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IWTO Specifications for Wool Sheep Welfare

A concise summation of good practice principles
for ethical wool sheep production.



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Foreword

Evidence is mounting that wool offers extensive benefits for health and well-being. Recent studies on skin, sleep and breathability are current examples the industry can cite in stating the case for widespread use of one of the oldest and noble fibres known to mankind.

The fundamental facts have not changed. Sheep's wool is the animal fibre most commonly used by mankind and its attributes have been well researched since the 1950s. In fact, the scientific evidence supporting wool's health benefits are well-established and includes thermal insulation, breathability and resistance to the development of body odour. In addition there are significant fire retardancy and ultraviolet light protection benefits.

When raw materials are sourced from animals, welfare and environmental credentials should support the sustainability aspects of the land, the animals and the people caring for it. The World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE) speaks about the One Health concept, where human health and animal health are interdependent and committed to the ecosystems in which they exist. The IWTO and OIE have been partners in a cooperation agreement for seven years, committed to constantly updating scientific evidence regarding animal welfare and communicating the results in a responsible and transparent manner.

Transparency in each step of the wool pipeline remains essential. Animal welfare and sustainable environmental practices are governed by the national legislative framework of each individual country. Woolgrowers are in turn governed by their local lawmakers and by the fundamental laws of nature; where if farmers do not take exceptional care of natural resources, the return on their investment will simply diminish with time.

This document aims to offer a summary of the main IWTO wool-producing country members and highlights the particular country specifications they adhere to. Animal abuse is a criminal offence in each of these countries, punishable by law and carrying heavy penalties. Animal welfare remains the essence of our wool farmers' existence and is simply non-negotiable.

IWTO supports responsible grower practices and encourages all aspects of sheep wellbeing. Our members remain fully committed to sustainable practices throughout the value chain.

Wolf Edmayr

President

International Wool Textile Organisation

www.iwto.org

1. Overview of the Wool Sheep Industry

Humans have been sourcing clothing and home textiles from animals for many centuries and traces of domestic sheep have been found dating back to 10,000 BC. Sheep were kept for their milk, wool, fleece and meat. Herders soon realized that it was more profitable to keep sheep for their wool, as the fresh growth could be harvested every year. By the time the Romans invaded the United Kingdom in 55 BC, local farmers had already developed a wool industry and were trading in textiles made from wool and fleece.

Breed registries are mostly kept by developed countries and from these we learn that there are more than 1,000 distinct sheep breeds with different body, wool and temperament types. Coats can be short and fine or long and coarse, and each breed has specific needs relating to the best environmental and animal husbandry conditions for optimum health and welfare. Wool farmers will choose a particular breed of sheep according to the historical data available for that particular area relating to topography, rainfall and market driven indicators.

The term 'animal welfare' is best described by the World Organisation of Animal Health in Chapter 7 of the Health Code for Terrestrial Animals¹.

"Animal welfare means the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.

An animal experiences good welfare if the animal is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress, and is able to express behaviours that are important for its physical and mental state.

Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and appropriate veterinary care, shelter, management and nutrition, a stimulating and safe environment, humane handling and humane slaughter or killing. While animal welfare refers to the state of the animal, the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment."

In recent years, there has been a rapid evolution of what constitutes good animal welfare practice, reflecting rising societal awareness of the importance of good animal husbandry. Originating in the UK during the 1960s, the so-called 'Five Freedoms' started out as a list of required provisions for farmed animal well-being. These now underpin modern welfare standards and Chapter 5 of this document is based on these codes. From a legal perspective, each country has sovereign responsibility for its laws and regulations pertaining to animal welfare practices. For this reason, the IWTO communicates a global stance on what it has agreed with its members to constitute good wool sheep welfare practices and lists the specific laws and regulations pertaining to each wool-growing member country.

