Responsible Wool Standard 2.2

User Manual

RAF-201a-V2.2-2021.10.01

The RWS 2.2 replaces RWS 2.1 and is effective as of October 1st, 2021. All audits conducted after January 1st, 2022 shall be conducted using RWS 2.2.

English is the official language of the Responsible Wool Standard. In any case of inconsistency between versions, reference shall be made to the English version.

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The RWS will undergo a revision process at least every five years. The next revision is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2024. You may submit feedback to the standard at any time; send to ResponsibleWool@TextileExchange.org. Points of clarification may be incorporated into RWS guidance documents prior to 2024. More substantive feedback or suggested changes will be collected and reviewed as part of the next revision of the standard.

Document Revision History

Responsible Wool Standard User Manual 2.0, released March 2020
Responsible Wool Standard User Manual 2.1, released May 2020
Responsible Wool Standard User Manual 2.2, released October 2021

Contents

Introduction

About the RWS User Manual

The RWS User Manual is intended to support farms and suppliers in the implementation of the Responsible Wool Standard. This is a separate document from the Responsible Wool Standard document.

About the Responsible Wool Standard

The Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) is an international, voluntary standard that addresses animal welfare in sheep farms and chain of custody of wool from certified farms to the final product.

Individual sites are certified by independent third-party certification bodies using annual audits. Material is tracked from the farm to the final product using transaction certificates, following the requirements of Textile Exchange's Content Claim Standard (CCS). For more information or to apply for certification, please visit: ResponsibleWool.org.

The goals of the Responsible Wool Standard are to provide the industry with the best possible tool to:

- Recognize the best practices of farmers;
- Ensure that wool comes from farms with a progressive approach to managing their land, and from sheep that have been treated responsibly;
- Create an industry benchmark that will drive improvements in animal care and land management and social welfare where needed; and
- Provide a robust chain of custody system from farm to final product so that consumers are confident that the wool in the products they choose is truly RWS.

About Textile Exchange

The Responsible Wool Standard is owned and managed by **Textile Exchange**. Textile Exchange is a global nonprofit that creates leaders in the sustainable fiber and materials industry. The organization develops, manages, and promotes a suite of leading industry standards as well as collects and publishes vital industry data and insights that enable brands and retailers to measure, manage, and track their use of preferred fiber and materials.

With a membership that represents leading brands, retailers, and suppliers, Textile Exchange has, for years, been positively impacting climate through accelerating the use of preferred fibers across the global textile industry and is now making it an imperative goal through its 2030 Strategy: Climate+. Under the Climate+ strategic direction,

Textile Exchange will be the driving force for urgent climate action with a goal of 45% reduced CO2 emissions from textile fiber and material production by 2030.

How to Use This Document

This document includes:

- guidance on compliance to the standard requirements;
- additional information, that is not required for compliance, but may be useful when planning sheep management;
- good practice documents for specific topics such as body condition scoring and euthanasia; and
- templates for written management plans and records.

These are intended to make it easier for the farmer to understand and integrate the requirements of the RWS into practice.

Specific standards guidance and additional information follow the standard to which they apply. Guidance documents and templates for records and plans are included directly after the relevant section of the standards to which they relate.

Guidance Sections

Animal welfare

In the guidance section, the animal welfare, land management and social requirements have been listed with additional comments on what compliance with these requirements will look like. Explanation of documents required, templates that may be used, and information to be collected in your records are all listed here.

Additional good practice guidance and links to further information is also provided for some requirements.

Templates

Plan Templates

Many of the requirements in the Responsible Wool Standard require that a written plan be available for the auditor to review. The plans are not required to look exactly like the templates in this document, but they are helpful guidelines to make sure your written plans have all the required elements. If you do not already have a plan, these should help you get started.

Record Templates

Records of animal husbandry procedures, illness, shearing, mortality, and other events on the farm are required to be kept by the farmer. This allows the auditor to get a better idea of how the farm handles these issues. Again, it is not necessary for your records to look exactly like the templates in this document, but you should be recording at the same level of detail. If you do not already keep records, feel free to print out these templates for your own use.

Section A – Get to Know the RWS

A1. What is the Responsible Wool Standard?

The RWS includes five important elements:

1. Animal welfare verification at farms.
    - Sheep farms are audited to verify that animals are treated well and that all requirements are followed.
    - Mulesing, by any method, is not permitted.
2. Land management
    - Progressive methods of land management are practiced on RWS farms, protecting soil health, biodiversity, and native species.
3. Social welfare
    - Key social welfare criteria are verified on farms.
4. Chain of custody of wool from the source to the final product.
    - Documents track the materials through each stage in the supply chain to make sure that products with wool from RWS-certified farms can be identified.
5. Product labelling.
    - A logo is provided to allow companies to identify products for consumers that want to purchase products with wool material that has come from RWS-certified farms.

A2. How does Certification Work?

The first step in the supply chain that shall be certified is the farm. These may be individual farms or a group of farms. Each company (including the farms, mills, and manufacturers and sometimes the brand) is required to be certified on an annual basis.

Certification is performed by an independent third-party organization called a certification body. You can find a list of Certification Bodies approved to the RWS on our website: https://responsiblewool.org

Steps of Certification:

1. Contact an approved certification body (CB).
2. Fill out the application form from the CB.
3. The CB will respond with an offer that includes their fee structure. It's a good idea to apply with more than one CB to compare prices and timeline.
4. Select an offer and sign a contract with the CB.
5. Read this document carefully. Prepare as well as you can; this will save time and money during the audit.
6. The CB will send an auditor to your operations to interview staff, and review documents and procedures against the requirements of the standard. This is the on-site audit. In your first year, this will be scheduled. In following years, it may be announced or semi-announced.
7. A report of the audit will be sent to the CB office; a separate person will review them and make a final certification decision. If you fail to meet any requirements designated major or minor, you will be given a period of time to correct them. If you fail to meet *critical* requirements at your first audit you will not be certified. If you fail to meet *critical* requirements at subsequent audits you will be suspended.

8. Once all corrections have been completed, the CB will issue an RWS Scope Certificate. This certificate will have to be renewed yearly, with an audit each time.

9. The CB may visit without advance notice, to make sure that you are still following the requirements.

10. Supply chain companies should request transaction certificates when you ship certified goods, in order to show your customers that the material is certified. Goods shipped without a transaction certificate are not considered certified.

Section B – Animal Welfare Criteria

AW1. Nutrition

Desired outcome: Access to sufficient feed and water suited to the animals' age and needs to maintain normal health and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.

Number	Requirement	Level
AW1.1	Sheep shall have access to adequate nutrition, suited to the animals' age and needs, to maintain normal health and to prevent prolonged hunger or malnutrition. Note: See standard AW5.7 for emergency feed and water provisions.	C
	AW1.1.1 Feeding shall be addressed in a management plan.	Mi
	The management plan does not need to be written; it can be communicated verbally.	
	It is critical to determine stock rates on a farm and/or paddock basis that balance the nutritional needs of the sheep, long-term productivity (profitability), and environmental sustainability. Feed planning enables you to objectively match pasture supply and animal feed demands on your whole farm during the year. The development of feed management plans is specific to each region, climate and farming system: plant types, growth rates and seasonal conditions will vary. For this reason it is best to work with a local expert, or use one of the many tools that are available online. The basic element of a plan will include: • Understanding the types of palatable vegetation on your land and their nutritional value; • Determining the amounts that are available through the different times of the year; • Determining the number of grazing days in a paddock and the grazing and nutritional needs of your sheep at different points in their production cycle;	

Number	Requirement	Level
	• Setting up a rotation; • Compiling a whole farm feed budget; matching the nutritional needs of the sheep to amount of available nutrition through grazing and identifying any need for supplemental feeds. The information taken from monitoring points will help in the development of this plan. See the RWS Monitoring Point Guidance for more information.	
AW1.2	Sheep shall have an adequate supply of clean, safe drinking water each day.	C
	Sheep should have free access to clean, safe drinking water unless deprivation meets the requirements detailed in AW1.7.	
AW1.3	The body condition of sheep shall be routinely monitored as part of the farm's management system to confirm health of the sheep.	Ma
	AW1.3.1 Farm workers shall be able to measure the Body Condition Score (BCS) of sheep.	Ma
	AW1.3.2 If BCS scoring identifies evidence of inadequate nutrition, appropriate action shall be taken to return the animals to good health. These actions should be recorded.	Ma
	Sheep that have BCS below 2 are generally accepted to be in a state of inadequate nutrition. For most accurate results, carrying out BCS requires sheep to be handled, however scores can be visually assessed if carried out within a few weeks of shearing. Actions to return animals to good health may be applied on an individual, group or flock basis	
	See Body Condition Scoring Guidance Routine monitoring requires that at least a sample of sheep are assessed several times through the year. Ideally farms should get in the habit of doing an assessment every time sheep are gathered and handled for other management tasks.	
	See Body Condition Scoring Record Template	

Number	Requirement	Level
AW1.4	Feed shall be stored properly.	Mi
	AW1.4.1 Hazardous material shall not be stored near feed storage areas.	Mi
	This applies to both stored forages (e.g. hay) and concentrate or grain based feeds. Proper storage ensures that feed maintains its quality and palatability. Poorly stored feed that becomes moldy, contaminated by birds or rodents or otherwise compromised can cause a risk to sheep's health.	
AW1.5	Routine checks and monitoring shall be conducted regularly to ensure feed and water quality and quantity is maintained.	Ma
	The frequency of checks will depend on the source and availability of feed and water. Whenever sheep are inspected, feed and water should also be checked. See also AW3.1 and the inspection frequency guidance note.	
	AW1.5.1 Equipment used to deliver feed and water shall be cleaned and maintained in good working order and any problems promptly rectified.	Ma
	AW1.5.2 Water supplied from troughs, drinkers or natural water sources shall be clean and be good quality and at an accessible level at all times.	Ma
AW1.6	Changes in diet shall be introduced gradually.	Mi
	AW1.6.1 Sheep shall be introduced to crop grazing and or supplementary feeding at a rate that allows the sheep to adapt to the new feed.	Mi
AW1.7	Sheep shall only be deprived of feed and water for reasonable management practices (such as shearing, transport, or slaughter). Deprivation periods shall be no longer than 24 hours.	Ma
	AW1.7.1 Sheep held in sheds or yards for management practices (such as shearing) shall be monitored for signs of distress during time held off feed and water and remedial action taken.	Ma
	Sheep must not show signs of distress when deprived of feed and water. Signs of heat stress include:	

Number	Requirement	Level
	• Panting • Rapid breathing • Weakness/difficulty standing Remedial action for heat stress includes moving the sheep to a cool shaded areas with good air circulation, and offering water. Note that spraying the wool with water stops air moving through the fleece and may be counterproductive. Wetting areas that do not have wool may help. Signs of cold stress include: • Shallow breathing • Shivering • Huddling together with other sheep Sheep are more likely to show signs of cold stress after shearing, rather than in the period of feed/water deprivation prior to this operation. Remedial action for cold stress includes moving sheep to a sheltered area and feeding them.	
	The combination of heat and humidity offers the greatest risk of causing stress to sheep. To avoid sheep suffering distress when they are deprived of feed and water: • Plan periods of deprivation and activities associated with this – such as shearing – around local weather forecasts to avoid deprivation in extreme weather conditions • Be aware that young animals, geriatric animals and those with compromised nutritional or health status are most at risk of suffering distress during deprivation periods. Try and keep those animals separate. • Provide shade/shelter as appropriate • Adjust stocking density in pens according to air temperature. • In hot temperatures ensure that air can move in and around any buildings/structures where sheep are held	
	AW1.7.2 Animals in ill health or poor condition shall not be deprived of food or water until they recover.	Ma
	AW1.7.3 Ewes in late pregnancy or lactating ewes shall not be deprived of water for more than 8 hours.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	Refer to https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/agriculture/working-with-animals/working-with-sheep/fasting-of-sheep-prior-to-shearing-gpg/ for further guidelines on different stock classes.	

Nutrition: Guidance notes and templates

Guidance Notes

- Body Condition Scoring Guidance (Corresponding with AW1.3)

Templates

- Body condition score record template (Corresponding with AW1.3)

Body Condition Scoring Guidance

Corresponds with AW1.3

Introduction

The RWS requires that the body condition of sheep is routinely monitored and recorded as part of the farm's management system to confirm health of the sheep. This document provides guidance on how to conduct Body Condition Scoring of sheep. The assessment guidance is also applicable to RWS auditors.

Description

Body condition scoring is a standardized method to estimate the amount of fat on a sheep's body. The body condition score measures the balance between intake and expenditure of energy, and is known to be related to feeding motivation. Body condition can be affected by a variety of factors such as food availability, reproductive or productive status, weather conditions, parasites, dental problems, diseases and feeding practices.

How to assess (individual)

Although it may be possible to get some idea of Body Condition by visual assessment of a sheep that is not in wool, the most accurate assessment requires sheep to be handled. Body Condition Score (BCS) should be assessed in a restrained sheep in a race. Body condition is assessed by palpation of the spine in the lumber region just after the last rib. Feel for the horizontal and vertical processes, and assess the amount of fat and muscle overlying the bones.

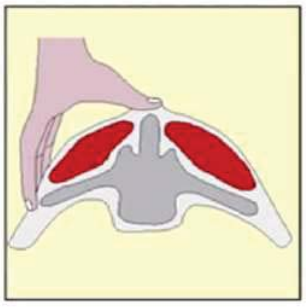


Illustration from Beef and Lamb New Zealand

There are several videos available online demonstrating how to carry out BCS.

How to condition score a ewe (Beef and Lamb New Zealand):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2_27XYEUOo&index=6&list=PL9ZU9GuQ1pFZhnvT4Wy1aBcxUI4cy09-n

Body Condition Scoring Demo (Beef and Lamb New Zealand):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrWQJ7B-ZMQ

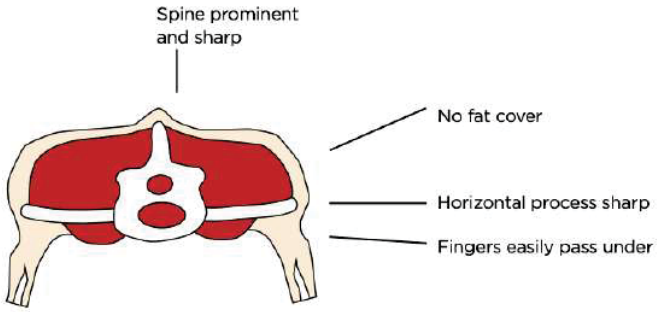
How to condition score sheep (DAFWA) (YouTube):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F5V-GcG1Qk

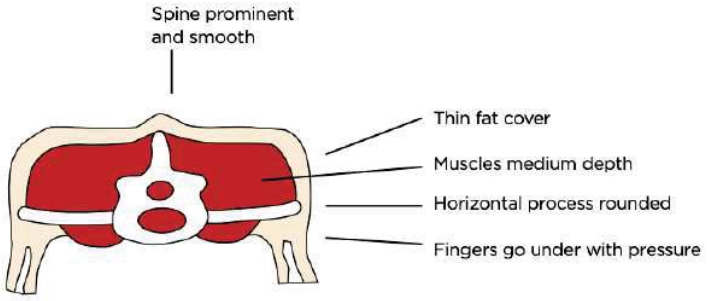
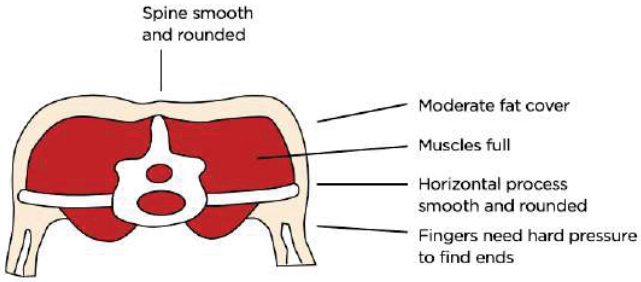
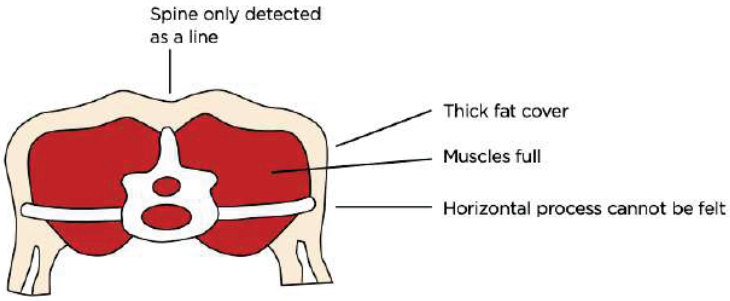
How to assess (flock)

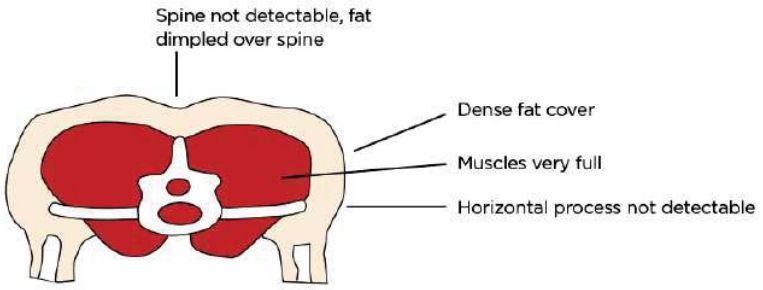
Randomly draft 25-50 sheep into a race or choose a random group from the middle of the flock. A couple of animals from each race when carrying out drenching or other animal husbandry tasks can also be selected. The animal should be standing in a relaxed position and should not be tense or crushed by other animals. Each assessment should only take a matter of seconds.

How to score

The BCS described by Russell et al. (1969, J Agric Sci, 72, 451-454) can be used. For welfare purposes animals are considered thin if they score below 2.0 on this scale, emaciated if they are at or below 1.0, and fat if they are above 4.0. The principle of this system is used across all breeds and types of sheep, goats, and alpacas.

Score 1	 The spinous and transverse processes are prominent and sharp. The fingers can be pushed easily below the transverse bone and each process can be felt. The loin is thin with no fat cover.

Score 2	 The spinous processes are prominent but smooth, individual processes being felt only as corrugations. The transverse processes are smooth and rounded, but it is still possible to press fingers underneath. The loin muscle is a moderate depth but with little fat cover.
Score 3	 The spinous processes are smooth and rounded; the bone is only felt with pressure. The transverse processes are also smooth and well-covered, hard pressure is required with the fingers to find the ends. The loin muscle is full and with moderate fat cover.
Score 4	 The spinous processes are only detectable as a line. The ends of the transverse processes cannot be felt. The loin muscles are full and rounded and have a thick covering of fat.

Score 5	 The spinous and transverse processes cannot be detected even with pressure; there is a dimple in the fat layers where the processes should be. The loin muscles are very full and covered with very thick fat.

Key scores

Optimum BCS will vary across the production cycle and breed of sheep used, but in general ewes that score between 2.5 and 3.5 will provide the optimum production and profitability. Low (<2) and high (>4) BCS have the potential to negatively impact production factors such as ovulation rate, embryonic loss, conception rates and return to service and also carry a higher risk of pregnancy toxemia. Ewes that are too thin (<2.5) will have poor production, increased risk of mortality and poor reproduction. No sheep should score less than 2 without action being taken. The recommended BCS for different production stages are as follows:

- Breeding BCS 2.5 to 3.5
- Early pregnancy maintain BCS at 2.5 to 3.5
- Lambing BCS 2.5 to 3.0, with an absolute minimum of 2.0
- Weaning BCS minimum 2.0.

How often to assess BCS

AW1.3 requires that sheep are routinely monitored for BCS. It is recommended that sheep have their BCS assessed at least three times during the production cycle, for example as follows:

- When lambs are weaned; to allow for ewes to be managed appropriately for the expected gain in BCS in the run up to breeding.
- In mid-pregnancy, at least for ewes bearing multiple lambs, to allow for any adjustment in feeding for ewes in poor condition prior to the period of increased nutritional need in late pregnancy.
- Prior to lambing so that ewes of lower BCS can be offered supplemental feed in lactation if necessary.

How to record BCS

A random sample from the flock can be used to get an average condition score that can be used to help inform decision making. A simple chart (see example below) can be used to record the BCS of a group and any shifts that occurs between recording sessions. Record the body condition of each sheep with an X on the chart. The median score of the flock is the score at the middle of the distribution. A printable chart is available in the Records section.

				X				
				X				
			X	X				
			X	X				
		X	X	X	X			

Body Condition Score Record Template

Corresponds with AW1.3

This template may be used for recording body condition scores as required by AW1.3.

Mob:

Date:

Median:

1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0

AW2. Living Environment

Desired outcome: Animals are kept in an environment that provides the conditions and facilities needed for health, safety, comfort, and normal behavior.

Number	Requirement	Level
AW2.1	Handling and housing systems (including shearing sheds) shall be designed, constructed, and maintained so as to minimize stress and the likelihood of injury to the sheep during handling.	Mi
	AW2.1.1 Buildings shall be structurally sound.	Mi
	AW2.1.2 Infrastructure shall be inspected and maintained regularly.	Mi
	The frequency of inspection and maintenance should at minimum relate to the frequency of use. For example, shearing sheds should be inspected and any maintenance carried out ahead of shearing, but if they are unused at other times of year there is not a need for (say) monthly checks. Similarly, if sheep are only housed at lambing time, the housing must be checked and any maintenance carried out ahead of and during the time of use, but ongoing checks at other times may not be necessary.	
AW2.2	Housing shall be well ventilated.	Mi
	Buildings should be effectively ventilated so as to avoid high humidity, condensation, draughts or the build-up of harmful concentration of gases such as ammonia and carbon dioxide.	
	Ammonia has a sharp distinctive odor that is detected at low concentrations. At levels above 25ppm both workers and sheep are at risk of respiratory problems and skin and eye irritation. Ammonia is lighter than air and is easily dispelled by good ventilation. In the absence of ammonia detection devices, sensory evaluation can give initial guidance on whether action to improve ventilation is needed. The odor of ammonia should be barely noticeable on entry to a house or	

Number	Requirement	Level
	building. If it causes eyes to water or coughing then action must be taken.	
AW2.3	Housing shall be kept in a sanitary condition.	Mi
	• Manure should be removed from housing or shelters on a regular basis. • All applicable equipment and services including water bowls and troughs, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems should be inspected and cleaned regularly	
AW2.4	Housed sheep shall be protected from either heat or cold stress.	Mi
	Signs of heat stress include: • Panting • Rapid breathing • Weakness/difficulty standing Remedial action for heat stress includes moving the sheep to a cool shaded areas with good air circulation, and offering water. Note that spraying the wool with water stops air moving through the fleece and may be counterproductive. Wetting areas that do not have wool may help. Signs of cold stress include: • Shallow breathing • Shivering • Huddling together with other sheep Sheep are more likely to show signs of cold stress after shearing, rather than in the period of feed/water deprivation prior to this operation. Remedial action for cold stress includes moving sheep to a sheltered area and feeding them.	
	Heat stress can reduce productivity and cause reproductive problems such as reduced sperm quality in rams. Cold stress can cause mortality, particularly in lambs and both heat and cold stress can impact the immune system.	

