



## WASHING AND SORTING DOWN AND FEATHERS (TYPICAL FACTORY PROCESS)

More than 99% of goose and duck down and feathers come as a by-product of the meat-packing industry. After the birds are slaughtered in the meat-processing plants the feathers are removed and brought to a feather processing plant.

### **At the feather processing plant the feathers and down go through the following process:**

1. The feathers are de-dusted to remove the majority of dirt and dust.
2. The feathers are then washed with special soaps and rinsed.
3. The washing and rinsing process continues until the feathers are clean enough to meet the stringent hygiene requirements of Japan, the EU and USDA.
4. During the drying process the down and feathers are placed in a centrifuge to remove the final rinse water.
5. After the initial drying, the feathers are placed in a pressure tank. The tank is injected with high pressure hot steam (130°C or 300°F) for 30 minutes.
6. The clean feathers are then sorted by size and feather type.

### **The cleanliness of down and feathers are measured after the shipment of bulk down or finished products as follows:**

1. The USA and EN standards require an Oxygen Number (this measures the amount of organic material on the surface of down and feathers) of less than 20. A clean sample is usually under 10. If it is 4.8 or less it can be called super-clean or hypoallergenic.
2. Turbidity (this measures the amount of dust in down and feathers) must be over 300 mm. The great majority of products are 700+ mm. A 500+ mm test result also allows the product to be called hypoallergenic.
3. Bioburden (This is a culture count of various bacteria for EU standards.)