¹ http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=1&htmfile=chapitre_aw_introduction.htm



1.1 Argentina

Argentina is a small producer of wool, accounting for around 2% of global raw wool production, and has approximately 30,000 farmers who grow wool from 14.3 million sheep. The most common breed of sheep in Argentina is Merino, followed by Corriedale. The average farm size is 600 hectares, with an average of 350 sheep. In Patagonia, the average farm size is 10,000 hectares, each with an average of 3,000 sheep. The climate of Patagonia is dry and cold, and the region has 8.5 million sheep that are pasture-raised. 62% of Argentinean wool is finer than 24.6 microns and is well suited for apparel.

Animal health and welfare in Argentina is supervised by the National Service of Agrifood Health and Quality Service (SENASA). SENASA is a decentralized organization with economic, financial, technical and administrative autonomy with its own legal status, under the National Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. A wide range of aspects related to animal health, welfare and cruelty to animals have been addressed by Argentinian national legislation and resulting regulations since 1954. Degrees of responsibility have been established as well as penalties for non-compliance or breaches of procedures.

Specific procedural guidelines are in place to ensure that animal welfare criteria are duly adhered to. A Joint Advisory Committee on Animal Welfare within the sphere of SENASA has been created to coordinate all aspects of animal welfare. This committee comprises experts from the areas of animal health, veterinary medicine and agricultural innovation. Consultation continues with organisations throughout the world in order to maintain an up to date position.



1.2 Australia

With 21% of total production, Australia is the world's largest wool producer. There are approximately 55,000 farmers who grow wool from around 70 million sheep. The Merino breed is predominant in Australia, producing fine wool used in apparel. The average farm enterprise size in Australia is 3,100 hectares with the average woolgrower running 3,000 sheep. Australia is the largest producer of apparel wool, producing around 80% of all superfine apparel wool destined for clothing and fashion.

Australia is a federation made up of a national government, plus six state and two territory governments. The Australian Constitution determines that animal health and welfare is the responsibility of the six state and two territory governments. Each of these jurisdictions has specific, but separate legislation governing animal health, welfare and cruelty. Contravention of these laws will result in prosecution. Codes of practice, standards and guidelines have been developed nationally for all livestock industries, including sheep farming. These help to guide or inform lawmakers on how to interpret the legislation. The federal government of Australia has no direct responsibility for animal welfare. However, it supports the state governments to ensure a coordinated approach by facilitating the development of the Australian Standards and Guidelines for Sheep. This regulatory tool assists the state governments, ensuring that their legislation is based on fact and the latest developments in R&D and production.

The relevant state government departments responsible for animal welfare are:

NSW - the Department of Primary Industries
 Victoria – Agriculture Victoria
 Queensland – Biosecurity Queensland
 South Australia - the Department Environment & Water
 Tasmania – the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment
 Western Australia – Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development



Image supplied AWI

1.3 New Zealand

At 10% of global production, New Zealand is the third largest producer of wool and is also the largest producer of strong wool used in interior textiles. New Zealand has more than 23,000 farms that grow wool from approximately 27 million sheep, amounting to over six sheep per head of population. The most common sheep breeds in New Zealand are Romney, Perendale, Coopworth, Merino and Corriedale. The average farm size in the country is 250 hectares, running 3,000 sheep. The overwhelming majority of New Zealand wool is coarser than 24.6 microns; hence, it is destined for non-apparel textiles and carpet manufacture.

New Zealand has a national animal welfare system. The Animal Welfare Act (1999) sets out the high level of responsibilities for owners and persons in charge of animals, to provide for their physical health and behavioural needs. Codes of welfare provide minimum standards for specific species and situations, and contain more detail than what is covered in the Act. The Sheep and Beef Cattle Code of Welfare sets minimum standards to adhere to by sheep and cattle farmers. New Zealand is currently consulting on animal welfare regulations that fall between the Act and the codes of welfare. The regulations are more specific than the Act and provide for direct penalties for non-compliance. In contrast, codes of welfare must currently be enforced via offences in the Act. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RNZSPCA) both have responsibilities for animal welfare compliance in New Zealand. The MPI deals primarily with farmed animals while the RNZSPCA is largely concerned with pets.



