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Montreal - A nationwide poll of Canadian men and women has shown that men are becoming as interested in buying and wearing fur as women are.

The telephone survey of 500 men and 500 women conducted by the NFO/Canadian Facts Group for the Fur Council of Canada and the Fur Institute of Canada revealed that 19% of Canadian women now own a fur garment. The highest ownership level is in Quebec Province at 26% per cent, with fashion conscious Montreal beating the average with 32%.

The number of Canadian men now wearing fur was found to be 7%, up from 5% recorded in the last survey five years ago. Even more as many men as women now say they are interested in buying a fur garment.

"The increase in men now wearing fur represents an extraordinary marketing opportunity." said Fur Council executive vice-president Alan Herscovici. "If I were a retailer, I'd think very seriously about marketing more aggressively to men."

AND YOUNGER WOMEN

The research also showed a surge of interest in fur among women in the 18-35 year old age group. Even among the youngest group polled, 18-34 years old, 6% said they are thinking about buying a fur garment in the next twelve months.

The study came up with important findings when exploring consumer knowledge and attitudes towards the fur trade.

-Almost 1/2 of Canadians - 46% - said they did not know that the fur trade is strictly regulated to ensure that only abundant furs are no endangered species are used.

-60% said they did not know about new humane trapping standards or the high standards of animal husbandry on fur farms.

"Clearly we still have a lot more work to do to keep consumers fully aware of high standards that prevail in our industry," said Rob Cahill, executive director of the Fur Institute.