

Sandy Reports

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Dear Subscriber,

The International Luxury Outerwear Exposition (ILOE) opened Sunday and is currently underway until Tuesday in Chicago. Preliminary reaction indicated traffic started slow but increased significantly throughout the day. By the close of the first day, exhibitors noted attendance was “very strong”. The overall mood at the show was deemed as “upbeat”. Retailers interviewed noted they were pleased to see so much strong fashion being showcased.



Early reaction on business was quoted as “much better than expected” and “very pleased” from vendors interviewed.

As one exhibitor was being interviewed early afternoon for this story, she had buyers walk in to her booth ... with business later confirmed.



The opening night GLO fashion show was held last night to an enthusiastic audience ... and was preceded by cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and a live garment auction with proceeds earmarked for FICA.

Stay tuned for a complete show wrap-up in next week's newsletter.

Fur Commission USA (FCUSA) hosts LVMH. Earlier this month, representatives for the Kering Group and Louis Vuitton-Moët Hennessy (LVMH) traveled to Chicago and met with US and Canadian producers of wild and farmed fur. It was an opportunity for the FCUSA to detail, for these important European luxury brands, the strict standards that are in place for humane trapping and farm animal care in North America. These two organizations combined own over 20 of the top luxury fashion brands worldwide and have close to €30 billion in annual sales.

The group then traveled to the Zimbal farms in Sheboygan WI (as reported). The guests commented on the contentment of the mink, the amount of time and work that went into the health and welfare of the animals and the attention to detail the farmers exercised. They were also impressed by the heritage and family-nature of U.S. mink farming. The LVMH group would like to bring more colleagues from their organization on a return visit.



(left) The Zimbal family and guests from LVMH and Kering Group.



Dr. John Easley, DVM, details animal care to Dr. Helen Crowley (Kering Group)



Cathelijne Klomp (I) of LVMH and Dr. Helen Crowley of the Kering Group examine the mink.

Legal Challenge to CITES Appendix II Export Permit Program. Earlier this year, the Fur Information Council of America (FICA) intervened in a federal lawsuit brought by WildEarth Guardians (WEG) in Montana. WEG is a western-based animal rights group that regularly litigates animal protection issues. The case alleges that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) because it failed to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or a more detailed Environmental Impact Statement of the CITES Appendix II Export program (CEP). Under CEP, FWS authorizes through the issuance of permits the exportation of certain Appendix II furbearers, including lynx, bobcat, otter, brown bear and gray wolves. WEG asked the Court to halt the CEP program – thereby halting the exportation of Appendix II species -- until the agency complies with NEPA and completes an environmental analysis.

FICA counsel submitted detailed legal comments in support of the program. There were also extensive comments filed by several animal rights groups arguing that FWS failed to meet its legal obligations under NEPA, and that the draft EA was woefully inadequate, and that a full environmental impact assessment is required. The FWS was given an April 18 deadline to provide the Court with its final recommendation. Because of the extensive number of detailed comments received, however, FWS requested a 30-day extension of time to report back to the Court. The Court granted the extension. FWS must now provide its final determination to the Court by May 18.

The likelihood is that if the FWS reaffirms the findings of the EA to the Court, and proposes that the CEP continue to function as is, the WEG will move the case forward into full litigation mode.

A Sign of the Times. International luxury brand Ralph Lauren, who this past winter had shearling fur in their Fifth Avenue windows, closed that location last week due to sagging sales. Having signed a 15-year lease in 2013, the brand was paying \$25 million annual rent. With no new tenant slated to move in to the 39,000 s.f. space, Lauren continues to pay the rent – which amounts to \$70,000 per day!

Google Searches increase for fur. According to the International Fur Federation (IFF), consumer interest in fur has grown worldwide with online searches for real fur products increasing every year.

According to Google Trends data, the data reveals that searches for ‘fur’ are rising, with an increase of 8.6% from 2004 – 2017. In fact, October – January 2016/17 has seen the broad search term ‘fur’ reach an all-time high, following steady increases since 2009. Denmark, the UK and Canada are amongst the top ten countries searching online for fur.

The IFF collated global search volumes through publically available global Google Trends data on terms related to fur items, including; 'fur', 'fur coat', 'fur jacket', 'fur bomber' and 'fur fashion' as well as 'fur pelts', 'mink fur', 'sable fur' and more. These terms were selected to track consumer interest globally in fur.

Mark Oaten, global CEO of the IFF, said: *"It's great to see that despite PETA buying shares in LVMH, using increasingly shocking PR stunts and pressuring designers to stop using fur, that people continue to exercise their freedom of choice and choose what they want to wear, not what they are told to wear. With an increasing demand by consumers and its prevalence on the runways worldwide, the fur industry is showing how truly resilient it is."*

Regards,

Sandy Blye

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+1.917.691.3015; sandyblye@gmail.com