1.4 Norway

Norway has an annual clip of 4,000 tons of wool. More than 14,000 privately owned small-scale family farms are growing wool from one million ewes and lambs. The most common breeds are Norwegian White Sheep (crossbreed) and Norwegian Short Tail Sheep. The mean fibre diameter of wool from Norwegian White Sheep is about 32 microns. Norwegian wool is a versatile fibre that is used for apparel, hand-knitting yarns, throws and blankets, upholstery and carpets.

Small herds provide offer the opportunity for good monitoring of animal health and welfare. All animals have electronic ID (full traceability) giving farmers, industry and government the opportunity to document, monitor and continuously improve the production. Due to the cold climate, most animals are kept indoors during winter. All lambs are born in the spring and 85% of the sheep uses extensive mountain summer pastures. Most farmers shear the sheep both in the autumn and in the spring.

The universally recognized Five Freedoms of animal welfare provides basic guidelines for wool production. The welfare of all animals in Norway is protected by the Animal Welfare Act. Regulations for the welfare of sheep and other livestock and combating animal diseases have subsequently been drafted based on the Animal Welfare Act and in 2021, a programme on sheep welfare will be introduced. Participation will be mandatory for all farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Norwegian Food Safety Authority will ensure that the legislation is adhered to.

Norway has worked systematically with preventive animal health care for many years. It is forbidden to remove body parts from animals, like amputation of tale, castration or mulesing. Veterinarians are required to register all visits, as well as illness and medical treatment. This information is analyzed and used both by farmers, industry and the authorities. The use of antibiotics is one of the lowest in the world.





1.5 South Africa

South Africa is an important player in the global supply of wool, accounting for around 2.2% of wool production. South Africa is also the second largest supplier of fine Merino wool for the apparel market and has approximately 8,000 commercial and 46,000 communal wool farmers. From the total number of 24 million sheep numbers in South Africa, the wool production of 44 million kgs stems from around 12.5 million woolled sheep, consisting mainly of Merino sheep, with 42% of the clip ranging between 19 and 20 microns.

Wool producers in South Africa prescribe to the Code of Best Practice (COBP) which includes the Five Freedoms. The compilation of the Sustainable Cape Wool Standard (SCWS) has now been completed and electronic on-farm assessments will commence in 2020. All assessments will be managed by one of the regional assigned production advisors, on behalf of Cape Wools.

The South African wool industry is also a participating member of the Livestock Welfare Co-ordinating Committee (LWCC), where animal welfare organizations are represented. The committee is tasked with all animal welfare related issues in South Africa. The current chairperson is Prof. Gareth Bath, a leading animal scientist in South Africa.

The welfare of animals in South Africa is regulated under the Animal Protection Act (1962) and Performing Animals Protection Act (1935). The Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1993) governs the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The animal welfare legislation falls under Directorate Veterinary Services of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.



² <http://capewools.co.za/pdf/documents/pdf1-26-sustainablecapewoolsstandard.pdf>

1.6 United Kingdom

British Wool takes animal welfare extremely seriously. While British Wool does not have any powers to enforce animal welfare legislation, should it become aware of any cases of animal mistreatment, it will inform the agencies who have such responsibility, Defra, Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC), the RSPCA (England & Wales), SSPCA (Scotland) and ISPCA (Northern Ireland)).

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 and its detailed subsidiary guidelines, The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007, prescribe the high animal welfare standards that English farmers are required to meet. Very similar legislation exists for the other UK countries:

Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012
The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007
The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010.

British Wool also commissioned a study called 'Best Management Practices' to give the industry a comprehensive summary of the husbandry, health and environmental standards under which British wool is produced.

In global terms, UK sheep farms are small, having on average approximately 350 sheep. UK sheep are raised naturally outdoors on pasture. As a result, the scale and method of UK lamb production is such that it is not considered an 'intensive' farming activity by animal welfare campaigning bodies.

Sheep are required to be shorn once a year for their own comfort and health. Hence, wool is a naturally occurring by-product. Every year, British Wool presents two-day shearing training courses in all parts of the UK that are tailored to participants' existing level of experience and skill, attended by over 800 people. It goes without saying that shearing in accordance with best practice industry standards ensures that the process is stress free for the animal (as well as maximising the value of producers' wool).