Number	Requirement	Level
AW2.5	Flooring in holding pens shall provide good traction.	Mi
	Smooth concrete can be slippery. If this floor surface is present in holding pens it should be grooved to provide grip and/or covered with bedding or rubber matting. Sheep should not slip or fall when being moved in holding pens.	
AW2.6	Housed sheep shall have access to a dry bedding area sufficient to avoid discomfort.	Mi
	AW2.6.1 Sheep housed on solid concrete floor shall be given sufficient bedding.	Mi
	AW2.6.2 Buildings shall be constructed to provide drainage.	Mi
	AW2.6.3 Bedding from timber-based products sourced from chemically treated wood is prohibited.	Mi
AW2.7	Housed sheep shall have pens that provide sufficient freedom of movement and floor space to lie in a normal resting posture.	Mi
	AW2.7.1 Housing space required shall take into account the age, size and class of sheep and environment.	Mi
	• The lying area should be of sufficient size to accommodate all sheep together lying in normal resting posture – see AW2.7.2 below for recommended space per animal. • Individual lambing pens should be bedded with straw or other substrate that provides comfort and warmth, and shall be of adequate size to allow the ewe to turn and lie down. • Exception from the above shall apply only in limited circumstances such as examinations, tests, veterinary treatments, while being fed, marketed, washed, weighed, vaccinated, or dipped, while accommodation is being cleaned, or waiting for transportation.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW2.7.2 Each sheep should have at least the following minimum area per animal after 24 hours or more in housing:	R

Type of animal	Minimum area per animal m^2 (ft^2)
Ewe	1.2 (15)
Ewe and single lamb	1.7 (21)
Additional lambs	0.4 (4)
Weaned lambs	0.9 (10)
Rams	1.5 (21)

AW2.8	Long term close confinement in crates or tethering is prohibited.	Ma
	AW2.8.1 Tethering or use of crates shall only be used for a minimum time to address a special need such as the provision of medical care.	Ma
	Close confinement is when the animal does not have freedom of movement. Examples could include sheep held in a race or turn crate and the use of ewe fostering /grafting crates where the ewe is held in a yoke at the neck and is unable to turn around. Tethering similarly restricts the sheep from having freedom of movement. Close confinement and tethering are only acceptable when there is no other option to manage sheep. If sheep are held in close confinement or tethered for longer than the time needed to complete the work this becomes “long term” confinement. This will vary with the task at hand. An individual animal placed in a foot trimming crate could be released in minutes. A mob of sheep bought in for drenching might be in pens and races for several hours. An ewe in a foster crate might be restrained for a couple of days. All of these examples are acceptable.	
	Instead of tethering, more humane methods of confining an animal to a specific area such as a secure yard or fenced paddock should be implemented. If animals are tethered, the following should be met: Animals shall be inspected at least twice in each 24-hour period to ensure that food and water are available, they haven’t become entangled	

Number	Requirement	Level
	and the tether is still fitted properly at the head or neck. This shall be increased to three times in very hot weather. For animals that are tethered, or confined in crates for longer than a few hours, clean, fresh, potable water should be available at all times in troughs or heavy containers that are firmly fixed on the perimeter of the tether or are accessible from the crate. Tethered grazing animals should receive supplementary feeding where grazing within the extent of the tether is not adequate.	
AW2.9	Housed sheep shall have access to a lit area for the normal period of daylight hours.	Mi
	AW2.9.1 Sheep should have access to natural light.	R
	Sheep should not be kept in permanent darkness nor permanent light. The most important biological functions of all animals are controlled by the circadian rhythm – the physical, mental, and behavioral changes that follow a daily cycle. Sheep in particular are very sensitive to changes in the ratio of light and dark in a 24 hour period. Ideally housing will allow natural light to enter such that there is sufficient light intensity to allow inspection of sheep during the daytime and for sheep to experience natural light cycles. If this is not possible artificial light should be provided to allow for the normal periods of light and dark in every 24 hour period.	
AW2.10	Housed sheep should not be exposed to sudden or loud noise that could cause fear or stress.	R
	There is limited research specific to sheep and noise but it suggests that sheep have a negative response to sudden loud noises such as people shouting, metal gates being slammed and similar sounds. This should therefore be avoided.	
AW2.11	Sheep shall have access to natural pasture at all times unless emergency or severe weather conditions would otherwise negatively impact on their welfare.	C

Number	Requirement	Level
	Sheep are best able to perform their normal behaviors when kept as a flock on pasture, and as such this should be the default management position for the lifetime of the animal. However, it is understood that there may be times when sheep's welfare is best served by removing them from pasture, for example in extreme weather events such as ice storms or similar, and in those situations removal from pasture is permitted. Keeping sheep off pasture outside such situations is not permitted. For example finishing lambs in feedlots is prohibited.	
	AW2.11.1 Where sheep are housed for lambing, access to natural pasture shall be restricted for the shortest period possible.	Ma
	Sheep may need to be housed at lambing to protect the welfare of newborn lambs, even though weather conditions would permit ewes to remain on pasture. Once the lambs are strong enough to withstand weather conditions and have bonded to the ewes they should all be returned to pasture.	
AW2.12	All sheep shall have access to effective shade, shelter and/or windbreaks if necessary to protect them from adverse weather conditions.	Mi
	AW2.12.1 Shelter may be natural or artificial as long as it is available and provides effective protection against prevailing conditions as needed.	Mi
	When planning for extreme weather events and handling, there should be a strategy in place to: • minimize the risk of hypothermia or heat stress • monitor flock closely for signs of cold or heat stress and take immediate action to provide relief if it occurs • relocate sheep to a sheltered area or housing in adverse conditions • provide additional feed and / or water in cases of cold or heat stress • provide extra bedding where appropriate • provide supplemental heating for very young animals when temperature becomes low enough to cause cold stress (in farms with housing systems)	

Number	Requirement	Level
	• manage timing of shearing events to minimize risk of hypothermia (if bad weather is predicted, make alternate arrangements such as delaying shearing or increasing available shelter) • when heavy snowfalls are forecast, move sheep into safer areas, and prevent them from gathering in places where they may be buried by snow • remove sheep from potential flooding areas at times of risk	
	Shelter can be defined broadly. Refer to guidance for additional guidelines regarding shelter: https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/sheep/health-and-welfare/sheep-shelter-guidelines	
AW2.13	All fencing shall be appropriate, and shall be regularly inspected and maintained.	Mi
	Electric fences should be designed, installed, used, and maintained so that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the sheep. When any type of mesh fencing is used, in particular for horned sheep and around lambing fields, it should be inspected frequently to ensure sheep are not trapped in it. Fences should be of a sufficient height to discourage sheep from trying to jump over them. Fences should be of a sufficient strength to withstand the side forces applied by sheep in the yards.	
	Fencing and wildlife: While secure fencing aids in husbandry, care should also be taken to provide passage for wildlife as possible. This may be in leaving gates open and providing access to pastures when sheep are grazing elsewhere. It also means considering wildlife in fence design. For example, what species, small and/or large, will be unable to cross a farm based on fence typed used? Additional information may be found at www.wildlifefriendly.org/resources	
AW2.14	Stocking rates shall be determined based on land type, pasture quality, seasonal conditions, class of stock, available feed, and total grazing pressure.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	Stocking rate records may be as simple as a record of the type (e.g. ewes, weaned lambs etc.) and number of sheep that are placed on a set area of land whether this is a single pasture or a groups of several fields that are managed together. Or, stocking rate records can include details of not only number and type of sheep, but levels of vegetation on entry to and exit from the land, rest times.	
	There are many free online templates and apps for grazing records that allow you to track stocking rates and pasture usage. Examples include: http://www.madcoswcd.com/grazing-charts.html https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-livestock-record-keeping [this is designed for those in stewardship agreements, but works for any farmer] *See also LM2.2*	
	AW2.14.1 Stocking rates shall be recorded and followed to plan pasture, feeding rations and water resource availability.	Mi
	Grazing pressure includes estimates of use by sheep and by local wild herbivores.	
	AW2.14.2 The amount of feed on offer should be measured to calculate the number of available grazing days.	R
	Guidance on stocking rates in different regions can be found here: Australia: https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Grazing-pasture-management/improved-pasture/grazing-management/stocking-rate/# UK: https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/planning-grazing-strategies-for-better-returns Holistic planned grazing: https://www.savory.global/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/about-holistic-planned-grazing.pdf	
AW2.15	Animals shall be protected from the threat of predators.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW2.15.1 Predator control shall be humane.	Ma

See also LM2.6 which prohibits the use of poison, leg hold traps and snares.

It must be demonstrated that all non-lethal methods have been exhausted before lethal control or live trapping is considered as an option. If used, live traps shall be managed to target the specific problem animal and shall be checked at least twice every 24 hours.

Lethal control or live trapping should only be carried out if it is legal in the country of operation. It is the farmer's responsibility to check the relevant legislation in the country of operation to ensure that control measures are legally permitted and that the species involved is not protected by law. Lethal control is not permitted for protected, threatened or endemic predator species. The IUCN Red List provides details on threatened and endemic species https://www.iucnredlist.org/

AW3. Animal Management

Desired outcome: Animals are managed in a way that promotes good health and prevents disease. Sick or injured animals are treated. Husbandry operations are carried in a way that minimizes pain and distress.

Number	Requirement	Level
AW3.1	The farm shall conduct routine welfare inspections and monitor for signs of disease or production disorders.	Ma
	AW3.1.1 The frequency of inspections shall be increased as required during, for example, extreme weather events, lambing times, flystrike etc.	Ma
	Sheep should be inspected frequently enough to avoid unnecessary suffering. The frequency of inspections should be appropriate to the scale and type of farming system. Inspections should include monitoring for signs of disease, infection, lameness, parasites, and production disorders. When sheep are housed, stock keepers should conduct daily inspections to inspect their livestock and equipment. If high levels of injury, morbidity and mortality occur on farm this could be an indication that inspection frequency is insufficient. The Inspection frequency guidance note gives more detailed information on the expected inspection routine.	
AW3.2	The farmer shall have a written management plan for flock health and animal welfare. *For Communal Farmer Groups, the written management plan for herd health and animal welfare can be prepared at group level.*	Ma
	The complexity of a flock health and welfare plan will differ depending on the flock size and circumstances. All Flock Health and Welfare Plans should be: • Based on each flock's individual requirements	

Number	Requirement	Level
	• Developed with appropriate veterinary and technical advice. • Regularly reviewed and updated There is a template for a health and welfare plan for individual farmers and members of farmer groups who each need to prepare their own plan, and a separate template for Communal Farmer Groups for prepare a plan at group level. The use of an RWS template is not compulsory but can be used to provide a basic structure if there is not already a plan in place. The management plan should cover the following areas: a. A schedule for flock inspection b. Disease and parasite prevention, management, and treatment c. Annual review of flock health, including key challenges and treatments given. d. Animal husbandry procedures e. Biosecurity provisions f. On-farm euthanasia and slaughter plan	
	Even when the farmer is very experienced in managing sheep, external advice from a veterinarian or other specialist advisor to develop the flock health and welfare plan may assist in providing information and solutions to specific health problems that had not been considered by the farm.	
	See Flock Health and Welfare Plan Template	
AW3.3	Sheep that are found suffering from health problems shall be treated promptly.	C
	AW3.3.1 Responsible personnel shall identify and treat sick and/or injured animals and obtain veterinary advice when needed.	Ma
	AW3.3.2 Sheep that can be treated that cannot move on their own shall only be moved using a humane conveyance method, such as a truck, sled, or cart.	Mi
	AW3.3.3 Animals who will not recover shall be promptly and humanely euthanized.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	Treatment is “prompt” when it is delivered as soon as possible after the health problem is discovered. For a housed sheep this could be within an hour, for a sheep out on pasture that must be caught before treatment, potentially requiring a return to the farm for equipment and the assistance of other workers it could be 4 to 6 hours (or even more) before treatment can be effected.	
	See euthanasia and on-farm slaughter guidance note.	
AW3.4	Any treatments for the health of the sheep shall be appropriately administered.	Ma
	Treatments should be timed and administered in accordance with manufacturer´s instructions or professional advice. This includes method of administration, dosage and withholding times.	
	AW3.4.1 Records should be kept detailing: a. Substance (product) administered and reason for treatment b. Animal or group identification c. Number of animals treated d. Date of treatment	R
	See Treatment and Vaccination record template	
AW3.5	Measures shall be taken to prevent or control external and internal parasite infestations such as fly strike, ticks, lice, gastro-intestinal worms, and scab.	Ma
	AW3.5.1 Advice shall be sought as needed from a veterinarian or specialist advisor on prevention, treatment, and strategies to avoid the development of resistant parasites.	Mi
	AW3.5.2 When infestations are likely or are found to occur, sheep shall be treated to control the parasites.	Ma
	AW3.5.3 Grazing management is utilized to aid in parasite management, allowing for treatments to be administered during the most effective stage of the parasite’s lifecycle.	Mi

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW3.5.4 When dipping is carried out stress to the sheep must be minimized and the health and safety of workers safeguarded.	Ma
	If dipping is to be effective the sheep must be fully submerged in the solution, but care must be taken to ensure sheep do not drown – separate ewes and lambs so that lambs do not get trapped by bigger sheep while in the dip. Sheep should not be dipped with open cuts or wounds to minimize any risk of infection. Sheep should not be dipped when they are wet, tired or thirsty. The dip solution must be kept at the required concentration and not allowed to become excessively contaminated with soil or feces as this can lead to post dipping lameness. Worker safety can be maintained by ensuring the correct personal protective equipment is worn, dipping should take place in an area where there is good ventilation, and having splash boards and screens to reduce the splash onto workers from sheep entering the dip. Note that dip residues will remain on sheep for several weeks following dipping so protective equipment should be used if handling is required during this time.	
	Sheep dips contain chemicals that can cause environmental pollution. Immediately after dipping sheep should be held in pens which have impermeable floors that slope back to the dip bath to allow excess dip to be collected before returning sheep to pasture. The used dip must be disposed of according to local regulations to avoid pollution. This may include diluting it with water and/or adding a chemical treatment to break down the active ingredients of the dip before it is spread on land. For further information see: http://www.flyboss.com.au/sheep-goats/treatment/choosing-the-right-application-method/dipping.php	
AW3.6	The decision to carry out injurious husbandry procedures, including tail docking and castration, shall be based on a welfare risk/benefit analysis rather than as a routine.	Ma
	AW3.6.1 The risk/benefit analysis shall include a. The methods used and steps taken to minimize suffering. b. Regular review of whether the procedures remain necessary, the procedures, pain management protocols used. c. Pain management options shall be discussed with a veterinary surgeon and options shall be reviewed regularly.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	It is recommended that the risk/benefit analysis is documented but it can be provided verbally. Pain management options have changed markedly over recent years and farmers should regularly investigate whether it is feasible to introduce pain relief administered by the veterinary surgeon or the farmer when injurious husbandry operations are carried out.	
	See Pain relief guidance note	
AW3.7	Animal husbandry procedures shall be performed or supervised by a competent stockperson, using well maintained equipment designed specifically for the purpose. *See AW5.11.1 for requirements for contractors to sign the RWS Contractors Declaration.*	C
	AW3.7.1 Farm shall have written and/or visual standard operating procedures on how animal husbandry procedures are to be carried out.	Mi
	See Tail Docking Standard Operation Procedures, Castration Standard Operating Procedure and pain relief guidance note	
AW3.8	Good hygiene practices shall be followed in relation to facilities, personnel, handling, and instruments.	Ma
AW3.9	Castration shall only be carried out on males that are being kept beyond puberty.	Ma
	The farmer needs to demonstrate their intent not to castrate kids that do not require it. However, if goats are sent to slaughter at different ages it is not always possible to identify at birth males that will be sold prior to puberty and those that will be sold later. As long as justification is provided as part of the requirements of AW3.6 all male kids could be castrated.	
	AW3.9.1 For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available.	Ma
	See pain relief guidance note	

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW3.9.2 The procedure shall be performed using either: a. bloodless emasculator; b. application of a rubber ring, including shortening of scrotum; or **c.** surgical methods with mandatory pain relief.	Ma
	AW3.9.3 The procedure shall be carried out between the ages of 24 hours and 8 weeks.	Ma

A flock of sheep will lamb over several weeks. If this occurs in housing each individual lamb can easily be castrated once the ewe/lamb bond is secure. For extensive flocks on pasture, trying to catch individual lambs at young ages can lead to mis-mothering. Normal practice is therefore to gather the flock once the youngest lambs are capable of safely following their mothers. In these extensive situations the average age of castration is acceptable to meet the requirements of this standard. The average castration age of the flock can be calculated by reviewing the spread of lambing dates and the date of castration.

Castration above the age specified in AW3.9.3 may only take place if the criteria below are met.

1. The farm must raise rams for sale or retention as breeding stock

2. The farm must have a set of criteria to assess rams for suitability as breeding stock such as conformation, parent's genetics etc. [i.e. they shouldn't be keeping every ram that's born as a breeding animal]

3. An initial assessment of ram lambs against the criteria must be made by the time lambs are 8 weeks of age and any ram lambs that don't meet the criteria must be castrated at this time.

4. Ram lambs that pass the initial assessment, but which later develop traits that make them unsuitable for breeding may be castrated for retention in the herd/flock but only if castration is carried out using a bloodless emasculator with pain relief.

For example, an extensive flock that lambs in a 6 week period between 1 September and 13 October and carries out castration on 3 November will have lambs that are between 3 weeks and 9 weeks of age on castration day, with an average age of 6 weeks. This is acceptable.

Number	Requirement	Level
	If the same flock carries out castration on 24 November lambs will be between 6 weeks and 12 weeks of age and the average age will be 9 weeks – this is not acceptable.	
	AW3.9.4 Farmers shall monitor for signs of post-operative complications and take appropriate corrective actions.	Ma
	Complications can include sepsis – a potential risk if equipment is dirty; scrotal hernia – when a loop of intestine is included with the testes in band castration; hemorrhage – if the testicular artery fails to seal during surgical castration; and clostridial disease such as tetanus.	
	AW3.9.5 Lambs shall not be castrated until the ewe/lamb bond has become established.	Ma
AW3.10	Tail docking shall only be carried out if failure to do so would lead to welfare problems.	Ma
	Tail docking may be justified as part of a program to reduce the risk of fly strike but cannot be the only action taken.	
	AW3.10.1 For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available.	Ma
	See pain relief guidance	
	AW3.10.2 The procedure shall be performed using either thermocautery (preferred method) or the application of a rubber ring.	Ma
	Scalpel without thermocautery is not permitted	
	AW3.10.3 The procedure shall be carried out between the ages of 24 hours and 8 weeks.	Ma
	See guidance at AW3.9.3. Sheep farms generally carry out tail docking and castration at the same time so the same rationale for average age of tail docking for extensive flocks and the same examples of how to calculate this apply to tail docking as for castration.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW3.10.4 Docked tails shall cover the vulva in ewes and the equivalent length in rams.	Ma
	Docking the tail at the distal end of the caudal fold should ensure tail length meets the requirements of the standard. With some breeds, breeding rams that are available for purchase will have already been docked with ultra-short tails. While this is not acceptable practice for the RWS, it is generally outside of the farmer's control. The farmer should look for and encourage tail docking that is consistent with the RWS requirements, but if there are no other local options, then the short-docked rams may be accepted and their wool can be RWS certified.	
	AW3.10.5 Farmers shall monitor for signs of post-operative complications and take appropriate corrective actions.	Ma
	Complications can include sepsis – a potential risk if equipment is dirty; burns if the thermocautery device is not applied correctly and clostridial disease such as tetanus.	
	AW3.10.6 Lambs shall not be tail docked until the ewe/lamb bond has become established.	Ma
AW3.11	Mulesing is prohibited. *Farms with Ceased Mulesing status are accepted.*	C
	A mob may contain mulesed sheep; but no lamb born on this property in the previous 12 months may have been mulesed at the time of first certification. No purchased sheep are mulesed.	
	AW3.11.1 Freeze Mulesing (Steining) is prohibited.	C
	In the case of an exceptional circumstance where a farmer has to bring mulesed stock on to the farm an exemption may be allowed. It will be the responsibility of the CB to ensure that it is an exceptional circumstance and that it is not possible to source non mulesed stock cost effectively or that have genetics for required welfare traits. The wool from the mulesed sheep must be kept separate from the RWS wool and may not be sold as RWS certified. The RWS exemption process (see *RAF-105a Guidance for Purchasing Mulesed Sheep*, which is	

Number	Requirement	Level
	available upon request), must be followed and exemption granted before mulesed sheep are purchased. The RWS defines mulesing as the process of removing the folds of skin from the breech of a sheep rather than specifying the method by which the removal is carried out. This means that steining – removal of wool bearing skin by use of liquid nitrogen, and any other novel techniques to remove folds of skin from the breech that are developed during the lifetime of this standard would be included in that definition. This aligns with most definitions of mulesing.	
AW3.12	Dehorning, disbudding and substantial horn trimming is prohibited unless needed to address animal welfare.	Ma
	AW3.12.1 Horned sheep should be inspected regularly to ensure the tip or other parts of the horn is not in contact with face.	R
	AW3.12.2 Minor horn trimming (removal of tips) shall be performed by a competent stockperson.	Mi
	AW3.12.3 Substantial horn trimming shall be performed by a veterinarian using anesthesia.	Ma
	Minor horn trimming, removal of the tip of the horn in adults is acceptable if done above the 'quick' where the tissue is devoid of nerves and blood vessels. If blood vessels are involved this becomes substantial horn trimming.	
AW3.13	Any sheep marking for identification shall be in accordance with current legislation and best practices.	Ma
	Tagging and tattooing are permitted methods of identification.	
	AW3.13.2 Hot branding is prohibited.	Ma
	AW3.13.3 Earmarking (notching) is only permitted under the following conditions:	Ma
	a. Where there is a risk of loss of tags from the natural environment or theft;	

Number	Requirement	Level
	b. Where ear notching does not remove more than 10% of each ear; and **c.** When ear notching tools or surgically sharp scalpels are used.	
AW3.14	Action shall be taken promptly to treat lameness and to remove any causes of lameness.	Ma
	AW3.14.1 Flocks shall be monitored for lame sheep on a regular basis.	Mi
	AW3.14.2 Stock people shall be able to recognize lameness, assess severity and take prompt action to resolve the lameness as quickly as possible.	Mi
	The RWS requires that flocks are monitored for lameness on a regular basis and that stock people are able to recognize lameness, assess severity and take prompt action to resolve the lameness.	
	See Lameness scoring guidance note Traditionally, foot trimming was a response to many instances of lameness. However, research has shown that for conditions such as footrot and contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD) trimming is detrimental to the recovery of the sheep and may lead to granuloma. Treatment with antibiotic and pain relief. without trimming is best practice in these cases See also advice on reducing lameness in the flock:https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/reducing-lameness-for-better-returns	
AW3.15	Shearing shall be performed by - or under the direct supervision of - a competent shearer. *Note: See AW5.11.1 for requirements for shearers to sign the RWS Contractors Declaration.*	C
	AW3.15.1 Shearing shall be carried out under the direct supervision of the farmer or a person appointed by the farmer.	Ma
	Direct supervision means that the farmer or person appointed by the farmer is on site while shearing takes place.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW3.15.2 Shearing shall be done using techniques and equipment designed to minimize stress and injury.	Ma
	AW3.15.3 Sheep shall be handled calmly and confidently to minimize stress. (see AW4.1)	Ma
	AW3.15.4 Particular care shall be taken not to cut or injure the animal, especially the teats/udders of female sheep and the penis/sheath and scrotum of rams.	Ma
	AW3.15.5 An action plan shall be instituted to address and prevent any recurring problems with injuries or mishandling.	Ma
	AW3.15.6 Written and/or visual "Shearing Standard Operating Procedures" shall be posted in a visible location of the shearing shed.	Mi
	For an example shearing SOP see: https://research.uq.edu.au/files/17679/sop_att_082_Crutching_and_shearing_sheep.pdf	
AW3.16	Pre-shearing planning shall consider climatic conditions and ensure that mitigation measures are in place in the event of changing conditions.	Ma
	Signs of heat stress include: • Panting • Rapid breathing • Weakness/difficulty standing Remedial action for heat stress includes moving the sheep to a cool shaded areas with good air circulation, and offering water. Note that spraying the wool with water stops air moving through the fleece and may be counterproductive. Wetting areas that do not have wool may help. Signs of cold stress include: • Shallow breathing • Shivering • Huddling together with other sheep Sheep are more likely to show signs of cold stress after shearing, rather than in the period of feed/water deprivation prior to this operation.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	Remedial action for cold stress includes moving sheep to a sheltered area and feeding them.	
AW3.17	All shearing related injuries shall be attended to promptly.	Ma
	AW3.17.1 In the event of a severe cut or injury the shearer shall cease shearing immediately to treat the injury.	Ma
	A severe cut or injury is as follows: open wounds that are greater than 10 cm or at a depth that reaches the muscle layer, the removal of teats in ewes, damage to the prepuce and removal of the tip of the vulva. Example of treatment could be as follows: sutures, application of a wound repair spray and an antibiotic injection.	
	AW3.17.2 Pain relief shall be applied for serious injuries when suitable pain relief is available.	Ma
	AW3.17.3 Records of serious injuries shall be kept.	Mi
	See Pain relief guidance note	
	See injury record template	
AW3.18	Breeding strategy shall address welfare traits and suitability for the type of environment in which the sheep are raised.	Ma
	Breeding stock selection criteria should include, at a minimum: a. foot and leg health; b. overall conformation; c. mothering ability; d. temperament; e. lambing ease	
AW3.19	Artificial breeding procedures shall be carried out by competent operators.	C
	AW3.19.1 Cervical artificial insemination and pregnancy diagnosis shall only be carried out by persons trained and competent with the techniques.	Ma
	AW3.19.2 Routine electroejaculation is prohibited.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW3.19.3 Laparoscopic artificial insemination shall be carried out only by veterinarians or by trained and competent operators under veterinarian supervision. Appropriate pain relief shall be used.	Ma
	On most commercial sheep farms, electroejaculation should be a rare procedure and may only be carried out when this is recommended by the vet. However, stud farms may need to use this technique to test the fertility of rams that will be sold for breeding. Electroejaculation is permitted for fertility testing if the following requirements are met: • electro-ejaculation shall only be performed by a veterinarian • records for each ram examined should be kept by the vet. • If there is any evidence of undue stress or pain from either the handling or the stimulation, the procedure should be abandoned or an analgesic or even a general anesthetic administered.	
	Additional points: Ewes must be well cared for to ensure optimum pregnancy rates. If farmers want to use laparoscopic AI they need to have good management. • Ewes that are too thin (below BCS 2) or too fat (above BCS 4) have lower conception rates. • Stress will reduce conception rates.	
AW3.20	Lambing shall be supervised and timely action taken while keeping disturbances to a minimum. In extensive systems, where animals are unaccustomed to daily supervision, breeds or strains suited to easy births and good maternal care should be used.	Ma
	AW3.20.1 All workers shall be able to recognize the signs of lambing difficulty and know when and how to provide appropriate assistance and when to seek assistance from an experienced producer or veterinarian.	Ma
	AW3.20.2 Any ewe with a prolapse shall be treated immediately using an appropriate technique and, where necessary, veterinary advice shall be sought.	Ma
	Appropriate treatment for a prolapse may include replacement and retention of the prolapse using a harness, plastic spoon/t-piece retainer or, under local anesthetic, stitches.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	If prolapses are a common problem preventative measures should be taken. Overfat ewes, a very bulky diet in late pregnancy, and lack of exercise can all potentially increase the risk of prolapse. An ewe that has prolapsed once is also highly likely to do so again.	
	AW3.20.3 Embryotomy shall only be performed on dead lambs by a skilled person or veterinarian.	Ma
AW3.21	The lambing period shall be planned to coincide with local climatic conditions favorable to good welfare and survival.	Ma
	It is understood that weather conditions can vary from year to year, but the lambing period should be planned to avoid times of year when snow, ice storms, flooding or other extremes of weather that could adversely affect lamb survivability are common. Planning the lambing period also requires planning which animals are bred and when. If ewe lambs are bred too early there may be a higher risk of mortality for them and their lambs due to multiple factors including: ewe lambs producing lower birth weight lambs; complications at lambing from ewe lambs that are not big enough to lamb without assistance; poorer maternal instinct from ewe lambs.	
	Weight is a better indicator than age for fitness for breeding. An ewe lamb that is at least 60 to 65% of her adult weight at first breeding, where nutrition is sufficient to ensure continued growth through pregnancy, is unlikely to experience the negative effects listed above for herself or her lambs The age of puberty in sheep will vary depending on breed, size (weight), nutrition, and season of birth. Most ewe lambs reach puberty between 5 and 12 months of age. Most flocks lamb once per year (sheep in temperate zones are seasonal breeders). It is therefore possible for a ewe lamb born at one lambing to be bred at the age of 7 months so that she lambs 5 months later, when she is one year old, at the same time that the rest of the flock lamb again. Alternatively, the ewe lambs are kept separately from the breeding flock post-weaning and mated when they are around 18 to 19 months of age so that they lamb when they are two. These ewes will produce a greater weight of wool in her first year than one that is bred at 7 months.	
AW3.22	Practices and procedures for lamb feeding and provisions for fostering shall be planned prior to the start of lambing.	Mi

