



News Release

Sealskin Sales Reach Record High

IQALUIT, Nunavut (December 21, 2004) - Nunavut sealskins are selling for an all time high this year, says Environment Minister Olayuk Akesuk.

At the December 2004 Fur Harvesters Auction in North Bay Ontario, sealskins from Nunavut sold for an average of \$70 per pelt, with the best quality skins going for up to \$92 each.

“I am extremely pleased to see Nunavut sealskins selling for such high prices,” Akesuk said. “Compared to the mid-1990s when sealskins prices were averaging less than \$15, this is a clear indication of a revitalized market that will support sustainable, traditional livelihoods for our harvesters.”

By participating in the Fur Harvesters Auction Inc., Nunavut sealskins are available to the market in sufficient volume to attract buyer interest.

Nunavut sealskin prices have steadily increased since the territorial government implemented the sealskin purchase component of the Fur Price Program in 1995. A new grading system for sealskins, introduced in May of 2002, helps to ensure that Nunavut harvesters are providing top-quality skins to the international market.

“I am pleased that support provided by the Government of Nunavut helps make sealing a more profitable activity for hunters,” Akesuk said.

This year, over 7500 Nunavut sealskins were sent to the auction, with buyers from Denmark and Russia purchasing the bulk of the skins. Gross sales figures for 2004 neared \$450,000.

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