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Khamis

Hermes hit with ostrich farm cruelty claims

PARIS: Hermes was thrown onto the defensive over claims of cruelty at a farm that allegedly supplies skins used in its luxury handbags, the second such allegation in a year.

A spokeswoman for animal rights group Peta used the French fashion house's annual general meeting in Paris on Tuesday to grill Hermes chief executive officer Axel Dumas on a video showing ostriches being slaughtered at a South African farm.

Peta France spokeswoman Isabelle Goetz, who bought a share in Hermes to secure a seat at the AGM, condemned the suffering of ostriches at the farm, which she called an "exclusive Hermes supplier".

"Will Hermes some day stop using exotic skins?" she asked Dumas in front of hundreds of shareholders.

Dumas insisted that Hermes had "no exclusive ostrich supplier" and that the company "fully meets its responsibilities in its partnerships with farms with which we work".

"We ask all our partners to not only respect international laws but also Hermes' rules, which are much stricter," he said.

The Peta video, published online in February, shows an ostrich being rammed into a pen to be stunned and then having its throat slit in front of other birds. — AFP