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW3.22.1 Artificially reared lambs shall receive a sufficient amount of colostrum after birth to ensure their welfare.	Mi
	Within the first 24 hours of life lambs should receive around 10% of their bodyweight in colostrum spread over several feeds. Many triplets and small lambs do not receive sufficient colostrum after birth. Ideally chilled or frozen colostrum from other ewes in the flock can be used to supplement artificially reared lambs. If this is not available powdered colostrum replacer can be used.	
	AW3.22.2 Close restraints of ewes for the purpose of lamb fostering is allowed only when other methods are not possible.	Mi
	See AW2.8 Alternatives to close restraint include: • Covering the lamb to be fostered with the birth fluids from the foster ewe (wet fostering) • Skinning a ewe's dead lamb and attaching the skin to the foster lamb	
	AW3.22.3 Lambs shall have access to milk in their diet until they are at least four weeks old.	Mi
AW3.23	Isolation of individual sheep shall be minimized.	Ma
	AW3.23.1 In case individual isolation cannot be avoided, the confined sheep shall be given a companion or be able to maintain visual contact with other sheep. Exception to contact with neighboring sheep may be made for quarantine purposes.	Mi
	Sheep that are sick or injured and unable to keep up with the rest of the flock may need to be isolated in hospital pens. Animals housed in sick pens should be inspected twice daily. Pens housing sick and injured animals should have urine and dung disposed of in a timely manner to prevent spreading infection to other stock. Pens should be constructed to facilitate effective cleaning.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	Continuous access to fresh water, and feed, as needed, should be provided in pens housing sick/injured animals.	
AW3.24	When introducing rams to a new group; sheep shall be monitored for signs of aggression.	Ma
AW3.25	Sheep shall be euthanized without delay if they are experiencing severe pain or illness and do not have a reasonable expectation of improvement.	C
	AW3.25.1 All workers shall have clear set of criteria to recognize when an animal needs to be euthanized, and be instructed to act accordingly.	Ma
	AW3.25.2 The euthanasia shall be done using a method that is quick, causes minimal stress and pain, and results in a rapid loss of consciousness followed by death without the animal regaining consciousness.	Ma
	AW3.25.3 Except in situations of emergency euthanasia, stunning prior to killing is required. Stunning may only be skipped in cases where the animal is in severe pain and finding access to tools for stunning would prolong the suffering. If emergency euthanasia is carried out by cutting the throat best practice guidance shall be followed.	Ma
	 See euthanasia and on-farm slaughter guidance note For Communal Farmer Groups, any written plan for euthanasia can be prepared at group level.  See euthanasia plan template.	
AW3.26	When an animal is slaughtered on-farm, it shall be done using a method that is quick, causes minimal stress and pain, and results in a rapid loss of consciousness followed by death without the animal regaining consciousness.	C
	AW3.26.1 Slaughter shall be carried out by either: a. a trained, competent worker; b. a licensed slaughterman; or c. a veterinary surgeon	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	Electric stunning using equipment designed for this purpose, and operated within manufacturers guidelines is an acceptable method for sheep slaughter, but rarely found on farm so not included here. See optional slaughter module for further details of this method.	
	AW3.26.2 Acceptable methods of slaughter for sheep include: a. Firearm b. Penetrating and non-penetrating captive bolt guns. Use of the captive bolt gun shall be immediately followed by a secondary method to ensure death (such as exsanguination or pithing).	Ma
	AW3.26.3 The spinal cord shall not be severed or broken in any animal until after confirmation of death.	Ma
	AW3.26.4 Death shall be confirmed through observation of pupils, heart beat and lack of respiration prior to disposal or further processing.	Ma
	AW3.26.5 Sheep shall be slaughtered away from the view of other animals except in unavoidable cases.	Ma
	See euthanasia and on-farm slaughter guidance note	

AW3. Animal Management Guidance Notes and Templates

Guidance Notes

- Inspection Frequency Guidance (corresponding with AW3.1)
- Pain Relief Guidance (corresponding with AW3.6, AW3.9, AW3.10, AW3.17, AW3.19)
- Lameness Scoring Guidance (corresponding with AW3.14)
- Euthanasia and On-Farm Slaughter Guidance Note (corresponding with AW3.3, AW3.25, AW3.26)

Standard Operating Procedures

- Castration Standard Operating Procedure (corresponding with AW3.7, AW3.9)
- Tail docking Standard Operating Procedure (corresponding with AW3.7, AW3.10)

Templates

- Flock Health and Welfare Plan template (corresponding with AW3.2)
- Treatment and vaccination record template (corresponding with AW3.4.1)
- Injury record template (corresponding with AW3.17)
- Euthanasia plan template (corresponding with AW3.25)

Inspection Frequency Guidance

Corresponds to AW3.1

Different production systems

Across the globe sheep are generally reared in extensive pasture systems, with only a tiny percentage of animals in intensive systems (e.g. feedlot finishing of lambs). However, although extensive, pasture or rangeland production is a common factor there are many differences in global production systems as follows:

- Farm size
- Flock size
- Breed of sheep
- Type of sheep/stage of production – e.g. wethers, ewes with lambs etc.
- Climate
- Farm topography
- Stocking rate
- Vegetation type and growth cycle
- Water availability – piped to troughs or natural sources
- Risk factors – e.g. predators.

These variants all impact on how often a farmer needs to check their sheep to ensure that their health and welfare is maintained and the fact there are so many variables make it difficult if not impossible to set a meaningful minimum frequency of inspection that can be practically achieved by farmers

What's the point of inspection?

Before any comment can be made on how often inspection of sheep is necessary, the desired outcome of inspection must be understood. Farmers check their sheep to ensure the health and welfare of their animals is maintained. This is achieved by ensuring adequate feed and water are available, sheep have access to shelter as applicable to the local weather conditions, sick or injured sheep are identified and treated, and predators and any other threats are monitored and action taken to deter/control these as necessary.

How frequently should inspection be carried out?

Different systems of sheep production require different frequencies of inspection to deliver the desired outcomes noted above. Two examples from extremes of sheep production systems are shown below:

- In a system where sheep are dependent on human intervention to provide daily feed and water [for example in feedlot systems] they must be checked daily.
- In a system where the stage of production is unchanging [e.g. wethers], the stocking rate ensures that adequate grass/forage stocks are available for long-term grazing, there is a natural water source that is known to never dry up; topography ensures shade/shelter is available for expected weather conditions and predators are either unknown or excluded, frequency of checks could be every month or every two months with no ill effects being identified.

Outcomes

As per the current wording farmers need to routinely inspect their animals. Farmers must also assess risk relating to their flocks and their farms and increase inspection as necessary. If negative outcomes are found, inspection frequency must be increased. Negative outcomes include:

- **Mortality** – if health or predation problems go unrecognized and unchecked, or ewes at lambing time are insufficiently monitored, mortality will rise
- **Body condition** – if there is insufficient availability of feed and water BCS will drop

Pain Relief Guidance

Corresponds to AW3.6, AW3.9, AW3.10, AW3.17, and AW3.19.

Why is pain relief needed?

Management tasks such as tail docking and castration are painful operations. The first question must always be whether such procedures are necessary, and the RWS standards already require that the decision to carry out injurious husbandry procedures, including tail docking and castration, must be based on a welfare risk/benefit analysis rather than as a routine.

There has been a lot of research into sheep castration looking at different ages and methods. The results vary in terms of what is considered to be the most painful method or age but there will always be some degree of pain that can be exhibited both during and after castration.

Similarly, tail docking is a painful procedure. Tail docking is carried out by using rubber rings, emasculators, hot docking iron or, in some instances, a scalpel. In the last 10 years, researchers have clearly demonstrated that tail docking causes significant pain and distress to lambs – regardless of the technique used or the age of the lambs.

What types of pain relieving drugs are available?

Local anesthetic
Anesthesia is defined as the loss of sensation with or without the loss of consciousness. A local anesthetic is a drug that, when injected or given topically (on the skin), produces a state of local anesthesia by reversibly blocking the nerve conductors that transmit the feeling of pain from the point of administration to the brain. They are designed not to distribute widely in the body – hence the name “local”. They are easily broken down and excreted by the body. This means that the duration of action is limited. Local anesthetics are the ideal class of drug for reducing acute pain, but will not persist long enough to have an effect on long lasting or chronic pain.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS)
NSAIDs are a group of drugs that all have an anti-inflammatory mode of action as well as antipyretic (fever reducing) and analgesic effects.

NSAIDs work by reducing the production of prostaglandins. Prostaglandins are chemicals that promote inflammation, pain, and fever. The enzymes that produce prostaglandins are called cyclooxygenases (COX). NSAIDs block COX enzymes and reduce production of prostaglandins. Therefore, inflammation, pain, and fever are reduced.

NSAIDs are slower to act than local anesthetics but have a longer lasting effect – up to 24 hours in some cases.

Alpha-2 adrenergic drugs
Alpha-2 adrenergic drugs include xylazine and detomidine. These drugs provide analgesia, but they also have a sedative effect. These products take a few minutes to take effect (longer if intramuscular rather than intravenous injection is used) and last as a sedative for an hour or

more, but as an analgesic for around 30 minutes. The common Alpha-2 adrenergic drug xylazine is often used by vets in combination with the drug ketamine to give an anesthetic effect.

What does "suitable" mean?

The RWS standards require that for all methods of tail docking and castration pain relief must be used when suitable pain relief products are available. A suitable product is defined as one that has a pain relieving effect for the method of castration/tail docking that is used. Some pain relieving products act quickly for acute pain, others take longer to show an effect, but last for a greater time period. Methods of castration and tail docking similarly vary. Some methods will give acute pain at the time of the procedure (e.g. scalpel castration); others may give rise to chronic pain post-operatively (e.g. rubber ring tail docking). In addition, some pain relieving products are designed to be applied to a wound, and not all methods of castration or tail docking leave a wound.

What does "available" mean?

Following on from defining whether a product is suitable, the next point is whether it is available. To decide this, a brief background into how veterinary drugs are licensed and used is necessary. Veterinary pharmaceuticals, including pain relieving drugs, have to be licensed for use in individual countries by the companies that produce these. Veterinary pharmaceutical companies generally operate on a global scale, but the fact that they license a particular product in one country does not automatically mean they will seek to license that product elsewhere. The process of licensing drugs for use is time consuming and expensive and companies will not license a product unless they are sure that it will be used.

Licensing will specify the animal species for which the pharmaceuticals are intended; the therapeutic indication (i.e. when the product may be used), the mode of application and the withholding period.

Some licenses require pharmaceuticals to be prescribed by a vet; others allow farmers to purchase the product "over the counter" without prescription.

In the absence of a suitable licensed product, a veterinary surgeon can use their country's "off-label" or "extra-label" procedure to prescribe a product that is licensed for anther species or another therapeutic indication. This is generally only permitted when no other product is already licensed within that country or for that species. Off-label/extra label use means that vets can access pharmaceuticals, including pain reliving drugs, that are not otherwise available. Depending on the licensing rules, such products may only be used by the veterinarian or under the control of the veterinarian.

It is not guaranteed that a farmer will be able to access off-label/extra label products through their vet. It will be up to the individual veterinarian as to whether they are willing and able to facilitate this. There have been instances of attempted suicide by overdose of veterinary pain relieving drugs in the farming community, plus toxic overdose of local anesthetics such as lidocaine are a risk if dosing rates are miscalculated – as can occur with small lambs. Vets may therefore be reluctant to allow all farmers access to such drugs.

For the purposes of these standards it is therefore proposed that “available” should be defined as a product that is licensed for use by the farmer, in the relevant country, for the relevant species, for pain relief. This definition does not require the farm’s veterinarian to make a judgement call regarding the use of off-label drugs, and the farmer does not have a reason not to get access to the appropriate product. This definition includes drugs where the farmer needs to get a prescription from their veterinarian to obtain the product, as long as the license allows the farmer to use the product without the veterinarian present.

Other considerations – farmers certified organic under the U.S. National Organic Program (NOP)

Farmers certified as organic under the U.S. NOP are heavily restricted in terms of synthetic substances that may be used for livestock production. This is covered in CFR 205.603 of the organic regulations. Several pain relieving products are listed here including aspirin, butorphanol (an opioid analgesic), flunixin, xylazine, procaine and lidocaine. So far so good, however butorphanol and xylazine are noted as only being available for any species under ADMUCA (the U.S. system for off-label prescription) and while the rest are licensed for use in cattle in the U.S. none of them are licensed for sheep.

The products listed in CFR 205.603 are the ONLY products that farmers certified under NOP may use. From the information above it can be seen that organic farmers in the U.S. do not currently have “available” products in any case. However, many farmers in other countries are certified to NOP standards in order to export products to the U.S. In some of those other countries – for example Australia – suitable pain relieving products are available to sheep farmers, but their use would cause the loss of organic status for treated animals.

What pain relieving drugs can be used for sheep?

Research has shown that several pharmaceuticals have pain relieving effects at castration and tail docking of sheep. However some of these products are only available off-label through a vet.

See table on following page for details of products that are licensed and available to farmers in different countries.

What is reasonable to expect from RWS/RMS certified farmers?

If farmers are in countries where pain relieving products are licensed for use [see table below]; and the methods used by the farmer for castration and/or tail docking match the pain relieving products that are available **pain relief must be used.**

However: if farmers are certified to NOP standards enforcing the use of pain relieving drugs, even if these are suitable and available, could cause the farmer to lose their organic status with the resultant disastrous economic effects that would have. An exemption to this standard may therefore be offered under these circumstances.

Pain relief for shearing injuries

Standard AW3.17.2 requires that pain relief is applied to severe shearing injuries when a suitable pain relief product is available. However, some products hold very specific licensing

requirements. For example, trisolfen is licensed in Australia for castration and tail docking, but the license only extends to lambs and not older sheep. This product is therefore not suitable for use for shearing injuries in ewes. Buccalgesic – an orally applied pain relief, and Metacam – an injection do hold a license for use in sheep, but cannot be used for lactating ewes or those within 10 days of lambing.

Note: This will require ongoing monitoring of licensing of veterinary products, for either new products or new applications of existing products: for example, there may be an option to use numnuts in conjunction with cautery blade tail docking, but this has not yet been evaluated. The chart of products will be updated on an annual basis.

Table 1. Suitable and available pain relief products

Type of product	Local anaesthetic (two formulations)	Local anaesthetic	NSAID	NSAID
Active ingredient and Product name	Bupivacaine & Lignocaine e.g. Trisolfen	Lignocaine e.g. Numnuts	Meloxicam e.g. Buccalgesic	Meloxicam e.g. Metacam
Countries where licensed for farmer use*	Australia, New Zealand, Registration underway in Europe, Canada, US and South America	Australia now; UK 2020, New Zealand 2020	Australia, New Zealand	Australia, New Zealand, Canada
Species licensed for use	Sheep – lambs only	Sheep	Sheep	Sheep - over 2 weeks of age only
How applied	To the wound (so not used for rubber ring castration / docking)	Injected as the rubber ring is applied	Gel, inside the cheek	Intra-muscular or sub-cutaneous injection
When applied	After the procedure	At the time of the procedure	Prior to the procedure	Prior to the procedure
When it works	30 to 60 seconds after application and lasts for 24 hours	30 to 60 seconds after injection and lasts for 60-90 minutes (the acute pain phase)	From 10 minutes after application lasting up to 24 hours	From 10 minutes after application lasting up to 24 hours
What the product does	Contains local anesthetic to deaden pain, adrenaline to stop bleeding and an antiseptic	Contains local anesthetic to deaden pain	Relieves pain by reducing inflammation	Relieves pain by reducing inflammation
Meat Withdrawal time	90 days	Nil	10 days	11 days

Lameness Scoring Guidance

Corresponds to AW3.14.

Lameness describes an abnormality of movement and is most evident while the animal is in motion. Although lameness may be as a result of injury, the majority of lameness in sheep is a result of infections of the hoof. These can be assessed by examining each hoof for the presence of infection, but for welfare assessment purposes lameness is assessed by scoring gait. Lameness indicates that the sheep is feeling pain and is unable to bear weight completely on the affected limb. This reduces the ability to use one or more limbs in a normal manner, with severe cases reducing mobility or resulting in an inability to bear weight on the limb(s).

How to assess (flock and individual)

Locomotion scoring can be used to assess lameness severity in individual sheep and severity and prevalence of lameness in flocks.

Flock: The flock is observed first in an undisturbed condition to identify animals that cannot bear weight on a foot when standing. They may either hold the foot off the ground, or be grazing in a kneeling position. Animals should then be gently encouraged to walk away from the assessor and gait is observed.

Individual: Individual animals should be encouraged to walk along a race, preferably on a hard, flat surface if this available, and gait scored.

How to score

Lameness is scored on four levels:

Score	Description
Not lame (0)	Movement is smooth, weight is borne equally on all four feet with no shortening of stride. Some minor head nodding is acceptable if walking on uneven ground.
Minor lameness (1):	Clear shortening of stride with obvious head nodding or flicking as the affected limb touches the ground.
Lame (2):	Very obvious head nodding and not weight bearing on affected limb while moving, foot may be held up while standing, may be grazing on knees with front leg lameness. Steps are uneven and the stride may be shortened.
Severe lameness (3):	Recumbency or reluctance to stand or move. The affected limb or limbs are clearly identifiable and may be held off the ground while walking or standing.

Euthanasia and On-farm Slaughter Guidance

Corresponds to AW3.3, AW3.25, and AW3.26.

What's the difference between euthanasia and on-farm slaughter?

Euthanasia

- Slaughter of a sheep as a result of irrecoverable injury or illness
- Euthanasia is not planned – a farm will not know how many or which sheep might need to be euthanized in a particular month or year.

On-farm slaughter

- Planned slaughter of sheep for home/worker consumption, food for farm dogs etc.
- A farm will have an idea of the number of sheep they intend to slaughter each month or year for the reasons listed above and will select the animals for slaughter.

RWS requires that both euthanasia and on-farm slaughter are carried out using a method that is quick, causes minimal stress and pain, and results in a rapid loss of consciousness followed by death without the animal regaining consciousness.

Equipment

Equipment that can be used for euthanasia and on-farm slaughter of sheep is shown below:

- Penetrating and non-penetrating captive bolt guns
- Firearm
- Veterinary administered barbiturate overdose (euthanasia only)

Availability of equipment

The availability of firearms for on-farm use is dependent on local licensing laws.

Captive bolt guns generally do not come under firearms licensing laws as they are considered safer than firearms so are easier for farmers to access and use. Captive bolt guns are most often powered by cartridges (ammunition) but some designs use gas or compressed air.

Company	Equipment suitable for sheep	Details	Countries where available
Accles and Shelvoke accles-shelvoke.com/distributors	Cash Special	Cartridge powered penetrating captive bolt gun. Designed for both abattoir and on-farm use	Europe, South Africa, Kenya, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, United States, Canada.
Blitz Kerner	Turbocut captive bolt gun [also sold as the "Shoof" in NZ]	Cartridge powered penetrating captive bolt gun. Designed for abattoir and on-farm use	Europe, Australia, New Zealand, United States, Canada.
Bock Industries bock-industries.com	Ted Stunner	Propane powered captive bolt gun Designed for euthanasia/casualty slaughter on farm	United States, Canada.
Jarvis	Variety of products	Cartridge powered penetrating and non-penetrating captive bolts. Designed primarily for abattoir use	Europe, South Africa, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, China, New Zealand, United States, Canada
Schermer karl-schermer.de	K-Line	Cartridge powered penetrating captive bolt gun. Designed primarily for abattoir use	Europe, Australia, United States, Canada.
Termet termet-solefi.com/international-retailers2.html	Matasson	Cartridge powered non-penetrating captive bolt gun. Designed for both abattoir and on-farm use	Europe, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, United States, Canada.

Knife euthanasia

AW3.25.3 requires sheep to be stunned prior to euthanasia. Stunning may only be skipped in cases where the animal is in severe pain and finding access to tools for stunning would prolong the suffering. Using a knife for sheep euthanasia is commonly used without prior stunning. Circumstances under which this would be is permitted include:

- Where licensing restrictions limit the access to the appropriate equipment;
- Where the appropriate equipment is not available for purchase;
- Equipment may be available within the country or region but not yet on-farm and it can be demonstrated that the farm is working towards having suitable equipment and trained staff to use it.

The last point may be of most relevant to those seeking group certification where there may be multiple farms of varying sizes which need to change their current method of euthanasia.

As with all methods of euthanasia, a SOP for the process must be prepared and evidence presented of training of all relevant staff in the correct method. An example is provided in Figure 1.

