements of the Zero Tolerance Standard explain the advantages of the trading and the consumers in a facts-check comparison to the other approaches. The site is growing daily. Companies which orient towards animal welfare and product policy, show their true faces. Please visit us online at www.40facts.org.

The industry stands for a self-determined assortment policy, both on trade and on the industry side. Commitment attempts on single seals, as they are currently circulating in the European market, combined with the constraint for down-free product alternatives and direct reporting in the event of breaches of an animal welfare organization, is rejected by the down and feather industry.

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Traumpass e.V.
Thomas-Mann-Str. 9
55122 Mainz

Tel.: 06131 588560
Fax: 06131 5885615

E-mail:
info@traumpass.com
Internet: www.40facts.org

Für Rückfragen steht Ihnen die
Geschäftsführerin des Verbandes, Frau
Dr. Juliane Hedderich unter folgenden
Kontaktdaten gern zur Verfügung:
info@traumpass.com oder telefonisch
unter 06131 / 588 56-0.



Below, you will find exemplarily the statements from various European companies, which have decided to pass an audit according to the Zero Tolerance Standard DOWNPASS 2017.

Trendsetter Home Furnishings Ltd

Peter Roebuck

Head of Procurement

Manchester, Great Britain

„The traceability of feather and down used in our natural fill products and auditing our suppliers to ensure they comply with ethical procedures is something the Trendsetter group is fully committed to. To guarantee that our suppliers source feather and down from geese and ducks that are the by-product of the food industry, and have not been force-fed or live plucked, we annually audit all of our partners through the independently recognised IDFL and have done for many years. At the start of 2016 we launched an internal down awareness project - we have been working with IDFL throughout the process to upgrade our audits including more rigorous farm visits and have chosen the Downpass 2017 standard as the audit basis. Downpass 2017 has been recognised by some UK retailers as the preferred audit method of choice – the zero tolerance approach taken by Downpass 2017 standard is what stood out for them. The added benefit of Downpass is the guarantee of quality which is also important in the market to differentiate our products from other qualities. “

Zhejiang Samsung Down Co., Ltd.

Michael Mao

Director, Vice-General Manager

China

„HANGZHOU SAMSUNG DOWN gives top priority to animal protection and sustainable development to support a most natural and healthy lifestyle. Our mission is to manufacture the best down products in China – we ban and exclude feathers and down obtained by live-plucking and forced feeding. “

SN Interplume SAS

Jean Philippe Catusse

Directeur Général / CEO

France

„Why have you chosen an auditing according to the DOWNPASS Standard 2017?

The DOWNPASS Standard 2017 is the more realistic existing standard. This is the one most of our finished product manufacturers, bedding & down jacket customers, have been asking for. This is on the other hand a well worldwide recognized standard & that is clear for both industry, manufacturers, retailers & customers side. As SN Interplume has a direct flow



control of the incoming material, the traceability is a key point for all our customers & the DOWNPASS Standard is a given proof by a third part auditor & association. “

„Are the audits according to the DOWNPASS 2017 already completed for your company?
SN Interplume Company has been completing the DOWNPASS 2017 Standard & was already before Downpass audited under previous standard. “

„How important is the labelling of your filled products, bedding articles and articles of clothing with the DOWNPASS 2017 for your POS?

SN Interplume does not produce any finished products.

But most of our customers do require DOWNPASS Certification to be sure that the traceability & all related contents of the standard have been audited & controlled by an independent third party & body.

DOWNPASS Standard 2017 is for the retailer & the end customer a guarantee.

DOWNPASS Standard 2017 shows that the F&D is a unique product, renewable coming from green source, respecting the environment & the traceability control. “

Quilts of Denmark A/S

Hans Erik Schmidt

CEO

Denmark

„Why have you chosen an auditing according to the DOWNPASS Standard 2017?

We are a fairly young company and right from the start we only used materials, whereby the entire process takes into account the fundamental values of environmental, social and animal ethics. The ability to trace the raw materials back to the original source is of utmost importance to us and we constantly work to meet the strictest and credible audit standards within animal ethics. We find that the DOWNPASS Standard 2017, fit this very well – it is strict and credible. “

„Are the audits according to the DOWNPASS 2017 already completed for your company?
Yes, we have finished auditing for the DOWNPASS 2017. “

„How important is the labelling of your filled products, bedding articles and articles of clothing with the DOWNPASS 2017 for your POS?

Animal ethics is an important part of the overall values of our company. The DOWNPASS 2017 label is a great way to show this on our products. “