1.7 United States

The U.S. is a small global producer of wool, accounting for around 0.6 % of the world's greasy wool production. The U.S. has over 100,000 sheep farms, growing wool from approximately 5.25 million sheep. The most common breeds of sheep are the Rambouillet and Columbia. The average farm size in the USA is 60 hectares with a flock size of 60. While the majority of those sheep farms are located in the eastern states, sheep farms in the western states tend to be much larger and account for as much as 80% of U.S. sheep numbers. Just over half of USA wool is finer than 24.6 microns and suitable for apparel.

Farm animal welfare is regulated at the federal, state and local levels through laws varying between the 50 states and numerous county governments. The United States is a republic made up of the federal government, the 50 individual state governments and 16 territories. Federally, the government's authority is limited by the U.S. Constitution and can only regulate limited aspects of animal welfare, specifically those falling under interstate commerce. Under that authority, Congress passed the Animal Welfare Act in 1966 to regulate the treatment of animals in research, exhibition, transport, and by dealers. The Act and accompanying regulations are administered by the United States Department of Agriculture / Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Care division.

In turn, the 50 states and 16 territories have broad responsibility for regulating activity within their jurisdictions and have a corresponding department of agriculture under their executive branch. Each of the states and territories have individual animal care laws and set criminal penalties for the violation of those laws. While each state and territory's animal care laws are unique, all have enacted statutes to punish individuals who engage in cruelty to animals.

The American Sheep Industry Association's Sheep Care Guide was again updated in 2017 to serve as a reference for US sheep producers and has been written in acceptance of the ethical responsibility for the humane care of animals. The Sheep Care Guide is updated frequently as new information on animal care and handling becomes available and is peer reviewed by sheep specialists. In addition to setting out best management practices, the Guide recognizes that each sheep producer's professional judgement, experience and training are key factors in providing for animal care.



1.8 Uruguay

Uruguay is a global supplier of wool produced outdoors and under extensive systems of mixed livestock production (sheep and beef cattle), mainly based on native pastures of temperate climate. Most of the production comes from 6.4 million sheep raised on family owned farms (there are approximately 19,800 farmers) that have been in the industry for generations. The most common breeds of sheep are dual purpose, such as Corriedale, Merino and Polwarth. As a consequence, nearly half of Uruguayan wool measures 24-30 microns (mid-micron wool), while the remaining half ranges between 17 and 24 microns (fine wool), suitable for apparel, hand knitting and upholstery.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) is in charge of the regulation and control of animal welfare. Representatives also head the Animal Welfare Group, which guides policy makers about all aspects of animal welfare. The Uruguayan Wool Secretariat (SUL), managed and funded by woolgrowers, and the National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIA), collectively play an active role in animal welfare. Research projects, partnerships in education, training and communication plans are auctioned assessed by this forum. A working group of representative members of organizations and companies that form part of the sheep supply chain developed the publication titled 'Guideline for ethical sheep production in Uruguay' to assure the best possible welfare in Uruguayan production systems.



Image supplied by Maria E. Lastreto



2. Legislative Frameworks for Wool Production

Each country has sovereign responsibility for its laws and regulations pertaining to animal welfare practices. The sovereign responsibility may be devolved to states and territories within countries (such as is the case in Australia), or individual countries within a regional aggregation, such as the European Union. This legal framework is designed to ensure that individuals and businesses operate within the law of these countries at all times. These legislative tools cover almost every aspect of farm operations, including how farmers care for the land and animals, the animal husbandry practices they are allowed to use, and specific chemicals and processes banned under local law.