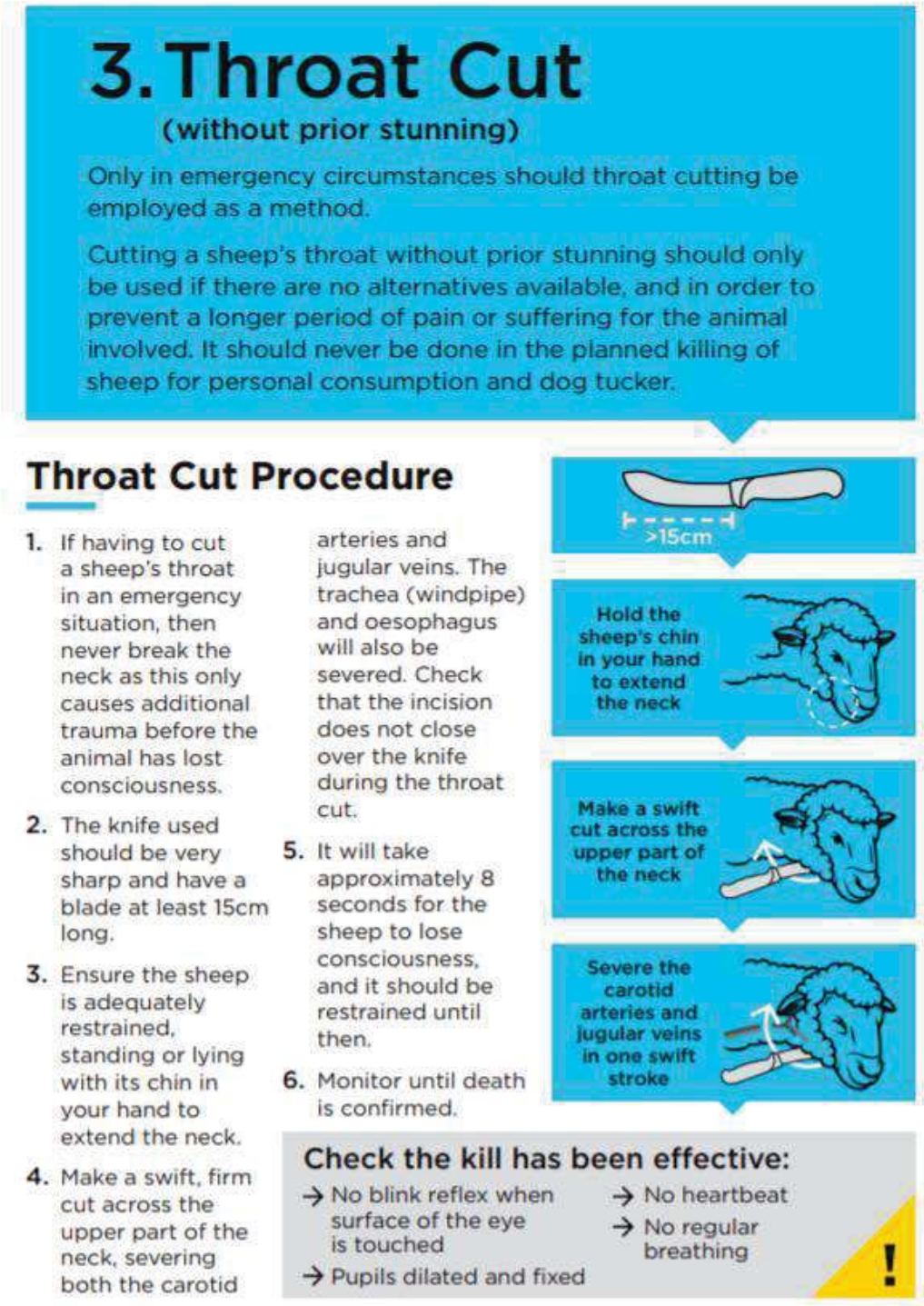
Knife slaughter

As noted above, on-farm slaughter and euthanasia have different definitions, and while euthanasia can be in response to an emergency situation, on-farm slaughter is a planned activity. Therefore, if on-farm slaughter is to be carried out without using a method listed in AW3.26.2 an exemption must first be granted.

RAF Exemption Policy

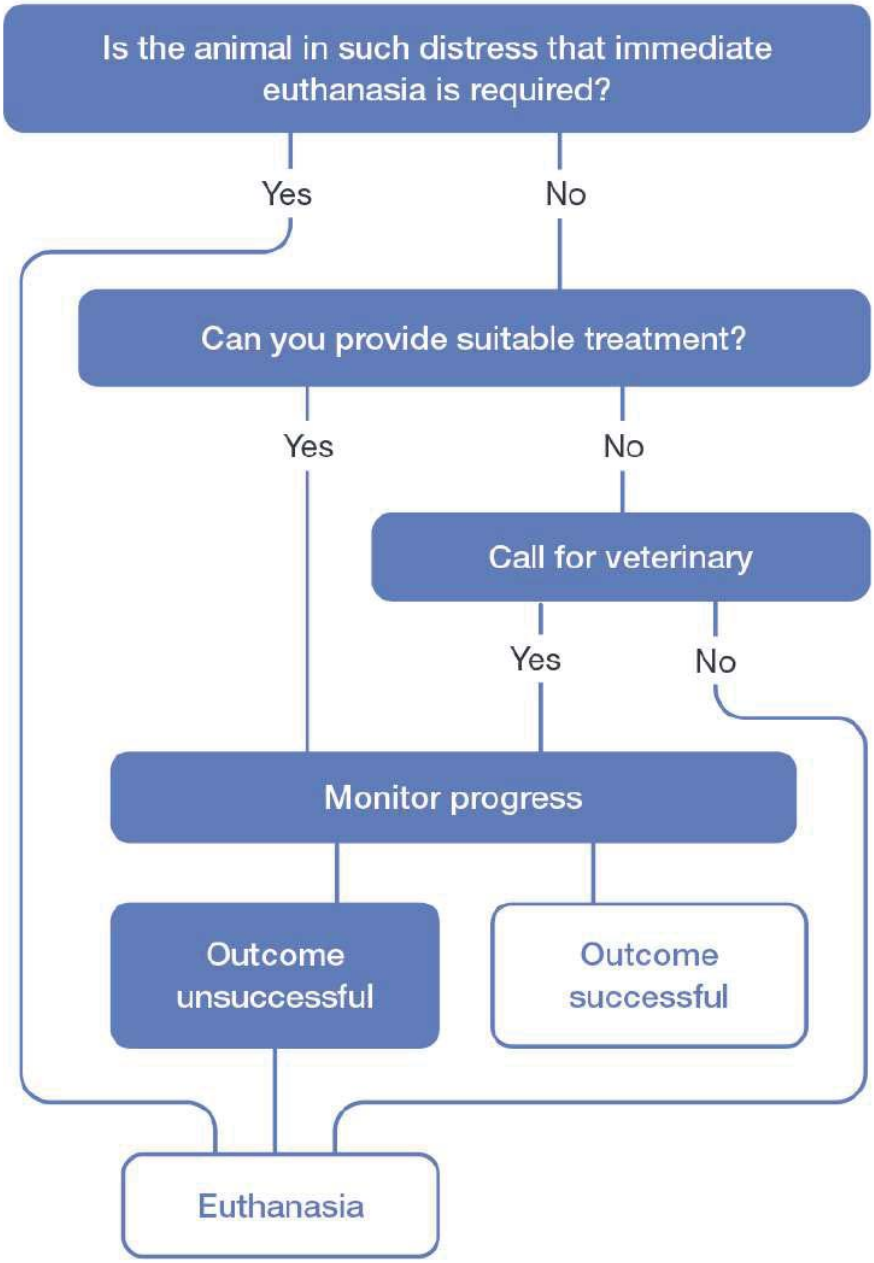
It is possible that a situation will arise in which a farmer meets the goals of the standard, but does not conform to a specific requirement of the standard. In this situation, the Certification Body may request to grant an exemption which means the certificate is issued without the requirement being met. Exemptions are granted on a case-by-case basis, and only for a limited period of time per farm. In these cases, the certification body shall submit the audit report to Textile Exchange, along with the description of the exemption, the reason for the exemption, and the amount of time allowed for the exemption. Textile Exchange will make the final decision of whether or not the exemption is allowed.

Figure 1. *(Humane Slaughter Good practice guidelines for the on-farm slaughter of sheep, The New Zealand Merino Company Ltd, Beef + Lamb New Zealand)*



When is euthanasia necessary – the Euthanasia Decision Tree:

Based on the 'Casualty Sheep', Sheep Veterinary Society.



The following information is taken from the Sheep Euthanasia Manual (2017) published by Alberta Lamb Producers and written by Jennifer Woods MSc. of J. Woods Livestock Services. Please note their disclaimer below the information provided

The full document can be found here:
https://www.ablamb.ca/images/documents/resources/Sheep-Euthanasia-Manual-final.pdf

When is euthanasia appropriate?

Just because there is a chance for recovery, it does not mean treatment is always the optimal choice for the producer or the animal. When deciding which option is best, there are several questions a handler has to ask in order to make a responsible decision.

- Is the animal experiencing a high level of pain?
- Will it require continual medication to alleviate the pain and suffering.
- Will the animal have to endure a painful and lengthy recovery?
- Will the animal be likely to return to normal function post recovery?
- Can the required care be provided during the convalescent period?
- Is the animal likely to suffer chronic pain or immobility following recovery?
- Will weather extremes create inhumane conditions for this animal during and/or after recovery?
- Will the animal be unable to or have difficulty accessing feed and water?
- Will the cost of therapy outweigh financial return?
- Is the animal contagious and can spread disease or illness to other animals, adversely affecting the welfare and the economics of the facility?

One of the biggest challenges though is determining: *How long should an animal be given to recover?* Current industry literature and guidelines would suggest that animals should show evidence of significant improvement within 24 hours from the onset of treatment.

Simply leaving an animal that is suffering to die of natural causes or in other words, “letting nature take its course” is unacceptable. Furthermore, it is NOT acceptable to prolong an animal’s misery by delaying euthanasia for reasons of convenience. It is important that when euthanasia is indicated, it be conducted in timely manner.

The following is a list of the more common illnesses and diseases that producers encounter while raising animals. This reference list is not intended to be all inclusive. It provides common examples of poor health and disease that may require euthanasia.

- Too weak to ship due to emaciation and poor body condition.
- Unresponsive to treatment and lack of ongoing desire to eat.
- Disease for which no effective treatment is known or is cost prohibitive.
- Disease for which expected recovery is unusually prolonged.
- Drastic weight loss.
- Contagious or reportable disease.
- Unresolved prolapses.
- Unresponsive respiratory disease/illness.
- Advanced or infectious arthritis affecting more than two joints.
- Infected prolapse.
- Intractable diarrhea.
- Paralysis from traumatic injuries or disease that results in immobility.
- Transmittable diseases (Zoonotics).
- Fractures of the legs, hip or spine.
- Emergency medical conditions that result in excruciating pain that cannot be relieved by treatment (i.e. trauma associated with highway accidents).
- A wound significantly impacting a critical biological function (i.e. major organ, muscle and skeletal systems, brain injury).
- Profuse bleeding.

Castration Standard Operating Procedure

Corresponds with AW3.7 and AW3.9.

Justification

Castration should only be done where the procedure results in benefits to life time sheep welfare, better flock management and a reduced health and safety risk to handlers.

Lambs destined for slaughter before they are 12 weeks old, or before the onset of puberty, should not be castrated.

Details of procedure

Lambs are restrained on their back by someone holding the lamb and restraining the feet or in a device for lamb restraint (docking cradle)

The scrotum is palpated for evidence of two descended testicles. If evidence of hernia or cryptorchidism exists, standard castration will not proceed and the lamb will be noted. Short scrotum castration may still be an option in this situation.

The following methods may be used:

- Application of a rubber ring, including short scrotum castration
- Bloodless Emasculator
- Surgical. Pain relief is mandatory

Rubber ring castration

Rubber ring castration works by constricting blood flow causing tissue below the ring to die and slough off. The process takes several weeks and leaves a sealed scar. There are two options for use of rubber rings. Standard castration by rubber ring is when the ring is placed at the neck of the scrotum above the two testes. The testes and the scrotum will then die and slough off. There is no blood loss with this method, but care must be taken to include both testes and not to include the urethra or a loop of intestine that has travelled down the inguinal canal (scrotal hernia) as these can lead to severe complications or death.

For short scrotum castration the testes are pushed up against the abdominal wall and the rubber ring placed below them around the scrotum. The ring prevents the testes from dropping back into the scrotum until the scrotum tissue dies and sloughs off. In this method the lamb retains its testes but without the scrotum is unable to regulate their temperature rendering the lams infertile. This advantage of this method is that testosterone is still produced by the testes and growth rates can therefore be higher than for lambs that undergo standard castration. This method is also less painful as less tissue is involved. However, production of testosterone does make the lambs behave as if they were fertile rams and if retained post puberty they may attempt to mate ewes and fight with other males.

Bloodless emasculator (burdizzo)

A bloodless emasculator (also known as a burdizzo) is designed to crush the spermatic cords without breaking the skin. This crushing should be at a level that causes irreversible damage. The testes will then shrivel up and become non-functional, but remain within the scrotum. The bloodless emasculator should be applied to each spermatic cord in turn for 6 to ten seconds each – not across the full width of the scrotum. There are different sized emasculators and it is crucial that the smaller instruments designed for sheep are used for lambs. This is another method which does not break the skin, reducing the risk of post-castration infection, however it requires a greater degree of skill than rubber ring castration and a higher rate of failure is often reported. If failure occurs it will not be immediately apparent, running the risk of unintendedly fertile males running with the flock.

Surgical

This method involves cutting open the scrotum and complete removal of the testes. The bottom of the scrotum is drawn downwards – leaving the testes behind – and cut off. The testes are grasped one at a time and drawn downwards through the opening at the bottom of the scrotum until the cord breaks. This method is much less likely to lead to hemorrhage than cutting the cords. The aim of cutting the bottom of the scrotum is so the wound can drain. However, this is an open wound and infection, abscesses and/or clostridial diseases such as tetanus are a potential risk. This method is acutely painful when compared with the alternatives and can only be used when pain relief is utilized.

Pain relief measures

For rubber ring and bloodless emasculator, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available on the market. Pain management options shall be discussed with a veterinary surgeon and options shall be reviewed regularly. See the additional pain relief guidance sheet.

Surgical castration without pain relief is not permitted.

Age

Castration should be done after a secure maternal bond has been established, and after the lambs are 24 hours old. The procedure shall be carried out between the ages of 24 hours and 8 weeks.

A flock of sheep will lamb over several weeks. If this occurs in housing each individual lamb can easily be castrated once the ewe/lamb bond is secure. For extensive flocks on pasture, trying to catch individual lambs at young ages can lead to mis-mothering. Normal practice is therefore to gather the flock once the youngest lambs are capable of safely following their mothers. In these extensive situations the average age of castration is acceptable to meet the requirements of this standard. The average castration age of the flock can be calculated by reviewing the spread of lambing dates and the date of castration.

For example, an extensive flock that lambs in a six week period between 1 September and 13 October and carries out castration on 3 November will have lambs that are between 3 weeks and 9 weeks of age on castration day, with an average age of 6 weeks. This is acceptable. If the

same flock carries out castration on 24 November lambs will be between 6 weeks and 12 weeks of age and the average age will be 9 weeks – this is not acceptable.

Castration above the age specified in AW3.9.3 may only take place if the criteria below are met.

1. The farm must raise rams for sale or retention as breeding stock

2. The farm must have a set of criteria to assess rams for suitability as breeding stock such as conformation, parent's genetics etc. [i.e. they shouldn't be keeping every ram that's born as a breeding animal]

3. An initial assessment of ram lambs against the criteria must be made by the time lambs are 8 weeks of age and any ram lambs that don't meet the criteria must be castrated at this time.

4. Ram lambs that pass the initial assessment, but which later develop traits that make them unsuitable for breeding may be castrated for retention in the herd/flock but only if castration is carried out using a bloodless emasculator with pain relief.

Care of animal(s) during/after the procedure

Lambs should be handled quietly before, during and after the procedure.

Following the procedure, lambs will be turned back onto dry, clean pasture or a dry, clean pen with their mothers.

Lambs must be inspected regularly following the procedure and with minimal disturbance for signs of post-operative complications during the healing process, and appropriate action taken as indicated.

Complications can include sepsis – a potential risk if equipment is dirty; scrotal hernia – when a loop of intestine is included with the testes in band castration; hemorrhage – if the testicular artery fails to seal during surgical castration; and clostridial disease such as tetanus.

Precautions

Good hygiene should be practiced in relation to facilities, hands, handling, and instruments with disinfectant being used and changed frequently.

Risk of infection can be limited by ensuring ewes have been routinely vaccinated and that the lambs are vaccinated at lamb marking.

Consideration of weather and yard conditions and fly activity should be made when planning lamb marking (e.g. avoid muddy yards and wet or humid weather).

Qualifications, experience or training necessary to perform this technique

The procedure shall be performed or supervised by a competent stockperson, using well-maintained equipment designed specifically for the purpose.

Tail docking Standard Operating Procedure

Corresponds with AW3.7 and AW3.10

Justification

Tail docking shall only be carried out if failure to do so would lead to welfare problems.

Details of procedure

Lambs can be restrained either by hand or in cradles.

The tail shall be docked with sufficient length to cover the vulva of a ewe, and the equivalent length in rams. Docking at the distal end of the caudal fold or no shorter than the third palpable joint should ensure this requirement is met. Docking tails to shorter lengths can increase the risk of rectal prolapse and vulva cancer and does not reduce the risk of fly strike, so is not permitted under RWS.

Two different techniques may be used:

- Thermocautery (Docking Iron)
- Application of a rubber ring

Thermocautery (Docking Iron)

This method uses a blade heated by gas or electricity to cauterize the wound and prevent bleeding. The heat also sterilizes the blade. There is some evidence that this method is less painful than rubber ring tail docking.

If using a hot knife when windy, consider using a wind block to maintain the knife at optimum temperature. A knife that is too cold will not cut through the tail in one motion. A knife that is too hot will cut through the tail too quickly and not cauterize the tail tip and increase the amount of blood loss.

Rubber ring

Rubber ring tail docking works by constricting blood flow, causing tissue below the ring to die and slough off. The process takes several weeks and leaves a sealed scar.

Pain relief measures

For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available on the market. Pain management options shall be discussed with a veterinary surgeon and options shall be reviewed regularly. See the additional pain relief guidance sheet.

Age

Lambs shall not be tail docked until the ewe/lamb bond has become established. The procedure shall be carried out between the ages of 24 hours and 8 weeks.

Care of animal(s) during/after the procedure

Lambs should be handled quietly before, during and after the procedure.

Following the procedure, lambs will be turned back onto dry, clean pasture or a dry, clean pen with their mothers.

Lambs must be inspected regularly following the procedure and with minimal disturbance for signs of post-operative complications during the healing process, and appropriate action taken as indicated.

Complications can include infection, particularly for rubber ring tail docking as the ring cuts into the tissue before the tail drops off. This can lead to abscesses or clostridial disease such as tetanus. If docking irons are not applied correctly there is a risk of burns. It is worth noting that some research suggests a proportion of lambs will exhibit hyperalgesia – an increased sensitivity to pain – and/or traumatic neuroma – a painful lesion at the tail end – after tail docking.

Precautions

Good hygiene should be practiced in relation to facilities, hands, handling, and instruments with disinfectant being used and changed frequently.

Risk of infection can be limited by ensuring ewes have been routinely vaccinated and that

the lambs are vaccinated at lamb marking

Consideration of weather and yard conditions and fly activity should be made when planning lamb marking (e.g. avoid muddy yards and wet or humid weather).

Qualifications, experience or training necessary to perform this technique

Only well-trained or well-supervised individuals will perform these procedures.

Flock Health and Welfare Plan Template

Corresponds with AW3.2 Note that this is the plan for individual farmers and farmer group members who each need to prepare their own plan. There is a separate template for Communal Farmer Groups who prepare a plan at group level in Appendix E.

Flock Health and Welfare Plan

For individual farmers and farmer group members.

Farm Name:

Location:

Date:

Completion of this template meets the requirements of AW3.2

Introduction

The complexity of a flock health and welfare plan will differ depending on the flock size and circumstances.

All Flock Health and Welfare Plans shall be:

- Based on each flock's individual requirements
- Developed with appropriate veterinary and technical advice.
- Regularly reviewed and updated

The use of this template is not compulsory but can be used to provide a basic structure if there is not already a plan in place.

Date of Plan		
Farmer Name		
Farm Name		
Size of farm [acres/ha]		
Veterinary Practice Details		
Plan completed by:	Name: Position	Signature: Date:

1. Flock details

1.1 Flock details

Breed(s)	
Number of breeding ewes	
Number of breeding rams	
Expected annual lambing %	

1.2 Describe your flock inspection schedule: who inspects the flocks, and how often.

	Months when this is applicable to sheep	Frequency of inspection	Person responsible
Housed			
Pastured			

2. Disease Prevention, Management and Treatment

2.1 Planned disease prevention, parasite management and vaccination program.

Provide details of your program below.

When	Type of animal e.g. ewes/lambs/ wethers/rams	Issue e.g. internal parasites / flies / clostridial disease	Action e.g. vaccinate with [product]/drench with [product]
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

3. Animal Husbandry Procedures

3.1 Castration

If castration is carried out, describe the approach including details of rationale, method, age, and pain relief. If pain relief is not provided provide a rationale for this.

Reason for castrating lambs	
Method(s) used	
Age(s)	
Pain relief measures	
Reason if pain relief is not used	

3.2 Tail docking

If tail docking is carried out, provide a description of the approach including rationale, details of method, age, pain relief. If pain relief is not provided provide a rationale for this.

Reason for tail docking lambs	
Method(s) used	
Age(s)	
Pain relief measures	
Reason if pain relief is not used	

4. Breeding Management and Lambing

4.1 Breeding management

What are the qualities that you are selecting for in your breeding strategy? Example: conformation, wool type, birth rates, meat quality etc.
e.g. we select for good leg/foot health and bare breech. All our new rams are facial eczema-tolerant

4.2 Breeding procedures

a.) Do you use laparoscopic artificial insemination? If yes, please indicate why this is used, who carries out the procedure, and provide details of pain relief.
e.g. the top 10% of flock are annually bred using laparoscopic AI to introduce superior wool traits. The veterinarian carries out the procedure. Ewes are sedated with ACP and given ketoprofen as an analgesic. Antiseptic spray is applied following the procedure and ewes are monitored carefully.
b.) Do you use electroejaculation? If yes, please indicate why this is carried out, who carries out the procedure, and provide details of pain relief.

e.g. we have a stud breeding operation and the veterinarian carries out electroejaculation for fertility testing for all stud rams.

4.3 Lambing

Detail the plans for lambing including time of year and other factor to reduce mortality of ewes and lambs
e.g. lambing is planned for the spring, when the weather is warmer and there is good grass growth to support the lactating ewes. We lamb ewe lambs for the first time when they are two years old.

5. Biosecurity Measures

Biosecurity

Document the actions undertaken to manage or reduce the risk of disease from the following sources, and any others you have identified.

Potential sources of disease	Control Actions Taken
Incoming livestock	*e.g. Only purchase from flocks with known health status. Put incoming stock in quarantine pen with no contact with existing flock for 28 days. Monitor for signs of disease*
People	*e.g. no visitors to the farm without prior appointment and record kept of visitors. Notices at farm entrance to inform delivery drivers to report to farm office.*
Buildings	*e.g. disinfectant foot dips outside each building*
Equipment	*e.g. foot trimming equipment cleaned and disinfected after use. Shearers ensure sanitized clippers brought onto farm*
Other (please describe)	*e.g. double fencing at farm boundaries so sheep do not have nose to nose contact with neighboring flocks.*

6. Health Issue Review and Action Plan

The table below can be used to summarize the issues that have occurred through the year, treatments given, and any deaths/culls that may be attributable to a specific health problem. Carrying out this review will help identify whether certain health issues are increasing or decreasing from year to year.

Condition		Animals Treated	Mortalities			Comments
			Died	Euthanized	Culled	
Lameness in Ewes						
Metabolic disease						
Clostridial disease						
Viral disease						
Bacterial disease						
Facial eczema						
Plant poisoning						
Parasites	Scab					
	Flystrike					
	Fluke					
	Worms					
	Lice					
Ewe Specific	Abortion					
	Prolapse					

Condition		Animals Treated	Mortalities			Comments
			Died	Euthanized	Culled	
	Difficulty lambing					
	Barren					
	Mastitis					
	Other					
Lambs	Congenital defect					
	Starvation/ Exposure					
	Orf					
	Joint ill					
	Other					
Predators						
Other						
Unknown						

Action Plan

Review records and collated data and identify key issues to address and actions to take.

Issue	Brief description	Actions already taken	Actions to be taken
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Comment:

Treatment and Vaccination Record Template

Corresponds with AW3.4.1.

Animal / group ID	Type of animal(s) (ewe, ram, lamb pre/post weaning	Number of animals treated	Vaccine / Treatment used	Reason for treatment	Date of treatment	Withdrawal time (days)	Date withdrawal finishes

Injury Record Template

Corresponds with AW3.17 and TG10.3

Animal ID	Reason for injury	Treatment	Date of treatment
	e.g. shearing injury, transport injury, injury in housing etc.		

Euthanasia Plan Template

Corresponds to AW3.24

Euthanasia Plan

For individual farmers, farmer group members and Communal Farmer Groups.

Farm or Group Name:

Location:

Date:

Completion of this template meets the requirements of AW3.24

The following template is adapted from the Sheep Euthanasia Manual (2017) published by Alberta Lamb Producers and written by Jennifer Woods MSc. of J. Woods Livestock Services. Please note their disclaimer below the information provided in the Euthanasia and On-farm Slaughter Guidance

The full document can be found here:
https://www.ablamb.ca/images/documents/resources/Sheep-Euthanasia-Manual-final.pdf

1. Farm or Communal Farmer Group details

Date of Plan		
Farmer Name		
Farm or Group Name		
Farm or Group Address		
Plan completed by:	Name: Position:	Signature: Date:
Date plan due for review		

2. Farmers or farm workers trained in euthanasia

Name	Date of training

3. Animals that will be promptly euthanized include:

Condition	Check to show that sheep with this condition will be euthanized
Untreatable conditions	
Non-responsive to treatment and not likely to recover	
Unfit for slaughter	
Weak, unable to stand or walk	
Unable to eat or drink	
Unable for farm to provide appropriate care	
Showing signs of a reportable disease	
Animal is showing signs of suffering, in pain or distress	

4. Acceptable methods

Size/type of sheep	Acceptable method of euthanasia
Lamb pre-weaning	
Lamb post-weaning	
Ewe	
Ram	

5. Acceptable secondary methods (if necessary)

Size/type of sheep	Secondary method of euthanasia
Lamb pre-weaning	
Lamb post-weaning	
Ewe	
Ram	

6. Death and disposal

What checks to confirm death are carried out before any euthanized animals is moved or disposed of?

