



# FINDING THE TRUTH ABOUT “LIVE-PLUCKING” & “HARVESTING”

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Recent European TV stories and newspaper articles have created a frenzy of concern about the issue of “live-plucking” and “live-harvesting” of down and feathers from geese and ducks.

## What is IDFL doing about these issues?

- Separate fact from fiction in these news stories.
- Cooperate with suppliers, manufacturers and retailers to understand the problems.
- Work with associations to gather and publish correct information:
  - European Down and Feather Association (EDFA).
  - Chinese Feather and Down Industrial Association (CFDIA).
  - International Down and Feather Bureau (IDFB).
  - Hungarian Down Association.
  - Other local associations.
- Continue to promote quality and humane production of down and feathers.
- Certify the origin of down and feathers from humane sources.

## Where do down and feathers come from?

The majority of down and feathers are a by-product of the food processing industry. Food products are the main value of duck and geese farming. Down and feathers are collected during the food-preparation process.

IDFL estimates that **99%** of the world’s down and feathers are by-products of the food industry. Therefore, no more **than 1%** of the world’s supply is “harvested” or “live-plucked”.

## What is “harvesting” and “live-plucking”?

For centuries family farms have traditionally removed down clusters and very small feathers from geese during the moulting season. The tradition has nearly disappeared. However, the process continues to occur in some east European countries and in Asia.

“Live-plucking” is wrongly used to describe two very different processes. These two processes must be defined separately. “Live-plucking” should never be used to describe both processes. The definitions and differences of the two terms are listed below:

1. **Harvesting.** The laws of the European Union (EU) allow for legal “harvesting” of soft down and small feathers during the moulting season. The laws require special handling of the birds during the moulting season when down and feathers are naturally lost. In China, “harvesting” of soft down and feathers from geese also occurs in a few flocks that often originated from east European countries.
2. **Live-Plucking.** Unfortunately, a few farms perform a dry “live-pluck” of geese without following the strict EU animal protection laws. This disregard for EU laws and the health and safety of the animals occurs in small numbers of farms in Europe and in Asia. “Live plucking” is condemned by both EDFA in Europe and CFDIA in China, as well as all other down and feather organizations.

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