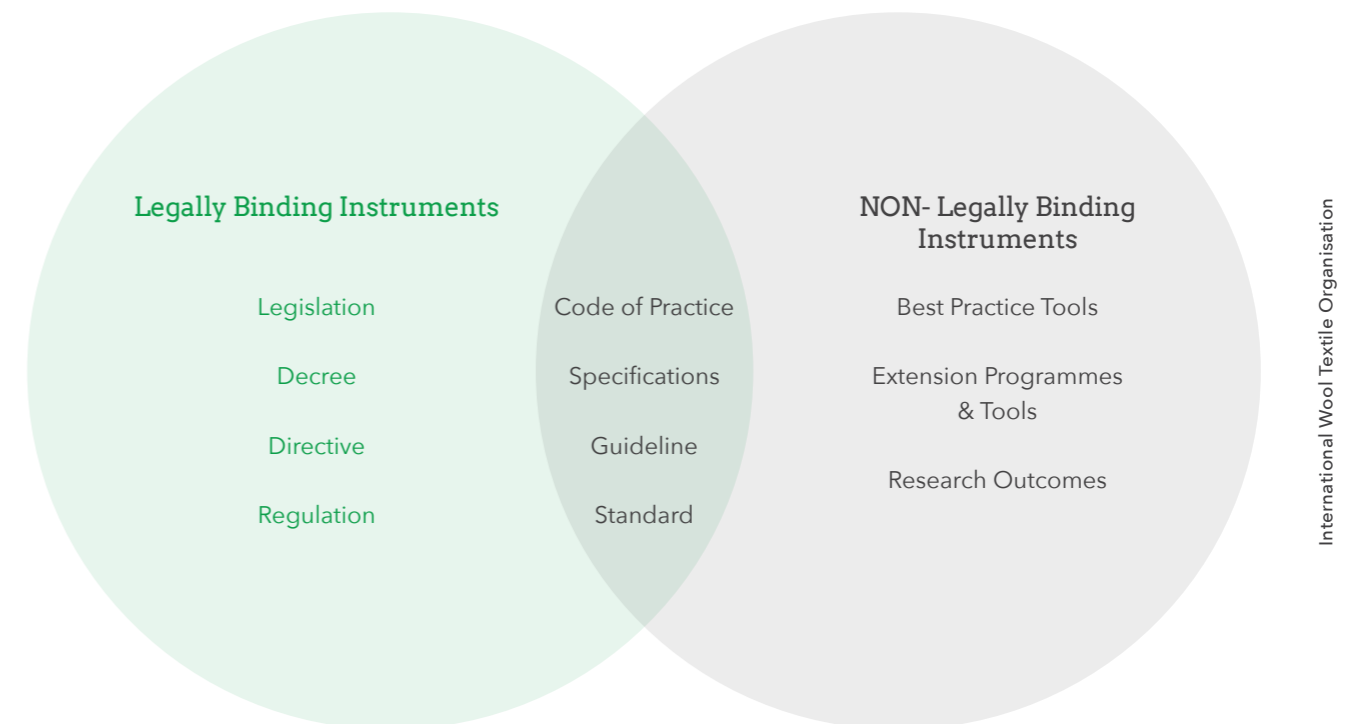
Legally binding instruments (e.g. decrees, acts, directives and regulations) form the baseline for acceptable practice. They provide the high-level and interpretive requirements that farmers in each wool producing country have to adhere to. Meeting the appropriate legal requirements relevant to their jurisdiction is compulsory for farmers and those breaking the law would be prosecuted accordingly.

Supporting the legislation outlined above are the best practice tools. These tools are based on the latest research and development, welfare expertise and animal husbandry practices. These guidelines are dynamic and ever evolving as new information becomes available. For example, best practice may recommend that a farmer manage sheep to reduce the risk of pests; however, how and when this is done will depend on whether the farm is located in a summer or winter dominant environment and the type of sheep present. These management tools are highly specific to the production system, environment and type of sheep. The approach that wool-producing countries have taken with these best practice tools also varies. Some countries adopt one programme that covers all facets of wool production³, whereas others have different guidelines for each facet of production⁴.