How are euthanized animals disposed of?

7. Reportable disease

If there is a suspicion of reportable disease, please detail who should be contacted

8. Other contacts

Veterinarian	
Deadstock removal service (if applicable)	
Other (please specify)	

AW4. Handling and Transport

Desired outcome: Good human-animal relationships are in place and animals are handled and transported around the farm and off the farm in a way that protects welfare.

Number	Requirement	Level
AW4.1	Animals shall be handled humanely; mistreatment of animals is unacceptable.	C
	AW4.1.1 Mistreatment includes rough physical contact such as kicking, striking, slamming gates on the sheep, tripping, throwing, or dropping animals, dragging, or pulling sheep by the fleece, tail, ears, head, horns or neck, or dragging by the back legs.	C
	AW4.1.2 Extra care shall be taken when handling sheep with special needs, such as young lambs, heavily pregnant ewes, lame sheep and rams. Heavily pregnant ewes shall only be handled when absolutely necessary.	Ma
	AW4.1.3 Electric prodders shall not be used.	Ma
	Electric prodders include any device that delivers an electric shock when handling animals. They are also known as electric prods and hotshots.	
	If sheep are handled calmly and quietly management tasks are easier to do and are less stressful for the animals and the farm workers. Humane handling also builds a positive relationship between handler and animal so that when close contact is needed it causes less distress. People handling sheep should be aware of signs that the animals are becoming stressed, for example if they are vocalising, and should take action to counter this for example moving more slowly, reducing any noise, moving animals to smaller pens if they need to be caught, to avoid chasing them or simply pausing the task to allow sheep/goats to settle before continuing.	
AW4.2	Audible or visual aids to handling (e.g. rattles or flags) should be used in preference to physical contact.	R

Number	Requirement	Level
AW4.3	Sheep moved on foot shall not be forced to proceed at a pace that will cause exhaustion, heat stress or injury.	Ma
	AW4.3.1 Sheep shall be driven in a calm manner at a relaxed pace, natural to that animal, and not faster than the pace of the slowest animal.	Ma
	AW4.3.2 Sick, injured, disabled, severely lame or heavily pregnant animals shall be moved only when necessary and at a pace to suit their condition.	Ma
	AW4.3.3 Contingency plans shall be made to move sheep that become lame or weak by vehicle.	Mi
AW4.4	Stock people shall have good command of dogs and be in control when working sheep.	Ma
	AW4.4.1 Dogs shall not be allowed to force the sheep to move too quickly nor to continue to force the sheep when they have nowhere to go.	Mi
AW4.5	Livestock guardian animals shall be trained and suitable for the farm environment and the expected predator threat.	Ma
	A number of animals have been successfully used as Livestock Guardians. The most common are livestock guardian dogs, but donkeys and llamas have also been used. The success of guardian animals will depend on the type and numbers of predators, the size of the flock and the number of trained guardians bonded to that flock. For example, llamas have been shown to chase small predators such as foxes away from the flock, but if the main threat is jackal or coyote guardian dogs will be more appropriate. With a large flock and/or multiple potential predator attacks multiple guardian animals will be needed.	
AW4.6	In situations where the farm is responsible for or in control of the transport of sheep, the requirements of the RWS Transport Guidance (Appendix D) and regional legal requirements shall be met.	Ma
	See Transport Guidance	

Number	Requirement	Level
AW4.7	The farmer shall keep records of injury and death rates associated with all transport of their sheep, and take actions to address high rates.	Mi
AW4.8	Farmers shall not knowingly sell their sheep to traders or brokers who intend to export their livestock for slaughter internationally.	C

Live export is the sale or transfer of sheep from one country to another. The only exception to this standard is when live export is across a single border to a neighboring country, sheep are only transported on land and transport can be accomplished within all requirements of the Transport Guidance.

Knowingly selling sheep for live export means that the farmer is selling directly to a trader or broker who only deals in live export and/or when the buyer has advertised or otherwise communicated to the farmer that sheep sold to them will be sent for live export.

If a farmer sells through an auction barn or market where there are multiple buyers and the farmer has no control over who purchases the stock they are not knowingly selling for live export.

Live export has many welfare risks for sheep and is coming under increasing regulatory and public scrutiny. Live export often entails transport that takes several days in conditions that are inadequate to maintain sheep welfare. Sheep may be slaughtered at the end of their journey in ways that do meet the regulatory requirements of the source country, nor RWS's slaughter requirements.

AW4. Handling and Transport Guidance Notes and Templates

Guidance Notes

- Transport Guidance

Transport Guidance

Corresponds to AW4.6.

Number	Requirement	Level
TG1. Responsibilities, Competency, and Stockmanship		
TG1.1	At every stage of transport, animals shall be cared for by a sufficient number of personnel, who collectively possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and competence necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the animals.	C
TG1.2	The person in charge of an animal may change as it moves from the farm to its final destination. The responsibility for implementing the standard therefore lies with the person(s) selecting and presenting animals for transport, and also the person(s) or organization(s) accepting the animals for transport.	Ma
	TG1.2.1 Where the responsibility changes, the person(s) or organization(s) accepting the animals for transport shall provide a copy of their Standard Operating Procedures.	Mi
TG2. Documentation		
TG2.1	All required documentation shall be completed and accessible to the relevant personnel prior to embarking on and during travel, so that incomplete or inaccessible documentation does not cause any delay in animals reaching the destination or being unloaded at the destination.	Mi
TG2.2	There shall be a contingency plan in place that allows the needs of animals to be met in the event of any delays arising during the journey.	Mi
TG3. Fitness for Travel		
TG3.1	All sheep shall be assessed as fit for transport. The following animals shall not be transported unless it is for the purposes of veterinary treatment: a. sick, injured, weak, or disabled animals b. those that are unable to stand unaided and bear weight on each leg c. those that are blind in both eyes	C

Number	Requirement	Level
	d. those that cannot be moved without causing them additional suffering e. those whose body condition would result in poor welfare because of the expected climatic conditions. **TG3.1.1** If animals meeting these conditions are suffering and unlikely to recover, they should be euthanized on the farm. They should not be transported to auction or slaughter.	R
TG3.2	The following animals shall only be transported if the journey is short (less than 50km) and the purpose is to improve conditions for the animal and the journey will not cause unnecessary pain or suffering. Otherwise, transport shall be delayed until they are fit to travel. a. Heavily pregnant ewes (past 90% gestation) b. New born lambs where the navel has not completely healed **c.** Ewes that have given birth in the previous seven days	Ma

TG4.Separation

TG4.1	Sheep shall be handled and transported separately from other species. The following separations shall also be applied: a. Sheep of significantly different sizes or ages b. Sexually mature males from females c. Animals with horns from animals without horns d. Animals hostile to each other e. Tied animals from untied animals *NOTE: TG4.1 does not apply where animals have been raised in compatible groups, are accustomed to each other and where separation would cause distress or where animals are accompanied by dependent young.*	Mi

TG5. Preparation for Transport

TG5.1	Animals shall be appropriately prepared for transport, including through the provision of sufficient food and water, as appropriate to the species, age, condition and expected length and conditions of the journey, so that pain, injury or distress to themselves or other animals is avoided.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
TG5.2	Before undertaking a journey during which the animals will be fed and watered, animals shall be familiarized with the feed to be offered and the methods by which the feed and water are given.	Mi

TG6.Transport Vehicles and Facilities for Livestock

TG6.1	The vehicle and its loading and unloading facilities shall be designed, constructed, and maintained to avoid injury and suffering and to ensure the safety of the animals.	Ma
TG6.2	Ramps shall be set at an incline of no greater than 27 degrees and have measures in place to prevent injury.	Mi
TG6.3	Conveyances and containers shall be designed to ensure adequate ventilation or oxygenation to allow the free flow of air or oxygen to all animals, even when stationary, to prevent the build-up of harmful concentrations of gases or impurities, water vapor or temperature.	Mi
TG6.4	Conveyances and containers shall be designed to provide protection from adverse weather that may be a risk to the animal's health and welfare. In very cold weather a vehicle with a solid front must be used to reduce the wind chill factor.	Mi
TG6.5	Where animals show signs of heat or cold stress or distress from exposure to noxious gases, immediate corrective action shall be taken.	Ma
TG6.6	Animals shall not be transported when climactic conditions are likely to cause significant discomfort or harm Climatic conditions that can cause significant discomfort or harm include hot and cold temperature extremes, heavy snow, or freezing rain. If transport on days of extreme heat is absolutely necessary, the journey plan should minimize the effects of heat stress on animals with rest stops planned to be in areas of shade and perhaps a water source. Animals should only be transported during the cooler hours of the day. If it is necessary to stop, park the vehicle in the shade and at a right angle to the wind direction to improve wind flow between animals during hot weather. Duration of stops should be kept to a minimum to avoid the build-up of heat while the vehicle is stationary.	Mi

Number	Requirement	Level
	Stocking densities should be reduced to 85 per cent of capacity to ensure good air flow between animals, and drivers should have contingency plans in place for adverse weather events. If sheep are being transported in very cold weather, vehicles may need to be halted and parked in a protected area to prevent wind chill and hypothermia in the animals.	

TG7. Loading and Unloading

TG7.1	Animals shall be loaded and unloaded in a way that minimizes the risk of pain, injury, or distress to the animals. The use of electric prodders is prohibited.	Ma
TG7.2	Sheep shall not be dropped, dragged, or pulled by the fleece, tail, ears, head, horns, or neck.	Ma
TG7.3	Stocking density shall be sufficient to allow animals to adopt a natural posture during the journey.	Ma

TG8. Recommended Space Allowance

TG8.1	Each sheep should have the following minimum area in transport: a. Shorn sheep and lambs of 26 kg or over: 0.20-0.30 m^2/animal b. Unshorn sheep: 0.30-0.40 m^2/animal c. Heavily pregnant ewes 0.40-0.50 m^2/animal	R

TG9. Journey Times, Food, Water, and Rest

TG9.1	Journeys shall be direct, without any prolonged stops.	Ma
	TG9.1.1. All animals should be transported for the shortest possible time.	R
	If a farm takes sheep to slaughter or market they should not bypass a nearby site to go to a further destination without good reason. Journey times must comply with legislation.	
TG9.2	Water, feed, and opportunity to rest shall be made available to animals as appropriate to meet their health needs.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
TG9.3	After each 24 hours of travel adult sheep shall have a rest period of at least 12 hours.	Ma
	TG9.3.1 Animals between weaning and 12 months of age shall have a rest period of at least 12 hours after every 18 hours of transport.	Ma
	Travel duration is calculated from the time loading starts, time on the vehicle and unloading time. Journey times may only reach 24 hours for adult animals and 18 hours for other animals if this is permitted by legislation.	
TG9.4	During every specified rest period, sheep of all ages shall: a. be unloaded; b. have access to food and clean water c. have enough space for exercise and rest.	Ma
	Sheep should have at least the following minimum area per animal during rest periods:	

Type of animal	Minimum area per animal m^2 (ft^2)
Ewe	1.2 (15)
Weaned lambs	0.9 (10)
Rams	1.5 (21)

TG9.5	Water and feed shall be provided at least once in every 24 hours to animals older than 12 months, except for animals traveling on a journey that will be entirely completed within 30 hours. *The relevant period for determining feed and water requirement is the total period of deprivation of feed and water from the time of initial loading until unloading after the second or last journey.*	Ma

TG10. Monitoring and Records

TG10.1	Animals shall be inspected for injury or signs of pain or distress at regular intervals during the journey, including at rest breaks taken by the operator of the conveyance and at refueling stops.	Ma
TG10.2	Animals found to be distressed or injured shall be assisted, treated or if necessary, euthanized as soon as practicable.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
TG10.3	The mortality and injury rate shall be recorded.	Mi

See mortality record template under section AW5

See injury record template under section AW3

AW5. Management, Plans, and Procedures

Desired outcome: Farmers have a clear strategy and set of protocols to safeguard the welfare of their animals, and to demonstrate compliance to the relevant RWS.

Number	Requirement	Level
AW5.1	Farms shall comply with all applicable legislation on animal welfare and land management.	C
AW5.2	Parallel production is prohibited: all sheep on the farm shall fall under RWS certification.	C
	If an exemption has been granted under *RAF-105a Guidance for Purchasing Mulesed Sheep* (available upon request), to bring in mulesed stock (see AW3.11), or the conditions under AW3.10.4 are followed to bring in short tailed stock, these animals are considered to be part of the RWS flock and not in a state of parallel production. However, wool from mulesed sheep must be kept separate from RWS wool and shall not be sold as certified.	
AW5.3	All other animals kept on the farm shall be treated humanely.	Ma
	AW5.3.1 Continuous confinement of any animal on the farm is prohibited. Animals shall receive nutrition, care, handling, and veterinary attention as required for their health, safety, and comfort.	Ma
AW5.4	Farmer shall give auditor full access to the farm and operations that fall under certification.	C
	AW5.4.1 As directed by the auditor, this shall include access to: a. buildings b. land c. documents d. sheep e. workers	C

Number	Requirement	Level
	The certification body will confirm ahead of the audit how many sheep need to be available for viewing at the audit.	
AW5.5	Records shall be kept for a minimum of five years.	Mi
AW5.6	Mortality records shall be kept.	Mi
	Mortality record template	
	AW5.6.1 If mortality rates fall outside expected levels, actions shall be taken and the problem resolved.	Mi
	AW5.6.2 Unexpected deaths and disease outbreaks shall be investigated and remedial and preventive actions shall be taken.	Mi
AW5.7	An emergency plan shall be in place to maintain sheep welfare in exceptional circumstances. *For Communal Farmer Groups, the emergency plan can be prepared at group level.*	Ma
	AW5.7.1 The emergency plan shall include measures that will be taken to ensure adequate feed and water are made available to sheep in the event of situations such as drought, wildfire, and other exceptional circumstance.	Mi
	AW5.7.2 A strategy shall be in place for the provision of shelter in the event of emergency situations caused by extreme weather events.	Mi
	AW5.7.3 If animal welfare is at risk, arrangements shall be made to relocate, sell, or humanely euthanize sheep to ensure their welfare is not adversely affected.	Mi
	The farm must be able to describe actions they will take in response to exceptional circumstances that could be expected to occur in their region. Such circumstances could include: drought, heavy snow/ice storms, bushfire/wildfire and flooding.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	In situations where natural forages are less available than planned, such as during drought or heavy snow, adaptive management should be used to avoid long-term damage to forage resources. Factors in adaptive management can include ranch and paddock based stocking rates, decisions on number and timing of stock sales, building forage reserves, and using seasonal predictions of climate and other monitoring. Where a temporary drought lot is established best practice codes should be adhered to: https://www.wool.com/globalassets/wool/land/drought-resources/accordion-1/2017-managing-sheep-in-droughtlots.pdf Additional resources for managing sheep in droughts and bushfires can be found here: https://www.wool.com/land/drought-resources/	
	Emergency plan template	
AW5.8	Quarantine procedures should be in place when new animals are introduced.	R
AW5.9	Farmer shall be knowledgeable on current and best practices regarding animal welfare and land management in sheep production.	Ma
	AW5.9.1 Farmer shall have read and understood the RWS.	Ma
AW5.10	Workers shall be trained or experienced and competent in handling animals, and shall possess and practice the ability, knowledge, and competence necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the animals. They shall be knowledgeable in current best practices for animal welfare and land management for sheep production.	Ma
	AW5.10.1 Training records should be maintained.	R
	AW5.10.2 Workers shall have access to the RWS, and be made aware of the relevant requirements.	Mi
AW5.11	All external workers that come onto the farm to perform work involving the sheep shall be made aware of the relevant parts of the RWS.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	AW5.11.1 All subcontractors shall sign the RWS Contractor Declaration.	Ma

AW5. Management, Plans and Procedures: Templates

Templates

- Mortality Records template (corresponding to AW5.6)
- Emergency Plan template (corresponding to AW5.7)
- Contractor Declaration (corresponding to AW5.11)

Mortality Record Template

Corresponds to AW5.6.

ID	Type of animal(s) (ewe, ram, lamb pre/post weaning	Date of death	Reason for, or suspected cause of death	Prior signs of illness (respiratory stress, off-feed, wasting)	Found dead or euthanized?	Cause confirmed? (Post mortem result if carried out)												

Emergency Plan Template

Corresponds to AW5.7.

Farm or Communal Farmer Group name:	Date of last review of plan:	Date plan due for review:

Emergency	Risk of occurrence on farm (High/Medium)	Actions
e.g. drought	*e.g. high*	*e.g. keep a stock of forage, put sheep into a drought lot, reduce sheep numbers, use water tanks where natural sources have dried up*
e.g. wildfire	*e.g. medium*	*e.g. establish "safe paddocks", monitor local fire reports, move high value animals to low risk areas, ensure personal safety*
e.g. flooding	*e.g. high*	*e.g. monitor weather conditions, move animals to high (dry) ground*
Other		
Other		

Contractor Declaration

Corresponds to AW5.11.

Over the years and recently, wool production has come into focus for brands and consumers; certain animal rights organizations have shone a harsh light on poor practices in farming, even if the reality is that these practices are not typical of most farming systems.

More and more companies are asking questions about where their wool comes from and under what conditions it was produced. Customers are not just asking but demanding that their supply of wool be humane. The Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) is the tool to give everyone the confidence they need that they are buying wool that is from sheep that have been well treated, and from farms that care for their land.

All farms supplying RWS wool undergo full certification to verify that the goals and requirements of the standard are met. In addition to the audit, we are asking any subcontractors coming onto the farm to deal directly with the sheep to fill in the declaration that follows.

Contractor Declaration

I, _____, declare that I have reviewed the Responsible Wool Standard, and understand its intent.

I commit to ensure that the animals that my crew and I work with are treated with care. In particular, I will ensure that the following requirements of the RWS are met as they apply (*please initial beside each one*):

Number	Requirement	Initial
AW3.9	Castration shall only be carried out on males that are being kept beyond puberty.	
	AW3.9.1 For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available.	
	AW3.9.2 The procedure shall be performed using either: a. bloodless emasculator; b. application of a rubber ring, including shortening of scrotum; or c. surgical methods with mandatory pain relief.	
	AW3.9.3 The procedure shall be carried out between the ages of 24 hours and 8 weeks.	
	AW3.9.4 Farmers shall monitor for signs of post-operative complications and take appropriate corrective actions.	
	AW3.9.5 Lambs shall not be castrated until the ewe/lamb bond has become established.	
AW3.10	Tail docking shall only be carried out if failure to do so would lead to welfare problems.	
	AW3.10.1 For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available.	

Number	Requirement	Initial
	AW3.10.2 The procedure shall be performed using either thermocautery (preferred method) or the application of a rubber ring.	
	AW3.10.3 The procedure shall be carried out between the ages of 24 hours and 8 weeks.	
	AW3.10.4 Docked tails shall cover the vulva in ewes and the equivalent length in rams.	
	AW3.10.5 Farmers shall monitor for signs of post-operative complications and take appropriate corrective actions.	
	AW3.10.6 Lambs shall not be tail docked until the ewe/lamb bond has become established.	
AW3.15	Shearing shall be performed by - or under the direct supervision of - a competent shearer.	
	AW3.15.1 Shearing shall be carried out under the direct supervision of the farmer or a person appointed by the farmer.	
	AW3.15.2 Shearing shall be done using techniques and equipment designed to minimize stress and injury.	
	AW3.15.3 Sheep shall be handled calmly and confidently to minimize stress. (see AW4.1)	
	AW3.15.4 Particular care shall be taken not to cut or injure the animal, especially the teats/udders of female sheep and the penis/sheath and scrotum of rams.	
	AW3.15.5 An action plan shall be instituted to address and prevent any recurring problems with injuries or mishandling.	
	AW3.15.6 Written and/or visual “Shearing Standard Operating Procedures” shall be posted in a visible location of the shearing shed.	
AW3.17	All shearing related injuries shall be attended to promptly.	

Number	Requirement	Initial
	AW3.17.1 In the event of a severe cut or injury the shearer shall cease shearing immediately to treat the injury.	
	AW3.17.2 Pain relief shall be applied for serious injuries when suitable pain relief is available.	
	AW3.17.3 Records of serious injuries shall be kept.	
AW4.1	Animals shall be handled humanely; mistreatment of animals is unacceptable.	
	AW4.1.1 Mistreatment includes rough physical contact such as kicking, striking, slamming gates on the sheep, tripping, throwing, or dropping animals, dragging, or pulling sheep by the fleece, tail, ears, head, horns, or neck, or dragging by the back legs.	
	AW4.1.2 Extra care shall be taken when handling sheep with special needs, such as young lambs, heavily pregnant ewes, lame sheep and rams. Heavily pregnant ewes shall only be handled when absolutely necessary.	
	AW4.1.3 Electric prodders shall not be used.	

In the event that it comes to my knowledge that any of the above requirements for any reasons are not met, I will inform the certification body immediately.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Section C – Land Management Criteria

LM1. Soil

Desired outcome: Farmers have an understanding of what will impact the health of their soil, and have a strategy to mitigate damage and improve soil health.

Number	Requirement	Level
LM1.1	Land shall not be degraded by overgrazing and/or other management techniques.	Ma
	LM1.1.1 Soil and land health including forage resources, soil erosion, compaction, organic matter, and any other areas of risk relevant to the farm, shall be addressed through actions and in a written management plan. For Communal Farmer Groups the written management plan for soil, land health, and biodiversity can be prepared at group level	Mi
	Local agricultural agencies can provide guidance on the factors influencing social health in their local region and provide advice on strategies and techniques that will help with developing a plan for soil and land health.	
	Communal Farmer Group Land Management, Soil Health and Biodiversity Plan Template	
LM1.2	Soil compaction shall be monitored and managed.	Ma
	LM1.2.1 Steps shall be taken to prevent or minimize soil compaction and to restore damaged areas. For land classes 4 and 5, rangelands can be managed through stocking rates and preferential selection of pastures species such as deep rooted perennials. For land classes 1 - 3, a number of management options can help prevent soil compaction on cropped or improved land:	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	• Keep off the field when the soil is wet, particularly with heavy equipment. The carrying capacity of dry soil is much greater than that of moist soil. • Ensure tillage operations are performed when the soil is at proper moisture conditions at tillage depth. • Install tile drainage in fields with variable or poor drainage. • Use longer crop rotations that include forages/cereals • Leave forage crops in for more than 1 year. • Alternate tillage depth so that tillage pans are not created. • Minimize the amount of traffic on a field. • Use radials, large tires or tracks that create a long narrow footprint to restrict compaction. • Reduce the tire pressure to reduce the force on the surface of the soil. This will only be effective with radial tires and with large enough tires to carry the equipment at the reduced pressures. Check with the manufacturer that the tires are rated to operate at low pressures. • Avoid high axle loading, which will cause compaction in the subsoil, even with low tire pressure. Keep equipment weight and loads as low as practical (below 4.5 tonnes/axle or 5 tons/axle). As often as possible, limit traffic with heavy equipment to laneways rather than tracking the entire field.	
LM1.3	Soil erosion shall be monitored and managed.	Ma
	LM1.3.1 Steps shall be taken to prevent or minimize soil erosion and to restore damaged areas.	Ma
	LM 1.3.2 The risk of sedimentation of water bodies with soil from fields should be assessed and managed (e.g. erosion control, avoidance of compaction, and riparian buffer strips).	R
	Check your land for areas where erosion is likely to happen, and take into account the factors that will cause it. The type of soil, the slope of the land, animal traffic, wind, water, and tillage may affect erosion. **Prevention of Soil Erosion:** *Grazing Planning:* Erosion prone areas should not be grazed in sensitive times of the year and grazing pressure should be monitored regularly to avoid overgrazing. *Windbreaks and Shelterbelts:* Often additional protection from the wind is necessary when there is not enough residue to hold soil in place.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	Windbreaks and shelterbelts can provide that protection by slowing down wind speeds near the ground. Windbreaks also create a microclimate, raising soil and air temperatures adjacent to the trees, reducing drying winds and accumulating more snow. These effects also provide crop yield increases. *Fragile Land Retirement:* Occasionally, the erosion cannot be controlled on a field or part of a field. The erosion may be too extreme, or the field has some other limitation, making it unprofitable or unsustainable to farm. Fragile land could include areas along creeks, lakes and wetlands that may be subject to flooding or other land that is subject to severe erosion. This land should be retired from production to forest or pastureland. See Guidance note 'Soil Management Practices to Reduce Soil Erosion'	
LM1.4	Soil organic matter shall be monitored and managed.	Mi
	LM1.4.1 Steps shall be taken to prevent or minimize loss of soil organic matter and to restore damaged areas.	Mi
	Organic matter on grazed lands Increasing or decreasing Stocking Rates is usually the best tool to manage soil organic matter in a rangeland situation. The Holistic Management approach promoted by the Savory Institute has seen excellent results, and resources are available at savory.global. *Organic matter on cropping lands* Soil needs to be monitored at an interval where farmers can demonstrate they are managing the health of their soil; that could be yearly or every 5 years but there must be a system in place. Soil testing will provide organic matter levels and it is best to work with the local agriculture department to determine what levels are acceptable, when improvement is needed and the best methods to use. The tillage practices recommended to limit soil erosion will also help to preserve organic matter.	
LM1.5	The farmer shall monitor key indicators of land health.	Mi

Number	Requirement	Level
	LM1.5.1 Monitoring sites shall be set for pasture composition and soil degradation. The number and distribution of the monitoring sites shall conform to the RWS Monitoring Guidance document.	Mi
	LM1.5.2. Where there is grazing on public lands, the farmer shall demonstrate that that the criteria designated by the permitting authority are met or exceeded.	Mi
	 Monitoring systems should be designed to detect changes due to grazing and other management and to gain objective information on the progress towards sustainable management of the land.	
	 See Monitoring Point Guidance Note for individual farmers and farm group members	
	 See Communal Farmer Group Land Management, Soil Health and Biodiversity Plan Template for information on monitoring for Communal Farmer Groups	
LM1.6	Hazardous materials shall not be disposed of on the farmland unless specifically allowed by law and it is safe to use the affected land for grazing.	Ma
	 Farm wastes that are considered inappropriate are any that may pose risks to human or animal health, water, or soil quality. These may include waste from: • Animal health products (medicines, sharps, etc.) • Chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, cleaning agents, antifreeze, etc.) • Certain building materials (asbestos, contaminated concrete, etc.) • Batteries • Equipment containing refrigerants (freezers, air conditioners, etc.) • Lubricating oils or filters • Paints or coatings • Machinery tires • Pressurized containers Devices containing mercury (thermometers, fluorescent bulbs, thermostats, electrical switches, etc.)	

LM1. Soil Guidance Notes and Templates

Guidance Notes

- Soil Management Practices to Reduce Soil Erosion
- Monitoring Points Guidance

Templates

- Communal Farmer Group Land Management, Soil Health and Biodiversity Plan Template

Guidance Note: Soil Management Practices to Reduce Soil Erosion

Reduced Tillage

Effect:

- leaves residue on the soil surface, effectively controlling erosion
- loosens less soil
- prevents soil from being moved down slope by tillage implements

Other Benefits:

- improved water infiltration
- reduced organic matter loss
- improved soil structure

Use against erosion caused by:

Adding organic materials

Effect:

- leaves residue on the soil surface, effectively controlling erosion
- loosens less soil
- prevents soil from being moved down slope by tillage implements

Other Benefits:

- improved water infiltration
- reduced organic matter loss
- improved soil structure

Use against erosion caused by:

Crop rotation

Effect:

- protects the soil by keeping the soil surface covered year round (grass and legume forage crops)
- helps hold soil in place with the extensive root systems (perennial crops)
- helps protect the soil from fall through to harvest (fall-planted annual crops such as winter wheat)

Other Benefits:

- improved soil structure and less soil compaction because of root systems
- improved water infiltration
- higher yields
- reduction in insect and disease build-up

Use against erosion caused by:

Cover crops

Effect:

- protect the soil by covering it when it might otherwise be left bare
- help improve soil structure to resist erosion and improve infiltration, less runoff due to added organic matter
- soil held in place by the roots

Other Benefits:

- increase organic matter levels
- help hold onto nutrients from recently applied manure
- provide forage
- weed and nematode suppression

Use against erosion caused by:

Monitoring Point Guidance

Long term monitoring is important to detect changes on the land and gain objective information on the progress towards sustainable management of the farm. The minimum requirements of the RWS are to have a formal monitoring plan and an adequate monitoring.

What is a monitoring point system?

A monitoring system means setting a number of specific locations on your farm to be regularly checked. Regularly recording observations allows you to observe changes over time.

For Land Classes 1-3
Pasture, vegetation and soil monitoring are required.

For Land Classes 4,5
Pasture and vegetation monitoring are required.

A Monitoring Point System involves three key steps:

1. Select monitoring points.
2. Select monitoring method at each point.
3. Record information annually from each point.

Select Monitoring Points

Choose set points to monitor from. These points will be used every year.

GPS coordinates may help identify the points. They may also be marked with a post. Locations for monitoring should be chosen to include:

Representative points: Should reflect the general situation of a paddock. These points should be chosen to truly represent the overall area of interest. You may choose to select a point to represent each soil type or pasture type on your farm (e.g. high elevation, mid elevation, low elevation, or riparian zones).

Critical points: These points should be chosen based on the important changes that may be happening on the farm. For example, a patch where invasive species are taking over, or a fragile spot where there are active erosion processes.

Benchmark points: These points are selected as representative of the best state and trend of the site. It may or may not be inside the farm.

The number of points chosen for monitoring should be based on the size of the farm.

Total Farm Area (hectares)	Minimum # of monitoring stations
2500 or less	3
10000	4
20000	6
60000	14

Select Monitoring Methods

Monitoring methods vary in complexity, time required, cost, and quality of information. We have included descriptions of photographic plots, transects, and cages.

Photographic plots

Photographs are regularly taken from a given point (e.g. a transect stake) in the same direction. The images can be used as a condition reference to estimate condition without completely repeating all measurements.

Photographic plots are cheap, easy to install and generate valuable information to track structural changes in soil and vegetation.

Transects

Transects is a specific line or length of land that transects the pasture and allows the farmer to collect more detailed information, such as the percentage of each species on a site, the percentage of bare ground, or the number of plants utilized by the sheep.

This information provides information on the state of the vegetation and its long-term trend. The process is easily repeated to allow validation of recorded results.

Line Transects – A linear measurement of plant community and characteristics that can be used for site evaluation. Line transects usually involve randomly selecting a representative site and placing a marker. The evaluator randomly chooses a compass direction (the site and direction will be marked and recorded for repeatability) and a line, tape, or rope of 50 or 100 meters is used to mark the line. Measurements of species occurrences, canopy, groundcover, and other factors can be recorded at predetermined increments along the line. This measurement process

can be repeated each time by restringing the line and re-measuring the desired factors and elements.

Pace Transects – Similar to line transects but no line is necessary. A transect stake is established and a magnetic direction chosen by compass, just as with a line transect. The evaluator simply takes paces along the imaginary line direction and records the findings that occur at the point of his shoe or boot. This method should be conducted by the same evaluator each time – or by someone with a similar stride length and recording criteria – to maintain replication accuracy.

At least 30% of your monitoring points should be transects.

Cages

Cages are set up at one location for the duration of a season. The cage prevents the area from being foraged by animals. This allows you to observe the growth rate of the site when undisturbed. New growth for the season can be accurately measured by comparing the inside of the cage with the outside. You can also observe how much the animals have eaten of the year's active growth. Cages may be used for multiple years to measure the cumulative effects of long term grazing in the area.

Other forms of monitoring may also be used.

Record information

If you have never used a monitoring point system, the information collected during the first year of the monitoring point system is very important to define the current status of your pasture. This information should be as extensive as possible.

In following years, information should be collected and recorded at the same time of the year at each monitoring point.

Monitor type	Complexity	Frequency	Information obtained
Photographic plot	Minimal	Once per year	Visual comparisons (vegetation and pasture structure)
Transects	Medium	Once per year	**Vegetation** • coverage (type and number) • invasive species **Pasture** • soil tests • compaction • presence of soil organic matter
Cages	Medium	One year, change position each year.	Vegetation amount of new growth per season forage rates

LM2. Biodiversity and Water

Desired outcome: Farmers have an understanding of what will impact of the biodiversity of their land, and have a strategy to protect and improve it over time.

Number	Requirement	Level
LM2.1	The farm shall develop a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) that conserves and enhances biodiversity on and around the farm. For Communal Farmer Groups the written management plan for biodiversity can be prepared at group level. The template provided incorporates the Biodiversity Management Plan requirements.	Ma

The BMP should include the following components:

i. a map that clearly identifies areas important for biodiversity, including natural ecosystems, native vegetation, and water bodies; any ecosystems known to support protected, threatened, or endemic species; animal migratory corridors; and any areas of degraded land.

ii. confirmation whether the farm is located either in a Protected Area or Key Biodiversity Area, and identification of the biodiversity values for which the site has been designated.

iii. time-bound actions that will be implemented to manage, restore, and enhance ecosystems on the farm.

iv. time-bound actions that will be implemented to support populations of any protected, threatened, or endemic species known to occur on the farm.

v. monitoring of the extent and condition of the areas important for biodiversity.

A Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is a strategic framework for conserving, restoration, and enhancement of biodiversity value of a farm. The BMP sets the objectives and describes the management actions necessary to deliver the desired outcomes. The actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound. The BMP should be reviewed annually and updated at least every five years and identify roles and responsibilities of individuals required to implement the actions. It is

Number	Requirement	Level
	recommended that local biodiversity experts are consulted for advice on the relevant biodiversity values to include in the BMP, as well as to provide suggestions on measures to protect, restore and enhance areas important for biodiversity. As part of the BMP, the Farm or Communal Farmer Group must develop a map of their land that clearly identifies areas important for biodiversity, including natural ecosystems, native vegetation, and water bodies; any ecosystems known to support protected, threatened or endemic species; animal migratory corridors; and any areas of degraded land. This map provides a baseline of the extent and condition of natural ecosystems that informs the management actions required for their conservation and enhancement, as well as a basis for ongoing monitoring. Natural ecosystems are defined as ecosystems that substantially resembles one that is or would be found in a given area in the absence of major human impacts. This includes human-managed ecosystems where much of the natural species composition, structure, and ecological function are still present. This can include ecosystems that might have been subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agricultural cultivation, tree plantations, or intensive logging), but where it has re-attained a natural species composition, structure, and ecological function. It can also include managed natural ecosystems where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function are present; such as managed natural forests and native grasslands or rangelands that are, or have historically been, grazed by livestock. Natural ecosystems may be partially degraded by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, climate change, invasive species), but have not been converted to another land use. The following are all considered to represent natural ecosystems and should be defined on the map: • All types of natural forests (broadleaf, needleleaf, evergreen, deciduous and semi evergreen), • All types of natural water body: lakes, ponds, springs, rivers, and streams, whether permanent or seasonal. • Other wetlands, where soils are waterlogged for most of the year (e.g. swamps, fens and peat bogs), or land which is periodically flooded (e.g. flood plains). • Shrubland, savanna and Paramo • Grasslands comprising predominantly of native plant species – likely to include land classified under RWS as Land Classes 4 and 5.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	• Areas of non-forest natural vegetation within areas of forest. Protected species are any species that are protected from harm under legislation in the country in which the Farm or Communal Farmer Group is located. Threatened species include any species categorized as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: https://www.iucnredlist.org/. An endemic species is any species whose global range is restricted to a limited geographical area (either a country or less than 50,000 km^2). An essential element of the defined actions to conserve, restore and enhance ecosystems will be consideration of the appropriate grazing management in each area managed by the Farm or Communal Farmer Group, taking into account the relevant land class of each pasture, the presence of native vegetation and Natural Ecosystems.	
	Biodiversity Management Plan Template Communal Farmer Group Land Management, Soil Health and Biodiversity Plan Template	
LM2.2	Forage resources shall be monitored and grazing will be managed to protect, restore, and enhance the biodiversity value of the farm.	Mi
	LM2.2.1 There shall be no grazing of areas important for biodiversity in times of the year when it could have a negative impact on natural ecosystems, native vegetation or on wildlife species.	Mi
	LM2.2.2 Livestock stocking rates and grazing management practices shall be adjusted to avoid negative impacts to areas important for biodiversity (e.g. from overgrazing, compaction, or erosion).	Mi
	LM2.2.3 Livestock stocking rates and grazing management practices shall encourage biodiversity and reflect the importance of native species within pastures.	Mi
	LM2.2.4 Any areas of degraded land shall be identified in the Biodiversity Management Plan, along with appropriate restoration measures.	Mi
	For some natural ecosystems, it might be appropriate to exclude livestock from natural habitats entirely. Other natural ecosystems such as grassland, shrublands and savanna in part owe their origin to grazing over	

Number	Requirement	Level
	millennia and its continued presence can be essential to maintain biodiversity. Pastures comprising native vegetation require careful management to avoid negative impacts such as overgrazing, soil erosion and loss of sward diversity. Seasonal grazing restrictions may be required to protect specific features (e.g. ground-nesting birds, wild flowers or tree regeneration), or in response to short-term changes in conditions due to weather (e.g. droughts or flooding). The most appropriate stocking density and grazing regime for a specific pasture depends on a wide range of factors such as vegetation types, soil type, fertility, and climate, as well as annual variation in weather. Therefore, the appropriate stocking density and grazing regime should be based on careful monitoring of forage resources. The following should be taken as signs of overgrazing: • Short grass heights over large areas. • Dominance of inedible plant species • Frequent areas of bare or poached ground. • Large amounts of dung. • Frequent uprooted vegetation. Degraded Land is defined by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as land that has lost its land cover, biological or economic productivity, and carbon stocks. This represents land that is likely to have lost the majority of its biodiversity or productive agricultural value. Indicators of degradation include absence of perennial vegetation (e.g. from over-grazing) areas affected by soil erosion, soil salinization and water scarcity. Restoration of degraded land can be a challenge and will likely require solving the underlying factors that that caused the degradation in the first instance. In the case of overgrazing, this may require the exclusion or significant reduction in stocking densities in the affected areas. If soil erosion is continuing, techniques to stabilize the soil structure are likely to be required. The re-establishment of vegetation is an objective of restoring degraded areas, and can be very effective method to stabilize soils. This may require the use of different species and vegetation types than those that existed prior to the degradation took place (e.g., use of halophytic plants in salinized soils). **Additional resources:** *Signs of Overgrazing:*	

Number	Requirement	Level
	http://www.uwyo.edu/barnbackyard/_files/documents/magazine/2009/summer/recognizing-overgrazing-summer-bb-2009.pdf https://www.sruc.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/2640/tn661_practical_guidelines_for_recognising_general_signs_of_overgrazing_and_undergrazing_within_semi-natural_habitats.pdf *Regenerative Farming* https://www.savory.global	
LM2.3	The farmer shall monitor and manage invasive alien species of flora or fauna on the farm.	Mi
	LM2.3.1 The farmer shall not intentionally introduce any invasive alien species, and shall implement measures to avoid accidental or unintended introduction (e.g. through the transportation of soil, plant materials, water, etc.).	Mi
	LM2.3.2. Where invasive alien species are present on a farm, the farmer shall adopt measures to avoid their spread and eradicate them from natural ecosystems.	Mi
	Invasive alien species are plants and animals that have been introduced outside of its natural geographic range and whose introduction and/or spread threatens biological diversity. Invasive alien species can also pose threats to economic activity and human / animal health (e.g. as a vector of disease). Preventing the introduction of invasive alien species in the first place is the most effective strategy and Farms should implement robust biosecurity. Vehicle wheels, dirty boots and equipment can all carry seeds, spores, eggs etc., and should be washed when re-entering the Farm. Importing soil, manure, compost, plant material or water also pose a risk of carrying invasive alien species. If introduced, the quicker that control measures can be instigated when invasive alien species following introduction, the more likely that they will be effective. It is also likely to be more cost-efficient compared to needing to instigate control programs for species that have become firmly established on the Farm. This demonstrates the benefits of having an effective monitoring program for invasive alien species. Monitoring can be done on an ongoing basis, during the regular farm inspections. If any invasive alien species are detected, these should be mapped to record their distribution and density. This should be updated as control measures	

Number	Requirement	Level
	are implemented to monitor effectiveness. Local government authorities can warn of potential problems and advise on treatment strategies. **Additional Resources** The Global invasive species database provides information about invasive alien that pose a threat to biodiversity and provides advice on prevention and management advice. It covers all taxonomic groups including micro-organisms, plants, and animals. http://www.iucngisd.org/gisd/	
LM2.4	Farms shall implement measures to minimize livestock-wildlife conflicts.	Ma
	LM2.4.1. The population and behavior of predators shall be monitored.	Mi
	LM2.4.2. The farm should adopt proactive co-existence planning to deter predators.	R
	LM2.4.3 Wildlife corridors or routes used for migration should be maintained, if these are known to exist on the farm.	R
	Large predators play an important role in maintaining the integrity and resilience of ecosystems, through their control of prey populations. However, many large predators are threatened globally, with their populations increasing fragmented. Large predators typically require large territories and therefore it is important that where they occur on Farms, they continue to be provided habitat for hunting, breeding and the ability to roam. Equally, Farmers have a duty to protect their livestock. The foundation of managing livestock-wildlife conflict is a good understanding of the ecology and behavior of the species involved. Farmers should monitor predator populations on an ongoing basis, during regular farm inspections. The monitoring may be based on sighting of the animals themselves, or of their tracks and signs (e.g. scats). The use of camera traps can greatly improve the ability to monitor large predators, especially if they are nocturnal. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Paul_Glover-Kapfer/publication/320402776_Camera-trapping_for_conservation_a_guide_to_best-practices/links/59e235f4458515393d57ed8e/Camera-trapping-for-conservation-a-guide-to-best-practices.pdf A wide range of management practices can be employed to manage livestock-wildlife conflict, including: • Adaptive Grazing Planning. Grazing certain pastures when predation pressure is low;	

Number	Requirement	Level
	• Mixing larger livestock with sheep to provide greater protection; • House sheep in a secure location at night and for lambing; • Timing lambing to reduce predation risk (e.g. avoid lambing when predators are feeding young; • Use of Livestock Guardian Dogs, Llamas and Donkeys; • Use of Barriers and Mechanical Deterrents; and • Making frequent and unpredictable patrols of pastures. See http://www.wildlifefriendly.org/resources/.	
LM2.5	Hunting, fishing, or gathering of protected, threatened, or endemic plant or animal species is prohibited.	Ma
LM2.6	Lethal control of predators shall only be used as a measure of last resort, if permitted legally and when carried out humanely.	Ma
	LM2.6.1 Lethal control shall target the specific, individual animals(s) that is/are creating the conflict.	Ma
	LM2.6.2 Lethal control of any animal shall result in instantaneous unconsciousness and death.	Ma
	LM2.6.3 Use of poison, leg hold traps and snares are prohibited.	Ma
	LM2.6.4 Lethal control is not permitted for protected, threatened or endemic predator species.	Ma
	LM2.6.5 Each time lethal control methods are used, a record of all killed animals shall be kept (including date, species, and reason for use of lethal methods). The non-lethal methods to minimize livestock-wildlife conflicts shall be immediately reviewed to identify improvements to avoid further conflict.	Mi
	It must be demonstrated that all non-lethal methods have been exhausted before lethal control or live trapping is considered as an option. If used, live traps shall be managed to target the specific problem animal and shall be checked at least twice every 24 hours. Lethal control or live trapping should only be carried out if it is legal in the country of operation. It is the Farmer's responsibility to check the relevant legislation in the country of operation to ensure that control measures are legally permitted and that the species involved is not protected by law.	

Number	Requirement	Level
	Lethal control is not permitted for protected, threatened or endemic predator species. The IUCN Red List provides details on threatened and endemic species https://www.iucnredlist.org/	
LM2.7	Deforestation and the conversion of natural ecosystems to agricultural land is prohibited.	Ma
	LM2.7.1 Existing native vegetation within the productive areas of the farm shall be protected and maintained, including: a. existing vegetated zones adjacent to aquatic ecosystems; b. traditional field boundary features such as hedgerows and ditches; and c. large native trees.	Ma
	LM2.7.2 Deforestation and the conversion of natural ecosystems to agricultural land shall not have occurred, June 1, 2016 onwards.	Ma
	Deforestation is the loss of natural forest as a result of conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use. It also includes the conversion of natural forest to a tree plantation or severe and sustained degradation. Conversion is the change of a natural ecosystem to another land use or profound change in a natural ecosystem's species composition, structure, or function. Conversion includes severe degradation or the introduction of management practices that result in substantial and sustained change in the ecosystem's former species composition, structure, or function. The following are all considered to represent natural ecosystems and should not be subject to conversion: • All types of natural forests (broadleaf, needleleaf, evergreen, deciduous and semi evergreen), • All types of natural water body: lakes, ponds, springs, rivers, and streams, whether permanent or seasonal. • Other wetlands, where soils are waterlogged for most of the year (e.g. swamps, fens and peat bogs), or land which is periodically flooded (e.g. flood plains). • Shrubland, savanna and Paramo • Grasslands comprising predominantly of native plant species – likely to include land classified under RWS as Land Classes 4 and 5. • Areas of non-forest natural vegetation within areas of forest.	

Number	Requirement	Level
LM2.8	Production activities shall not degrade or significantly impact the biodiversity values for which a Protected Area or Key Biodiversity Area are designated.	Ma
	Protected Areas are a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. The Protected Planet web portal is the most up to date and complete source of information on protected areas. https://www.protectedplanet.net/ Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are sites that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity. They are defined according to A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas. The location of KBAs, along with details on the biodiversity values for which a KBA has been designated can be found on the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas™. http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/home Farmer should consult these web-based resources and identify whether the Farm is located in a Protected Area of KBA. Degrade is defined as changes within a natural ecosystem that significantly and negatively affect its species composition, structure, and/or function and reduce the ecosystem's capacity to supply products, support biodiversity, and/or deliver ecosystem services. The IUCN has developed guidelines for businesses operating within Key Biodiversity Areas: https://www.iucn.org/theme/business-and-biodiversity/our-work/business-approaches-and-tools/business-and-key-biodiversity-areas.	
LM2.9	Aquatic ecosystems and water bodies shall be conserved and enhanced.	Mi
	LM2.9.1 River banks should be managed to keep erosion and soil run-off to a minimum.	R
	LM2.9.2 Riparian ecosystems should be protected and restored, as part of the Biodiversity Management Plan.	R

Number	Requirement	Level
	LM2.9.3 Buffer zones should be maintained adjacent to wetlands and watercourses, within which fertilizer, manure and pesticide applications should be restricted.	R
	LM2.9.4 Natural wetlands shall not be drained.	Mi

Aquatic ecosystems include lakes, ponds, springs, rivers and streams, as well as other wetlands, such as swamps, fens and peat bogs, or land which is periodically flooded (e.g. flood plains).

Unfenced banks of streams and rivers can be vulnerable to erosion when they are unfenced. Sheep frequently use rivers and other natural water sources for drinking, and their trampling of the banks and grazing of riparian vegetation can result in exposure of bare soil. This can then be more vulnerable to erosion when water levels rise, leading to a loss of productive soil and sedimentation of water courses.

There are a range of ways to protect river banks and watercourses from livestock damage:

- Reduce stocking densities in problem areas and avoid
- Temporary or permanent fencing to exclude livestock and allow vegetation to recover;
- consider establishing riparian buffer zones to encourage natural regeneration of riparian vegetation, including trees and shrubs
- Provide alternative water supplies;
- Provide the access areas should be fenced and stock prevented from standing in the main flow.

LM2. Biodiversity Guidance Notes and Templates

Templates

- Biodiversity Management Plan

Biodiversity Management Plan

Farm Name:

Location:

Date:

1. Biodiversity Management Plan

1.1 Objectives

A Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is a implementation plan for conserving, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity value of a farm. The BMP sets the objectives and describes the management actions necessary to deliver the desired outcomes. The actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound.

The objective of the Farm Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is to conserve and enhance biodiversity on and around the farm.

The Farmer must ensure that decisions made in relation to direct production practices such as animal husbandry, cultivation, and crop protection take account of this BMP and its objective to conserve and enhance the biodiversity on and around the farm.

1.2 Farm Details

Brief description: size, location (grid reference), soils, livestock, crops, rotation, cultivation techniques etc.

1.3 Landscape

Protected Areas (PA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity. It is important that Farmers are aware if they are operating in an PA or KBA and that they do not negatively impact these sites. A PA is a geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives. They can include the following: Nature Reserves; Wilderness Areas; National Parks; Natural Monuments; Habitat Management Areas; Protected Landscapes; and Protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources.

Confirm whether the farm is located either in a Protected Area or Key Biodiversity Areas, and identify the biodiversity values for which the site has been designated.

Protected Areas are shown on the following web portal: https://www.protectedplanet.net/.

World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas provides a searchable map of Key Biodiversity Areas at the following website: http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/mapsearch.

Also confirm which river catchment(s) the Farm is situated.