³ Best Practice Reference Manual for Wool Sheep Farming - South Africa

⁴ Woolgrowers of Australia

Relationship between legally binding and non-legally binding instruments



World organisation for animal health (OIE)

OIE is the intergovernmental standard setting organisation responsible for improving animal health. With 182 (2020) member countries worldwide, the OIE is recognised as a 'reference organisation' by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Animal welfare was first identified as a priority in the OIE 2001-2005 Strategy Plan. OIE was mandated by its members to take the lead on animal welfare internationally and provide recommendations and guidelines covering animal welfare practices. The international community views the OIE animal welfare standards as the key guiding principles upon which individual countries develop further detailed tools⁵. In May 2017, all OIE Member Countries adopted the first Global Animal Welfare Strategy.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

FAO's aim is to provide food security for all. It strives to raise the level of nutrition, improve agriculture productivity, improve the lives of the rural population and contribute to the growth of the world economy. These objectives are achieved by making relevant information accessible, sharing policy expertise, providing a meeting place for nations and bringing knowledge to the field. FAO has devised the 'Gateway to Farm Animals' to build good farm welfare practices. The Gateway is a single access point for international and national aspects related to animal welfare. It is a participatory platform and allows for the retrieval and submission of information⁶.

⁵ <http://www.oie.int>

⁶ <https://www.oie.int/en/animal-welfare/oie-standards-and-international-trade/>

3. IWTO Specifications for Wool Sheep Welfare

In the establishment of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, the OIE acknowledges the guidance provided by the internationally recognized Five Freedoms^{7,8}:

1. **Freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition – through ready access to fresh water and a diet sufficient to maintain full health and vigour.**
2. **Freedom from discomfort – through provision of an appropriately sheltered and comfortable environment.**
3. **Freedom from pain, injury and disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.**
4. **Freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour – through provision of sufficient space, suitable facilities and company of the animal's own kind.**
5. **Freedom from fear and distress – ensuring conditions and treatments imposed avoid mental suffering.**

Environment

The general principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production systems of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, states:

“The physical environment, including the substrate (walking surface, resting surface, etc.), should be suited to the species so as to minimise risk of injury and transmission of diseases or parasites to animals. The physical environment should allow comfortable resting, safe and comfortable movement including normal postural changes, and the opportunity to perform types of natural behaviour that animals are motivated to perform. For housed animals, air quality, temperature and humidity should support good animal health and not be aversive. Where extreme conditions occur, animals should not be prevented from using their natural methods of thermo- regulation.”

Extending the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code specific to wool production practice guidelines, the general principle is that sheep should be managed so as to minimise the impact of threats to their lifetime welfare, including extremes of weather, natural disasters, disease, injury and predation.

⁷ OIE (2016), Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Article 7.1.2

⁸ FAO (2010), “Legislative and regulatory options for animal welfare”, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1907e/i1907e01.pdf>

⁹ OIE (2016) Terrestrial Animal Code, Article 7.1.5 (3-4, 6).

Specifically:

1. Sheep should be purpose-bred and effectively managed so as to enable a high level of physical adaptation to the production environment and minimise undue stress;
2. Sheep should be inspected at intervals appropriate to risks to their welfare;
3. Consideration should be given to the provision of shelter in the absence of natural protection;
4. When sheep are confined for extended periods, they should:
 - a. have effective ventilation;
 - b. be housed in social groups; and
 - c. have non-slip, non-abrasive and free-draining floor surfaces that avoid the accumulation of faeces and urine likely to compromise their welfare.
5. Handling facilities should be free from protrusions and obstacles that may cause injury;
6. Measures should be put in place to prevent sheep being harmed or killed by predators.

Nutrition

The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code states:

*“Animals should have access to sufficient feed and water, suited to the animals' age and needs, to maintain normal health and productivity and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.”*¹⁰

Extending the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code specific to wool production practice guidelines:

1. Sheep should have reasonable access to feed and water appropriate for their age and needs;
2. If sufficient feed and water cannot be provided for sheep, options such as relocating, selling, or humanely disposing of the sheep should be considered before their welfare is adversely affected;
3. Self-feeders and watering points should be checked regularly to ensure feed and water quality and quantity is maintained;
4. Access to contaminated and spoiled feed, toxic plants and harmful substances should be avoided;
5. Digestive problems should be prevented by gradually introducing sheep to a change of diet.