1.3.1 Protected Areas:

1.3.2 Key Biodiversity Areas:

1.3.3 River Catchments

1.4 Farm Map

As part of the BMP, the Farm must develop a map of the Farm that clearly identifies areas important for biodiversity, including natural ecosystems, native vegetation and water bodies; any ecosystems known to support protected, threatened or endemic species; animal migratory corridors; and any areas of degraded land.

Natural ecosystems are defined as ecosystems that substantially resembles one that is or would be found in a given area in the absence of major human impacts. This includes human-managed ecosystems where much of the natural species composition, structure, and ecological function are still present. This can include ecosystems that might have been subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agricultural cultivation, tree plantations, or intensive logging), but where it has re-attained a natural species composition, structure, and ecological function. It can also include managed natural ecosystems where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function are present; such as managed natural forests and native grasslands or rangelands that are, or have historically been, grazed by livestock. Natural ecosystems may be partially degraded by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, climate change, invasive species), but have not been converted to another land use.

The following are all considered to represent natural ecosystems and should be defined on the Farm map:

- All types of natural forests (e.g. broadleaf, needleleaf, evergreen, deciduous and semi evergreen),
- All types of natural water body: lakes, ponds, springs, rivers, and streams, whether permanent or seasonal.
- Other wetlands, where soils are waterlogged for most of the year (e.g. swamps, fens and peat bogs), or land which is periodically flooded (e.g. flood plains).
- Shrubland, savanna and Paramo
- Grasslands comprising predominantly of native plant species – likely to include land classified under RWS as Land Classes 4 and 5.
- Areas of non-forest natural vegetation within areas of forest.

2. Biodiversity on the Farm

2.1 Natural Ecosystems on the Farm

List all of the natural ecosystems on the Farm and record their extent and condition in terms of percentage vegetation cover and percentage of native species at the initial completion of the BMP, to act as a baseline for future monitoring (see Section 1.9).

Natural Ecosystem	Extent (ha)	Vegetation coverage (%)	Percentage native species %

2.2 Important Species on the Farm

Protected species are any species that are protected from harm under legislation in the country in which the Farm is located. Threatened species include any species categorized as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: https://www.iucnredlist.org/.

An endemic species is any species whose global range is restricted to a limited geographical area (either a country or less than 50,000 km^2). Keystone species are species whose influence on ecosystem function and diversity are disproportionate to their numerical abundance. These can include large mammalian predators, large herbivores, or key pollinators and seed dispersers.

List the known protected, threatened, endemic, and keystone species and identify which ecosystems on the Farm support each species.

Species name	Species Category (Protected, threatened, endemic, keystone species)	Ecosystems important for the species

2.3 Alien Invasive Species and Degraded Land

Any areas of degraded land and invasive species shall be identified in this section of the BMP. One of the aims of the BMP should be to restore degraded areas as part of the restoration actions (section 3).

3. Actions

An essential element of the defined actions to manage, restore and enhance ecosystem will be consideration of the appropriate grazing management in each area of the Farm, taking into account the relevant land class of each pasture, the presence of native vegetation and Natural Ecosystems.

3.1.1 Conservation Actions

Specify conservation measures for each of the natural ecosystems and important species on the Farm. Cross reference with the Farm Map.

Habitat / Species	Map Reference / Location	Action Required	Frequency	Date for completion	Person responsible

3.1.2 Restoration Measures

Specify restoration measures for each of the natural ecosystems and important species on the Farm. Include measures to avoid the spread of manage alien invasive species of flora or fauna and eradicate them from natural ecosystems. Also specify measures to restore degraded areas of the Farm

Habitat / Species	Map Reference / Location	Action Required	Frequency	Date for completion	Person responsible

3.1.3 Enhancement measures

Specify enhancement measures for each of the natural ecosystems and important species on the Farm.

Habitat / Species	Map Reference / Location	Action Required	Frequency	Date for completion	Person responsible

4. Monitoring

It is important to monitor of the extent and condition of the areas important for biodiversity each year to inform the review of the actions specified above, to ensure that the desired outcomes are being attained. The management actions should be adapted in light of the monitoring results. The Table in Section 1.5 should be used as a baseline for annual monitoring of natural ecosystems. The extent of alien invasive plant species and degraded land should also be monitored. The results of the actions Further guidance is provided the RWS Monitoring Point Guidance document.

4.1 Review

The BMP should be reviewed annually and updated at least every five years

	Date of next review	Completed (Y/N)
Annual Review - 1		
Annual Review -2		
Annual Review - 3		
Annual Review - 4		
Five-year Update		

5. Sources of Advice

It is recommended that local biodiversity experts are consulted for advice on the relevant biodiversity values to include in the BMP, as well as to provide suggestions on measures to protect, restore and enhance areas important for biodiversity. Record a summary of the advice received. If the local expert provided a separate report, this can be referenced here.

Advice Required	Organization	Date

LM3. Fertilizers

Desired outcome: Farmers use the minimum amount of inputs to meet the nutritional needs of their land to maintain their carrying capacity.

Number	Requirement	Level
LM3.1	There shall be a fertilizer management strategy that is reviewed annually.	Ma
	LM3.1.1 The strategy shall include calculations of likely crop requirements, taking account of available nutrients in soil, organic manures, composts, and crop residues is in place and be based on the principles of efficiency and reduction of use.	Mi
LM3.2	The farmer shall test and record soil nutrient levels, at intervals relevant to maintaining a healthy vibrant soil.	Mi
LM3.3	Fertilizers applied shall be appropriate and as specific to the situation as possible with minimal side effects.	Mi
	LM3.3.1 Manures and fertilizers that can have a negative effect on soil microbial life and/or which contain heavy metals shall not be used.	Mi
	LM 3.3.2 Fertilizers and manures shall only be applied to the intended crop area, specifically avoiding water bodies, riparian zones, and natural ecosystems.	Mi
LM3.4	Application methods and equipment that minimize waste and pollution shall be adopted.	Mi
	LM3.4.1 Application equipment shall be kept in good working order, cleaned after use, and regularly calibrated.	Mi

Waste and pollution have the potential to leach into the soil, creating many problems. Prevention methods include soil testing, yield mapping, pasture composition assessment, calibration of equipment, cleaning equipment, use of catch crops at the edge of the field, and not applying fertilizers prior to expected rainfall.

LM4. Pesticides

LM4 applies to land classes 1-3 *(parasite control on animals is addressed in AW3.4-3.5)*

Desired outcome: Farmers use the minimum amount of pesticides to achieve adequate control of pest burden on their farm.

Number	Requirement	Level
LM4.1	There shall be an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan or strategy that is reviewed annually.	Ma
	LM4.1.1 The IPM plan or strategy shall be based on the principles of prevention, observation, monitoring and intervention. The plan shall include the recommended thresholds or triggers to use pesticides where these are available.	Mi
LM4.2	Farmers shall have a monitoring program for crop and pasture.	Mi
	LM4.2.1 Decisions to use pesticides shall be based on monitoring and thresholds.	Mi
LM4.3	Biological, physical, and cultural control methods shall be used instead of chemical methods if they provide satisfactory control.	Mi
LM4.4	Pesticides applied shall be appropriate and as specific to the situation as possible with minimal side effects.	Mi
	LM4.4.1 Farmers shall apply pesticides in appropriate weather conditions, according to the directions on the label, and/or manufacturers' directions, with appropriate and well-maintained equipment.	Mi
	LM4.4.2 Pesticides shall only be applied to the intended crop area, specifically avoiding water bodies, riparian zones, and natural ecosystems.	Mi

Number	Requirement	Level
LM4.5	Farmers shall use the minimum amount of pesticides to achieve adequate control of pest burden on their farm.	Mi
	LM4.5.1 Prophylactic use of pesticides is prohibited.	Mi
LM4.6	Measures shall be in place the limit the impact of pesticide use.	Mi
	LM4.6.1 Farmers shall take care to avoid damage to beneficial organisms.	Mi
	LM4.6.2 Risks from pesticide application for human and animal health or the environment shall be minimized.	Mi
	LM4.6.3 Systems shall be in place to ensure that pesticides reach all targeted areas and to minimize losses to non-target areas or the atmosphere.	Mi
	Good practice guidance for handling of chemicals • Chemicals need to be handled, stored, and used in a responsible manner as prescribed by the occupational health and safety legislation and the latest regulations supporting this legislation. • The store should be located above the 50-year flood line • Only authorized and trained personnel shall have access to keys and the store • Person responsible for managing pesticide store (literate farmer/ farm worker) must be trained in pesticide handling & understand implications of incorrect handling • Only plant protection and/or animal health products are allowed in the store – no feedstuffs • Large containers should not be stored directly on cement floor – place on wooden pallets covered with thick plastic or on plastic pallets • Products in solid, powder or granular form must be stored above liquid formulations (less damage during accidental leakage) All products must be stored in original containers with labels intact	
LM4.7	Actions shall be taken to avoid pesticide resistance.	Mi
LM4.8	Application records shall be kept for all pesticides that have been used.	Mi

Number	Requirement	Level
LM4.9	Farmers shall dispose of used pesticide containers safely, or through a collection and recycling program.	Mi
	LM4.9.1 Disposal of pesticides (including used sheep dip) in rivers, streams, drains or other surface or ground waters is prohibited.	Mi

Section D – Social Welfare Criteria

SW1. Hiring Practices and Forced Labor

Desired outcome: The farmer demonstrates good practices with regard to fair hiring, which is free of discrimination and intimidation and directly combats risk factors for forced labor.

Number	Requirement	Level
SW1.1	The farm shall have policies and codes of conduct to ensure fair hiring.	Ma
	SW1.1.1 Policies, codes of conduct and information on grievance mechanisms shall be made available to workers upon hiring	Mi
	SW1.1.2 There should be procedures in place to record, track and document all post-arrival legal requirements for migrant workers.	R
	Coming soon: Example Hiring policies and codes of conduct	
SW1.2	The farm shall not engage in or support the use of forced or compulsory labor, including prison labor, as defined in ILO Convention 29.	Ma
	ILO Convention 29: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029	
SW1.3	The farm shall operate in accordance with local laws and not engage in hiring practices that increase risk of forced labor and other human rights abuses.	Ma
	SW1.3.1 The farm shall not engage in hiring practices which increase the risk of forced labor including, but not limited to, charging fees for recruitment to workers; requiring that workers lodge deposits or security payments; withholding passports, other personal documentation, wages, or benefits; charging for document processing fees; or engaging in intimidation or coercion.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
SW1.4	The farm shall orient all employees to the terms of their contract and provide them contracts in their native language, or a language that is understood by both parties.	Mi
	SW1.4.1 The farm shall maintain a copy of worker contracts in writing, and provide workers timely access to these at their request.	Mi

SW2. Child Labor

Desired outcome: Children are protected from exploitation, not engaged in dangerous work, and able to participate fully in formal education. Children are able to safely learn farming from their family members by engaging in age-appropriate activities outside of school hours and lessons.

Number	Requirement	Level
SW2.1	The farm shall not employ workers under the age of 15 or legal minimum (whichever is higher).	Ma
	SW2.1.1 Workers under the age of 18 shall not be engaged in the worst forms of child labor or hazardous child labor, as defined in ILO Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 190.	Ma

ILO Convention N.182
Article 3

For the purposes of this Convention, the term **the worst forms of child labour** comprises:

a. all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
b. the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
c. the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
d. work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C182

Recommendation No. 190.
https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R190

Number	Requirement	Level
SW2.2	Farmers may engage their own children in work provided that children shall not be engaged in the worst forms of child labor or hazardous child labor, as defined by the ILO. Work shall not interfere with schooling.	Ma

SW3. Working Conditions and Conduct

Desired outcome: Workers work in a respectful environment, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and abuse. Workers are enabled to speak out and have their concerns addressed in a clear, timely, and courteous manner.

Number	Requirement	Level
SW3.1	Discrimination, as defined in ILO Convention No. 111, is prohibited.	Ma
	SW3.1.1 Discrimination by employers in hiring, compensation, treatment, or daily activities of any kind is prohibited.	Ma
	SW3.1.2 Non-discrimination codes of conduct shall be shared with all employees. Employees shall be aware of their rights.	R

ILO Convention No. 111:

1. For the purpose of this Convention the term discrimination includes--
   a. any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation;
   b. such other distinction, exclusion or preference which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation as may be determined by the Member concerned after consultation with representative employers' and workers' organisations, where such exist, and with other appropriate bodies.
2. Any distinction, exclusion or preference in respect of a particular job based on the inherent requirements thereof shall not be deemed to be discrimination.
3. For the purpose of this Convention the terms employment and occupation include access to vocational training, access to employment and to particular occupations, and terms and conditions of employment.

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312256

Coming soon: Example code of conduct

Number	Requirement	Level
SW3.2	Harassment, verbal abuse, or physical abuse of any kind at any time is prohibited.	Ma
	This includes use of verbal or physical abuse, mental or physical coercion, or any other form of harassment including sexual harassment.	
	SW3.2.1 Codes of conduct prohibiting harassment and abuse shall be shared with all employees. Employees should be are aware of their rights.	R
	Coming soon: Example code of conduct	
SW3.3	Corruption, extortion, and/or bribery of workers or families are prohibited.	Ma

SW4. Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

Desired outcome: All workers are free to organize and collectively bargain without interference or penalty from farm management.

Number	Requirement	Level
SW4.1	The farm shall operate in accordance with local legislation related to freedom of association and collective bargaining.	Mi
SW4.2	Farmers should not discriminate, punish, or penalize in any way workers who choose to organize or collectively bargain.	R

SW5. Wages and Benefits

Desired outcome: Workers receive payment in a transparent and consistent manner that is non-discriminatory and provides for appropriate rest and leave for the worker.

Number	Requirement	Level
SW5.1	Workers shall receive wages that comply with local legal minimum wages or collectively bargained wages, whichever is higher.	Mi
	SW5.1.1 Farmers shall not use consecutive short-term contracts and/or false apprenticeship or other schemes to avoid meeting its obligations to personnel under applicable labor laws and regulations.	Mi
	SW5.1.2 Farmers shall pay all wages in legal tender and provide benefits due in a manner convenient to workers, without delay or substitutions e.g. vouchers, coupons, or promissory notes.	Mi
SW5.2	Equal pay for equal work should be provided for all workers regardless of gender, work status, religion, political affiliation, nationality, or other factors.	R
SW5.3	Farmers should provide paid vacation leave for workers and should document said paid leave agreements in employment contracts.	R
SW5.4	In-kind benefits (e.g. meals, housing, etc.) may be provided as a portion of wages in compliance with local laws and regulations.	Mi

SW6. Communities

Desired outcome: Farm activities respect the rights of and have minimal negative impact on communities

Number	Requirement	Level
SW6.1	Farms shall acknowledge and adhere to legal rights of communities regarding sites, land, and other resources.	Mi
	SW6.1.1 Farms shall respect the customary rights and religious and cultural significance to communities of locations and resources.	Mi
	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295) https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf	
SW6.2	Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) should be obtained for any activity that may affect the lands, territories, and resources that Indigenous Peoples customarily own, occupy, or otherwise use.	R
	Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a specific right that pertains to indigenous peoples and is recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It allows them to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or their territories. Once they have given their consent, they can withdraw it at any stage. Furthermore, FPIC enables them to negotiate the conditions under which the project will be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. This is also embedded within the universal right to self-determination. http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/fpic/en/	
SW6.3	Farms should engage local communities on farm management decisions that risk adversely affecting communities and should engage them on issues which create community concern.	R

SW7. Health and Safety

Desired outcome: Workers work in facilities and environments that are safe and healthy.

Number	Requirement	Level
SW7.1	Infrastructure shall be inspected regularly to ensure the safety of buildings.	Ma
	SW7.1.1 Fire risk assessment shall be conducted and steps taken to address risks.	Mi
SW7.2	Access to clean and potable water shall be provided at the main farm site.	Ma
	SW7.2.1 If risks have been identified, regular testing of water sources should be conducted.	R
SW7.3	Facilities for proper hygiene and comfort, including hand-washing facilities and toilets, and a place to store food shall be available at the main farm site.	Mi
SW7.4	Potentially hazardous work situations shall be clearly identified and unnecessary risks eliminated.	Ma
	SW7.4.1 Farmers shall conduct and document a risk assessment of potential health and safety risks and hazards, which is updated on a regular schedule or when new equipment or conditions are introduced and accompanied by preventative and corrective actions to address said risks.	Mi
	SW7.4.2 Clear signage shall exist to identify areas or equipment that are potentially hazardous.	Mi
	There are many resources available to help with the identification and management of risks. See for example: https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/3.1.6_farmersguidebook.pdf?v=1556002958	

Number	Requirement	Level
SW7.5	Machines shall have clear instructions on safe usage, are maintained to limit hazards, and dangerous parts are guarded or encased.	Ma
SW7.6	For hazards that can be minimized through the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), the organization should provide workers with appropriate PPE at no cost to the worker.	R

Section E – Farm and Communal Farmer Group Certification

E1. Communal Farmer Group Requirements

Communal Farmer Groups are one of the three certification types by which farms may be certified to the RAF standards.

Farmers and herders may be eligible for participation in Communal Farmer Group certification if the following criteria are met:

- The farmer faces significant economic constraints, such as lack of capital assets and low access to finance (i.e. lack of economies of scale);
- The farmer faces significant information constraints, including lack of technical knowledge and low access to market information;

The farm/farmer also meets at least two of the following criteria:

- The farmer has little or no land security,
- The farm is independent and not affiliated with a company for which they produce fiber,
- The farm has a small number of livestock,
- The farm relies on family labor,
- Animal fibers are the farmer's primary source of income,
- The farm uses relatively low levels of agricultural inputs and has comparatively low yields relative to the range of yields for the given commodity and context, and
- The farm has a relatively small land footprint.

The need for an adapted approach for Communal Farmer Groups was identified for wool, mohair and alpaca. Although individually the amount of fiber produced by each farmer will be a tiny percentage of a country or region's production, collectively Communal Farmer Groups may produce the majority of fiber in some regions. Communal Farmer Groups that are unable to meet the specified conformity timelines may apply for an extension via the certification body.

The desired outcome is not to create a different standard or threshold but to identify alternative approached of verifying outcomes. In this approach, farm groups that meet the eligibility criteria can demonstrate compliance with the standard documentation requirements at the group level and the sample farm audits are based on animal based assessments. The templates below have been adapted to meet the needs of Communal Farmer Groups and to be completed at the group level.

These templates should be completed taking account of the practices of all the members of the group.

E1. Communal Farmer Group Requirements: Guidance Notes and Templates

Templates

- Herd Health and Welfare Plan for Communal Farmer Groups
- Land Management, Soil Health and Biodiversity Plan For Communal Farmer Groups

Herd Health and Welfare Plan

For Communal Farmer Groups.

Group Name:

Location:

Date:

Completion of this template meets the requirements of AW3.2

Introduction:

This template is designed to assist Communal Farmer Groups develop the animal health and welfare plan that is required for Responsible Animal Fiber certification requirement **AW3.2**. This template is designed to be used for any certified species (sheep, goats or alpacas). Unless otherwise stated, all sections of the template apply to all species. Topics that are species specific, such as tail docking for sheep, are highlighted as such.

The complexity of an animal health and welfare plan will differ depending on several different factors:

- The number of farmers within the group
- The average number of animals in each herd or flock
- The degree of variation of animal management practices by farmers within the group
- The prevalence of risks to animal health and welfare within the group

All animal health and welfare plans shall be:

- Representative of the requirements of individual herds or flocks within the group.
- Developed with the engagement of the communal farmers within the group (for example through workshops or similar group meetings)
- Developed with appropriate veterinary or technical advice
- Regularly reviewed and updated

The use of this template is not compulsory, but it may be used to provide a basic structure if there is not already a plan in place.

Overview

Date of Plan	
Group name	
Group contact person name	
Group contact person address	
Number of farmers in group	
Species to be certified	
Veterinary or technical support to develop this plan (name and qualification)	

Plan completed by	Name: Position:	Signature: Date:
Date plan due for review		

1.HERD OR FLOCK DETAILS

1.1 Herd or Flock details:

Breed(s) or type(s) of animal	
Range of total number of animals in each herd or flock within the group	
Average number of breeding females in each herd or flock	
Average number of breeding males in each herd or flock	
Expected range of annual birthing %* in each herd or flock within the group	
Expected average annual birthing %* within the group	

*Birthing percentage is calculated as follows: (number of offspring born alive/number of females bred) X 100

1.2 Describe the herd or flock inspection schedule: who inspects the herds or flocks, and how often.

	Months when this is applicable to animals	Frequency of inspection (e.g. once daily, weekly etc.)	Person responsible (e.g. farmer, farmer's family, hired staff)
On pasture			
Off pasture in pens or housing			

2. DISEASE PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT

2.1 Key health challenges, planned prevention and vaccination programs.

Health challenge	Type of animal affected	Action	Timing
e.g. pneumonia, lameness, internal parasites etc.	*e.g. all, or only freshly weaned young animals*	*e.g. vaccination program or antibiotic treatment*	*e.g. as needed or vaccinate 6 weeks prior to birthing*

Expected health challenges for sheep and goats could include:

- Lameness/foot problems
- Fly strike
- Internal parasites
- Facial eczema

Expected health challenges for alpacas could include:

- Lameness/foot problems
- Pneumonia
- Coccidiosis
- Mange
- Internal parasites

3. ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PROCEDURES

3.1 Castration

If castration is carried out, describe the approach including details of rationale, method, age and pain relief. If pain relief is not provided provide a rationale for this.

Reason for castrating males	
Number or % of farms in the group castrating males	
Method(s) used	
Age/ age range	
Pain relief measures	
Reason if pain relief is not used	

3.2 Tail docking [SHEEP ONLY]

If tail docking is carried out, provide a description of the approach including rationale, details of method, age, pain relief. If pain relief is not provided provide a rationale for this.

Reason for tail docking lambs	
Number or % of farms in the group tail docking	
Method(s) used	
Age/age range	
Pain relief measures	
Reason if pain relief is not used	

4. BREEDING MANAGEMENT AND BIRTHING

4.1 Breeding management

What are the main qualities that farmers in the group select for in their breeding strategy? Example: conformation, fiber quality, birth rates, meat quality etc.

e.g. we select for good leg/foot health and high fiber quality.

4.2 Breeding procedures

a. Do any farmers in the group use laparoscopic artificial insemination? If yes, please indicate why this is used, who carries out the procedure, and provide details of pain relief.

e.g. Only 5% of the group uses this technique. In those flocks the top 5-10% of the flock are annually bred using laparoscopic AI to introduce superior fiber traits. The veterinarian carries out the procedure. Breeding females are sedated with ACP and given ketoprofen as an analgesic. Antiseptic spray is applied following the procedure and animals are monitored carefully.

b. Do any farmers in the group use electroejaculation? If yes, please indicate why this is carried out, who carries out the procedure, and provide details of pain relief.

e.g. two farmers in the group have a stud breeding operation and the veterinarian carries out electroejaculation for fertility testing for all stud males.

4.3 Birthing

Detail the plans for birthing including time of year and other factor to reduce mortality of females and newborns

e.g. for all farmers in the group birthing is planned for the spring, when the weather is warmer and there is good grass growth to support the lactating females. Young females give birth for the first time when they are two years old.

5. BIOSECURITY MEASURES

Biosecurity

Document the actions undertaken to manage or reduce the risk of disease from the following sources, and any others you have identified. If any of the sources below are not applicable to your group please note this and the reason – e.g. “no famers in the group have buildings”.

Potential sources of disease	Control Actions Taken
Incoming livestock	*e.g. Only purchase from herds or flocks with known health status. Put incoming stock in quarantine pen with no contact with existing herd or flock for 28 days. Monitor for signs of disease*
Wild animals	*e.g. try to minimize contact with animals that carry transmissible diseases and/or parasites.*
People	*e.g. no visitors without prior appointment and record kept of visitors.*

Buildings	*e.g. disinfectant foot dips outside each building*
Equipment	*e.g. foot trimming equipment cleaned and disinfected after use. Shearers ensure sanitized clippers brought onto farm*
Other (please describe)	*e.g. animals not mixed with other herds or flocks to minimize disease transmission risk*

6. HEALTH ISSUE REVIEW AND ACTION PLAN

The table below may be used to summarize the issues that have occurred through the year, treatments given, and any deaths/culls that may be attributable to a specific health problem. Carrying out this review will help identify whether certain health issues are increasing or decreasing from year to year.

Condition	No. or % of farmers in the group that had this problem	Total no. animals treated	Average % Mortality			Comments
			Died	Euthanized	Culled	
Lameness						
Metabolic disease (e.g. hypocalcemia)						
Clostridial disease						
Infectious disease (e.g. pneumonia)						
Facial eczema						

Parasites	Scab/mange						
	Flystrike						
	Fluke						
	Worms						
Breeding female specific	Abortion						
	Prolapse						
	Difficulty birthing						
	Barren						
	Mastitis						
	Other						
Young animals	Congenital defect						
	Starvation/ Exposure						
	Joint ill						
	Other						
Other							
Other							
Unknown							

ACTION PLAN

Review records and collated data and identify key issues within the group to address and actions to take. For example, the health problems that are most common within the group and/or those that cause the most mortality.