¹⁰ OIE (2016) Terrestrial Animal Code, Article 7.1.5 (7)





Health

The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code states:

“Diseases and parasites should be prevented and controlled as much as possible through good management practices. Animals with serious health problems should be isolated and treated promptly or killed humanely if treatment is not feasible or recovery is unlikely. Where painful procedures cannot be avoided, the resulting pain should be managed to the extent that available methods allow.”¹²

Extending the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code specific to wool production practice guidelines:

1. As part of a preventative approach to managing the health aspects of sheep welfare, a health management plan should be designed and implemented under the guidance of qualified advisors;
2. Within the health management plans, disease prevention strategies should include vaccination against relevant diseases, monitoring and control of internal and external parasites, and selection toward genetic resistance and resilience to parasites and diseases;
3. Sheep should be inspected regularly, and unexplained diseases and deaths should be investigated to formulate appropriate remedial and preventative actions;
4. Appropriate treatment for sick, injured or diseased sheep should be undertaken at the first reasonable opportunity, and sheep suffering from ill health that cannot be reasonably treated should be humanely euthanized at the first reasonable opportunity;
5. Surgical procedures should be avoided wherever possible and should only be performed where there is a positive health or welfare outcome for the animal. Where surgical procedures cannot be avoided, the resulting pain should be minimized by selection of the most appropriate method for the age of the animal and the use of anaesthesia and analgesia. Genetic, technological, and management interventions should be sought and applied to remove the need for surgical procedures;
6. Good hygiene practices should be applied relating to facilities, hands, handling and instruments; and
7. Sheep that grow and retain long wool should be shorn at least annually.

¹² OIE (2016) Terrestrial Animal Code, Article 7.1.5 (5).

¹¹ OIE (2016) Terrestrial Animal Code, Article 7.1.5 (8-9).

Handling

The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code specifies:

“The handling of animals should foster a positive relationship between humans and animals and should not cause injury, panic, lasting fear or avoidable stress.”

And:

“Owners and handlers should have sufficient skills and knowledge to ensure that animals are treated in accordance with these [OIE] principles.”¹³

Extending the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code specific to wool production practice guidelines:

1. Handling practices should be appropriate and minimise risk to the welfare of sheep:
 - a. handling should be minimised during extreme weather;
 - b. extra care should be taken when handling sheep with special needs – for example, young lambs, heavily pregnant ewes, lame sheep and rams; and
 - c. sheep should be returned to feed and water as soon as possible after handling.
2. Overcrowding of sheep in pens or yards and on transport vehicles should be avoided. Precautions should be taken to prevent smothering - especially for lambs and weaners;
3. Handling facilities should be appropriate to minimise risks to sheep welfare;
4. The use of dogs and handling aids should be limited to the minimum needed to complete the task. When dogs are used, they should be effectively trained and managed; and
5. In the interests of the livestock and all involved in the farm enterprise, farm staff involved in management of livestock should be suitably proficient in their animal management practices.

Behaviour

The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code specifies that:

“Social grouping of animals should be managed to allow positive social behaviour and minimise injury, distress and chronic fear.”¹²

Extending the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code specific to wool production practice guidelines:

In general, sheep should be able to express normal behaviour free from undue stress or constraint:

1. Sheep confined for extended periods should be able to turn around, see, hear, smell and touch neighbouring sheep or have a companion if individually penned;
2. Trough space should be adequate to allow sufficient daily intake of feed and water by all sheep, including shy feeders, and to minimise bullying;
3. In intensive production systems, sufficient space should be allowed for all sheep at the same time to lie on their sternums; and
4. Sheep should be restrained for the minimum time necessary and tethered sheep should be able to exercise daily.

¹³ OIE (2016) Terrestrial Animal Code, Article 7.1.5 (10,11).

4. Glossary

Access to Feed and Water

A reasonable opportunity for sheep to be able to drink water of a suitable quality and quantity to maintain their hydration, and consume a sufficient quality and quantity of feed to maintain appropriate levels of health and vigour.