Issue	Brief description	Actions already taken	Actions to be taken
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Comment

Land Management, Soil Health and Biodiversity Plan

For Communal Farmer Groups.

Group Name:

Location:

Date:

Completion of this template meets the requirements of LM1.1.1, LM2.1, LM2.4, LM2.6, LM3 and LM4

Introduction:

This template is designed to assist Communal Farmer Groups develop the land management and soil health plan that is required for Responsible Animal Fiber certification requirement **LM1.1.1** and the biodiversity plan requirement **LM2.1.** It also covers the information required for **LM2.4** and **LM2.6** (and the associated sub-standards) and sections **LM3** and **LM4**. This template is designed to be used for any certified species (sheep, goats, or alpacas). Unless otherwise stated, all sections of the template apply to all groups in all regions and landscapes.

The complexity of the land management, soil health and biodiversity plan will differ depending on several different factors:

- The number of farmers within the group
- The average land area utilized by each farmer and the total land area where animals managed by members of the group may graze
- The degree of variation of land management practices by farmers within the group, for example whether land is cultivated and planted with crops that are grazed by or harvested for certified animals
- The prevalence of risks to pasture and soil health (e.g. erosion, compaction, overgrazing) within the group
- The prevalence of wildlife species in the area

All land management, soil health and biodiversity plans shall be:

- Reflective of the different land, vegetation and biodiversity on land managed by the group
- Representative of management practices within the group
- Developed with the engagement of the communal farmers within the group (for example through workshops or similar group meetings)
- Developed with appropriate technical advice
- Regularly reviewed and updated

The use of this template is not compulsory but it may be used to provide a basic structure if there is not already a plan in place.

Overview

Date of Plan	
Group name	
Group contact person name	
Group contact person address	
Number of farmers in group	
Species to be certified	
Technical support provided to develop this plan (name and qualification)	

Plan completed by	Name: Position:	Signature: Date:
Date plan due for review		

1. Communal Farmer Group Map

There must be a map or maps that cover the extent of the land utilized by the Communal Farmer Group and key locations within that area as listed below.

Maps may be sketch maps, annotated printed maps of the region or annotated satellite mapping. It is understood that communal grazing areas may not have fixed boundaries, but the map should detail the general area where grazing is planned to take place through the year. Important areas to identify on the map (where applicable):

- Extent of land used by the entire group of communal farmers
- Villages or other settlements
- All types of natural water body: lakes, ponds, springs, rivers, and streams, whether permanent or seasonal.
- Other wetlands, where soils are waterlogged for most of the year (e.g. swamps and bogs), or land which is periodically flooded (e.g. flood plains).
- Areas of regular sighting of predator species
- Migratory corridors for wildlife
- Natural ecosystems such as grasslands comprising predominantly of native plant species (see below for more details)
- Areas which have been managed/improved by the introduction of new seeds or plants
- Areas used for conserving hay or other forages
- Areas used for growing crops
- Land designated or regulated as Protected Areas or Key Biodiversity Areas (see below for more details)
- Areas that are important for biodiversity where grazing must be restricted either year round or at certain times of year when it could have a negative impact on natural ecosystems, native vegetation or on wildlife species
- Areas of degraded land
- Areas where invasive alien species are found

Definition of natural ecosystems

Natural ecosystems are defined as ecosystems that substantially resembles one that is or would be found in a given area in the absence of major human impacts. This includes human-managed ecosystems where much of the natural species composition, structure, and ecological function are still present. This can include ecosystems that might have been subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agricultural cultivation), but where it has re-attained a natural species composition, structure and ecological function. It can also include managed natural ecosystems where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function are present; such as managed native grasslands or rangelands that are, or have historically been, grazed by livestock. Natural ecosystems may be partially degraded by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, climate change, invasive species), but have not been converted to another land use.

Natural Ecosystem	Extent (note unit of measurement)	Vegetation coverage (%)	Native species coverage (%)
[E.g. native grasslands]	*[E.g. 250ha = 90% of all land covered by communal group]*	*[E.g. 90%]*	*[E.g. 100% - all species in this area are native]*

1.1 Details of protected areas or key biodiversity areas

Protected Areas (PA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity. It is important that Communal Farmer Groups are aware if they are operating in an PA or KBA and that they do not negatively impact these sites. A PA is a geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives. They can include the following: Nature Reserves; Wilderness Areas; National Parks; Natural Monuments; Habitat Management Areas; Protected Landscapes; and Protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources.

The group manager must check online (see links below) to see whether the land managed by the Communal Farmer Group includes Protected Area or Key Biodiversity Areas, and identify the biodiversity values for which each site has been designated.

Protected Areas are shown on the following web portal: https://www.protectedplanet.net/. World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas provides details of Key Biodiversity Areas at the following website: http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org.

If there are no protected areas or key biodiversity areas on land managed by the Communal Farmer Group the following table is not applicable.

Name of protected area or key biodiversity area	Description/key biodiversity values leading to designation

1.2 Details of important Species on the Communal Farmer Group's land

This section includes all species of wildlife whether they interact with livestock or not. See also section 1.3 for specific questions relating to livestock/wildlife conflict. These are listed in the first column of the table below.

The farmers in the group will provide information on the species of wildlife they see or know to be present on the land that they manage.

The group manager must check these species on the IUCN red list [see https://www.iucnredlist.org/] and review the habitat and ecology information on this website to complete the second and third columns of this table below.

Species name	**Species Category** (Protected, threatened, endemic, keystone species)	**Ecosystems that are important for the species**

Definitions:

- Protected species are any species that are protected from harm under legislation in the country in which the Communal Farmer Group is located.
- Threatened species include any species categorized as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: https://www.iucnredlist.org/.
- An endemic species is any species whose global range is restricted to a limited geographical area (either a country or less than 50,000 km^2)
- Keystone species are species whose influence on ecosystem function and diversity are disproportionate to their numerical abundance. These can include large mammalian predators, large herbivores, or key pollinators and seed dispersers.

1.3 Reducing livestock-wildlife conflict

List the species known to be present on land managed by the Communal Farmer Group which can cause livestock-wildlife conflict. Include species that are only present seasonally	*[Examples could include predators that are known to try to injure or kill livestock and wild grazing species that share the land with livestock]*

List the non-lethal management practices used to reduce the risk of livestock-wildlife conflict	*[Examples could include using guardian animals to protect livestock; using barriers/deterrents such as lights, noise, flagging on fencing etc.; and making frequent and unpredictable patrols of pasture areas to deter wildlife from approaching livestock]*

If lethal control of wildlife is used, detail the circumstances under which it would occur	*[Examples could include an active attack on livestock by a predator]*
If lethal control of wildlife takes place, what methods are used, and how is the specific individual animal that is causing the problem targeted?	*[Note poison, snares and leg-hold traps are prohibited under all Responsible Fiber standards]*
If lethal control of wildlife takes place, how many animals of which species have been controlled in the previous 12 months?	

2. Communal Farmer Group Land Details

For all question relating to area of land the unit of measurement must be noted in the response (e.g. hectare, acre or other local measurement)

Area of land utilized by Communal Farmer Group	
Soil type or types	
Crops grown (if any)	

Area of land used for growing crops each year (if any)	
Area of land used for growing/harvesting hay or other forages each year (if any)	
Species used if planting or reseeding forage or grazing crops is carried out	

3. Communal Farmer Group Grazing Management

Total number of animals grazing at any one time	
Average stocking rate across total grazing area	
Describe grazing management practice(s)	*[For example moving animals to fresh pastures daily or weekly and not returning to grazed areas for at least x days or weeks. set stocking with x number of animals on y area for z number of days or weeks]*
Main plant species (native or introduced) present in grazing areas	

4. Communal Farmer Group Soil Health and Land Degradation

For further information on mitigation strategies see Annex to this plan

Problem encountered	**Where found and extent** *[E.g. mark on map in section 1.1, or state situation where it may arise – e.g. cropping land, winter grazing areas]*	**Mitigation Strategies**
Erosion		*[Examples could include: if in cropping areas use reduced tillage, cover crops or adding organic matter; in grazing situations reduce stocking density or herd animals away from affected areas]*
Compaction		*[Examples could include: aerating soil, moving feed/feeders/mineral buckets to avoid creating focal points, avoiding traffic with machinery]*
Low soil organic matter		*[Examples could include: adding manures, on cropping land planting green manures that are then incorporated into the soil, managing grazing patterns so livestock naturally deposit manures in certain areas]*
Overgrazing		*[Examples could include: removal of stock, herding to keep stock away from the area, reseeding, reduction in total stock numbers managed by the group]*

Invasive alien species [list species found if any]		*[Examples could include: physical removal of plants, use of herbicides, re-seeding pasture areas]*
Other (please specify)		

5. Communal Farmer Group Conservation Actions

Specify conservation measures for each of the natural ecosystems and important species identified on land managed by the Communal Farmer Group. Cross reference with the map required by 1.1. above. Depending on the condition of the natural ecosystem and/or status of the important species, actions may be part of ongoing management, or working towards restoration or enhancement.

Habitat/ species	**Map ref/ Location**	**Action required (note also whether this is management, restoration, or enhancement)**	**Frequency of action**	**Date for completion**	**Person responsible**
[E.g. natural grassland]	*[E.g. location no. 3]*	*[Stocking density reduced by 20% to aid recovery of vegetation]*	*[Grazing season this year]*	*[End of grazing season this year]*	*[Farmers from Village A]*

6 Communal Farmer Group Fertilizer Usage

Are any fertilizers (natural or synthetic) applied to the land? If no move to next section	
If yes, please list the materials	*[Examples could include livestock manures, lime, compost, rock phosphate potassium sulphate, calcium ammonium nitrate, ammonium sulphate etc.]*
If yes, how are decisions made about which fertilizer to use and at what rate of application?	*[Examples could include: soil testing, nutrient balance calculations]*
If yes, how are pollution risks minimized when fertilizers are applied	*[Examples could include identification of areas and times of year when fertilizers are not spread, and accurate application using calibrated equipment]*

7 Communal Farmer Group Pesticide Usage

Are any pesticides applied to the land? If no move to next section	
If yes, please list the type of pesticide and the active ingredient	*[Examples could include: herbicides such as glyphosate, fungicides such as imidazoles, insecticides such as pyrethroids etc.]*
If yes, what techniques are used to try to avoid the use of pesticides?	*[Examples could include: crop rotation, selection of varieties that are resistant to prevalent disease problems, cultivation techniques such as direct drilling, encouraging beneficial organisms etc.]*
If yes, how are decisions made about which pesticide to use and when?	*[Examples could include monitoring programs with thresholds such as number of pest insects found per plant, extent of fungus on crop plants etc.]*
If yes, how are pollution risks minimized when pesticides are applied	*[Examples could include identification of areas where pesticides are not spread, only spraying when there will not be drift into non-target areas]*
If yes, note who is responsible for pesticide management (storage, correct utilization and disposal of packaging and other waste)	

8 Communal Farmer Group Hazardous Materials

Are any hazardous materials applied to the land? If no move to next section	
If yes, please list the materials	*[Examples could include: Animal health products (medicines, sharps, etc.), Chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, cleaning agents, antifreeze, etc.), Certain building materials (asbestos, contaminated concrete, etc.), Batteries, Equipment containing refrigerants (freezers, air conditioners, etc.), Lubricating oils or filters, Paints or coatings, Machinery tires, Pressurized containers]*
If hazardous materials are applied to the land how is human and animal health and water and soil quality protected?	*[Examples could include: designated areas away from watercourses that cannot be accessed by livestock or wildlife, burial of waste]*

9 Communal Farmer Group Monitoring Point Guidance

Monitoring, ideally on a long-term basis, is important to detect changes and gain objective information on the progress towards sustainable management on the land. The minimum requirements for Communal Farmer Groups are to have a formal monitoring plan and some monitoring sites.

Different Communal Farmer Groups have different arrangements when it comes to land. The table below shows examples of different types of access to land and the expectation for monitoring for each. Some groups may have more than one type of arrangement for land use, and they should follow the monitoring guidance for each.

Arrangement for use of land by the group	Expectation for monitoring
Broadly the same land area is available to group members from year to year.	Monitoring points will be established. See **section 9a** below.
Land available varies from year to year. Group members have no management control over land and do not know from year to year where they will graze their stock	Pre- and post-grazing monitoring by photograph. See **section 9b** below.
Formal agreement or licence to graze which defines the area, the length of time grazing takes place and the stocking density An example would be a licence to graze forest land issued by government permission in India	Pre- and post-grazing monitoring by photograph. See **section 9b** below.

9a. Monitoring point systems

A monitoring system means setting a number of specific locations on the land managed by the Communal Farmer Group to be regularly checked. Regularly recording observations for **pasture** and **vegetation** allows the group to observe changes over time.

A Monitoring Point System involves three key steps:

1. Select monitoring points.
2. Select monitoring method at each point.
3. Record information annually from each point.

Select Monitoring Points

Choose set points to monitor from. The same points will be used every year.

GPS coordinates may help identify the points. They may also be marked with a post. Locations for monitoring should be chosen to include:

Representative points: Should reflect the general situation of the land. These points should be chosen to truly represent the overall area of interest. You may choose to select a point to represent each soil type or pasture type on the land managed by the group (e.g. high elevation, mid elevation, low elevation, or riparian zones).

Critical points: These points should be chosen based on the important changes that may be happening on the land managed by the group. For example, a patch where invasive species are taking over, or a fragile spot where there are active erosion processes.

Benchmark points: These points are selected as representative of the best state and trend of the site.

Select Monitoring Methods

Monitoring methods vary in complexity, time required, cost, and quality of information. We have included descriptions of photographic plots, transects, and cages.

Photographic plots

Photographs are regularly taken from a given point (e.g. a transect stake) in the same direction. The images may be used as a condition reference to estimate condition without completely repeating all measurements.

Photographic plots are cheap, easy to install and generate valuable information to track structural changes in soil and vegetation.

Transects

Transects is a specific line or length of land that transects the land and allows the collection of more detailed information, such as the percentage of each species on a site, the percentage of bare ground, or the number of plants utilized by the livestock.

This information provides information on the state of the vegetation and its long-term trend. The process is easily repeated to allow validation of recorded results.

Line Transects – A linear measurement of plant community and characteristics that can be used for site evaluation. Line transects usually involve randomly selecting a representative site and placing a marker. The evaluator randomly chooses a compass direction (the site and direction will be marked and recorded for repeatability) and a line, tape, or rope of 50 or 100 meters is used to mark the line. Measurements of species occurrences, canopy, groundcover, and other

factors can be recorded at predetermined increments along the line. This measurement process can be repeated each time by restringing the line and re-measuring the desired factors and elements.

Pace Transects – Similar to line transects but no line is necessary. A transect stake is established and a magnetic direction chosen by compass, just as with a line transect. The evaluator simply takes paces along the imaginary line direction and records the findings that occur at the point of his shoe or boot. This method should be conducted by the same evaluator each time – or by someone with a similar stride length and recording criteria – to maintain replication accuracy.

At least 30% of the monitoring points should be transects.

Cages

Cages are set up at one location for the duration of a season. The cage prevents the area from being foraged by animals. This allows observation of the growth rate of the site when undisturbed. New growth for the season can be accurately measured by comparing the inside of the cage with the outside. You can also observe how much the animals have eaten of the year's active growth. Cages may be used for multiple years to measure the cumulative effects of long term grazing in the area.

Other forms of monitoring may also be used.

Record information

If you have never used a monitoring point system, the information collected during the first year of the monitoring point system is very important to define the current status of the land. This information should be as extensive as possible.

In following years, information should be collected and recorded at the same time of the year at each monitoring point.

Monitor type Complexity Frequency Information obtained

Monitor Type	Complexity	Frequency	Information Obtained
Photographic plot	Minimal	Once per year	Visual comparisons (vegetation and pasture structure)
Transects	Medium	Once per year	**Vegetation** • coverage (type and number) • invasive species **Pasture** • soil tests • compaction • presence of soil organic matter
Cages	Medium	Once per year, change position each year	Vegetation amount of new growth per season forage rates

9b. Photographic monitoring

When farmers from the communal group are unable to carry out year-to-year monitoring as described in section 9a above, they must still provide some evidence of monitoring individual grazing sites to demonstrate good practice grazing management.

The simplest way to do this is for farmers to take photograph(s) of a grazing site at the time they move their animals onto the land and a second photograph or set of photographs taken in the same spot(s) and looking in the same direction when they move their animals on. The date that the photographs are taken must be recorded.

The number of sites and photographs taken by individual group members is determined by the group manager and should relate to the risks to soil health. For example, a farmer with less than 20 animals who moves them every day is lower risk than a farmer with 300 animals who will graze the same area of land for a number of weeks.

Photographs may be sent to the group manager who will collate them for review at audit.

Annex: Soil Management Practices to Reduce Soil Erosion

Reduced Tillage

Effect:

- leaves residue on the soil surface, effectively controlling erosion
- loosens less soil
- prevents soil from being moved down slope by tillage implements

Use against erosion caused by:

Other Benefits:

- improved water infiltration
- reduced organic matter loss
- improved soil structure

Adding organic materials

Effect:

- leaves residue on the soil surface, effectively controlling erosion
- loosens less soil
- prevents soil from being moved down slope by tillage implements

Use against erosion caused by:

Other Benefits:

- improved water infiltration
- reduced organic matter loss
- improved soil structure

Crop rotation

Effect:

- protects the soil by keeping the soil surface covered year round (grass and legume forage crops)
- helps hold soil in place with the extensive root systems (perennial crops)
- helps protect the soil from fall through to harvest (fall-planted annual crops such as winter wheat)

Other Benefits:

- improved soil structure and less soil compaction because of root systems
- improved water infiltration
- higher yields
- reduction in insect and disease build-up

Use against erosion caused by:

Cover crops

Effect:

- protect the soil by covering it when it might otherwise be left bare
- help improve soil structure to resist erosion and improve infiltration, less runoff due to added organic matter
- soil held in place by the roots

Other Benefits:

- increase organic matter levels
- help hold onto nutrients from recently applied manure
- provide forage
- weed and nematode suppression

Use against erosion caused by:

Appendix A – Slaughter Site (Optional)

This appendix applies to slaughter sites. RWS certification is optional for slaughter sites; RWS fiber may be sold from farms when the slaughter sites are not certified.

S1. Management and Training

Desired outcome: The slaughter process prevents or minimizes pain and distress. All animals are stunned (rendered unconscious and insensible to pain) prior to slaughter.

Number	Requirement	Level
S1.1	All personnel unloading, handling, stunning, and slaughtering animals shall be trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them, so as to protect animal welfare.	C
	S1.1.1 Training shall include: a. Animal welfare principles; b. Good handling practices; c. Identification of sick/injured animals; d. Stunning methods and checking effectiveness of stunning; and e. Slaughter methods	Ma
	Training should be relevant to the tasks undertaken. While many slaughter sites rotate personnel through different tasks and ensure that any worker may carry out any aspect of the slaughter process, others have specific teams who only stun or only work on unloading and the holding pens.	
S1.2	There shall be a named person who is responsible for animal welfare and who has the authority to stop slaughter operations if there is a risk to sheep welfare.	Ma
S1.3	Documented standard operating procedures for all parts of the operation shall be developed and implemented.	Mi
	The Humane Slaughter Association have training resources and guides covering all aspects of animal slaughter. See https://www.hsa.org.uk/publications/online-guides	

Number	Requirement	Level
S1.4	Records of training shall be kept.	Mi

S2. Casualty Animals

Number	Requirement	Level
S2.1	Animals that are down and unable to rise shall be euthanized promptly using a method defined by these standards. This includes animals that are discovered on the transport vehicle when they arrive at the slaughter site as well as those that were unloaded and then found to be unable to rise. Animals that are down and unable to rise should not be moved, they should be euthanized where they are found. Other animals that can walk should be moved out the area first.	Ma

S3. Preslaughter Handling

Number	Requirement	Level
S3.1	Animals shall be handled calmly with no abuse.	C
S3.2	The use of electric prods is prohibited.	Ma
	Low stress handling aids such as flags, rattle paddles and sorting boards are acceptable.	
S3.3	Holding pens shall provide enough space for animals to move around and lie down together.	Ma
S3.4	Holding pens shall provide shade and shelter to maintain sheep thermal comfort.	Ma
	Maintaining thermal comfort in hot weather could include the use of fans or water misters. Maintaining thermal comfort in cold weather could include providing bedding in holding pens and reducing airflow through areas where live animals are held – while maintaining ventilation.	
S3.5	Water shall be provided in holding pens.	Ma
S3.6	If animals are held for 12 hours or more they shall be fed.	Ma
	If animals may be held for 12 hours or more the slaughter site should have suitable feed or fodder available.	
S3.7	Flooring in all areas accessed by live animals shall be non-slip to prevent animals slipping or falling.	Ma
	Areas accessed by live animals that should be non-slip include unloading ramps, holding pens, passageways, and the stun box. Concrete surfaces should be grooved or covered with a non-slip material to reduce the risk of animals slipping and falling. Passageways should be kept clean. If flooring is covered with wet manure it increases the risk of slips and falls.	

S4. Slaughter Equipment

Number	Requirement	Level
S4.1	Suitable equipment including reserve equipment for the slaughter of sheep shall be available.	Ma
	Reserve equipment does not have to be of the same type as the main slaughter equipment as long as it a method accepted by these standards.	
S4.2	Stunning/slaughter equipment shall be well maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions.	Ma
	Penetrating captive bolt guns and firearms should be cleaned daily. Electric stunners should have the electrodes cleaned to ensure good contact every 20 to 25 animals. Additional periodic maintenance for all these methods should be completed as per manufacturer's instructions Maintenance requirements include any reserve equipment that may not be in daily use.	

S5. Stunning and Killing Methods

Number	Requirement	Level
S5.1	Animals shall be stunned using a method that causes immediate unconsciousness that lasts until death. Acceptable methods for sheep are as follows: a. Head only electric stunning b. Head/heart electric stunning c. Penetrating captive bolt guns d. Firearm	C
S5.2	The stunning or killing device shall be positioned correctly according to the species and the method being used.	Ma
S5.3	If electrical stunning is used a minimum current of 1.00 Amp shall be achieved.	Ma
	There should be meters associated with electrical stunners which display the current and/or failsafe systems that do not permit use of the equipment if the current is below acceptable levels.	
S5.4	If electrical stunning is used electrodes shall be positioned to span the brain of the animal.	Ma
S5.5	If captive bolts or firearms are used the correct cartridge or propellent for sheep shall be used.	Ma
S5.6	Sheep shall not be shackled and/or hoisted unless they have first been effectively stunned.	C
S5.7	If animals show any sign of sensibility they shall be immediately re-stunned.	Ma
	If an animal is not stunned at the first attempt, after an effective re-stun of that animal there should be a check on whether the equipment is functioning correctly and that the person carrying out stunning is positioning and using the equipment according to the SOP before an attempt is made to stun the next animal.	
S5.8	Animals shall be checked to ensure they are insensible before being bled.	Ma

Number	Requirement	Level
	Signs of ineffective stunning and/or a return to sensibility include: corneal reflex in response to touch, rhythmic breathing where the ribs move in and out at least twice, spontaneous blinking, vocalization and a righting reflex from animals that have been hung on the rail.	
S5.9	Following stunning sheep shall be bled as soon as possible.	Ma
	S5.9.1 Sheep shall be bled within 15 seconds of head-only electrical stunning.	Mi
	Animals can recover from head-only electrical stunning. To ensure that the insensibility that is caused by the electric stun is maintained until death, the animal should be bled as soon as possible and within 15 seconds after an effective stun.	
	S5.9.2 Sheep shall be bled within 60 seconds of head/heart electrical stunning, captive bolt stunning, or shooting with a firearm.	Mi
	The methods listed above when carried out correctly should cause death, but prompt bleeding is still required to ensure there is no possibility of the animal regaining consciousness.	
S5.10	The bleed wound shall sever the major blood vessels in the neck and allow rapid blood loss such that insensibility is maintained until the point of death.	Ma
S5.11	No further processing shall be carried out until the death of the sheep has been verified.	Ma
S5.12	Sheep shall not be slaughtered in sight of other animals.	Ma

S6. Chain of Custody

Number	Requirement	Level
S6.1	The slaughter site shall have a plan that shows how incoming sheep are identified, how skins from certified herds are identified from different herds and how the skins are handled from removal from the carcass until the material leaves the facility.	Ma
S6.2	The slaughter plant shall have procedures for verifying that animals came from RWS-certified farms.	Ma
S6.3	Records shall be kept of the number of sheep slaughtered from RWS-certified farms and the corresponding number of skins from RWS certified farms.	Ma