Animal Welfare

The state of an animal and how well it is coping with the conditions in which it lives.

Crutching or clipping

The removal of wool from the breech of the sheep.

Extremes of Weather

Temperature and climatic conditions (e.g. rain, hail, snow, wind, humidity and heat) that, individually or in combination, are likely to predispose sheep to heat or cold stress.

Facilities

Fences, yards, sheds, raceways, feed and water troughs, portable yards, ramps and equipment, including lamb-marking cradles, dips, sprays and jetting races.

Five Freedoms

A list of required provisions for farmed animal well-being, that underpin modern welfare standards.

Husbandry

The practice of breeding and raising livestock.

Intensive production systems

An operation where sheep are confined for a period longer than four weeks for the purposes of wool, meat or milk production, and are dependent on the daily supply of feed and or water provided by human or mechanical means. Excluding rams housed for breeding or stud sheep in preparation for showing.

IWTO

International Wool Textile Organisation.

Lamb Marking

A set of procedures commonly undertaken simultaneously. May include earmarking, ear tagging, vaccination, drenching, tail docking and castration of lambs.

Lie

Sheep are able to rest on their sternums without restriction (or contact with other sheep or structure).

OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

The World Organisation for Animal Health (historically the Office International des Epizooties formed in 1924).

OIE Terrestrial Code

Sets out standards for animal health and welfare and veterinary public health worldwide.

Pain Relief

The administration of veterinary medicine that reduce the intensity and duration of a pain response.

Sheep

Ovis aries aries and other members of the genus *Ovis*.

Surgical Procedure

A procedure requiring surgery that is conducted to improve the long-term welfare of a sheep. Usually conducted during lamb marking.

Trough

A container for animal feed or water.

Ventilation

Natural or mechanically induced air movement sufficient to provide oxygen and remove excessive heat load and noxious gases.

Weaner

An adolescent sheep that no longer requires liquid feed.

Wether

A castrated ram (male sheep).



5. Legislative Frameworks per Country

The following table provides an overview of the key legal requirements in each country and the legal entity that governs over it.

Instrument Type	Details	Links
Argentina		
National Law 14346 (1954)	Establishes penalties for persons ill- treating animals.	http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=153011
Decree 4238 (1968)	Regulation on Inspection for products, by-products and derivatives of animal origin.	http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=24788
National Law 18819 (1970)	Establishes procedure for animal slaughter.	http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=196842
Decree 1733 (1970) – National executive power	To allow for the Regulation of Law No. 18,819, Procedures for the Slaughter of Animals.	http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=196848
Resolución-97-1999- SENASA - Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria	Establishing the conditions to be met for the transport of animals.	http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=55716
Resolución 253/2002	Creation, within SENASA, of the Joint Advisory Committee on Animal Welfare.	http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=73641
Resolución 25/2013	Rules for herding livestock.	http://www.senasa.gov.ar/resolucion-252013
Resolución 46/2014	Chapter XXXII of Animal Welfare added to the Regulation on Inspection for products, by-products and derivatives of animal origin, approved by Decree 4238 (National Executive).	http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=226148
Resolución 581/2014	Creation of Health National Register of Live Animals Transport	http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=239893

Australia

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1979) New South Wales	The purpose of the Act is to prevent cruelty to animals and promote animal welfare. It does so by placing specific responsibilities on those in charge of the care of animals.	https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1979/200
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1979) New South Wales		https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1979/200
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (Victoria)	The Act does not permit cruelty to occur. Where people are not complying with the specific requirements of these other acts, standards or codes, they can face prosecution for cruelty, as laid out in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.	Regulations in 2019 https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/statutory-rules/prevention-cruelty-animals-regulations-2019
Livestock Management Act (2010)	The Livestock Management Act provides a framework to achieve nationally consistent animal welfare, biosecurity and traceability standards. The Act will affect anyone owning, managing or working with livestock in any capacity.	https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/livestock-management-act-2010/006
Code of Accepted Farming Practice for the Welfare of Sheep (Victoria) (Revision Number 2)		http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/260154/sheep_welfare_code_revision_2.pdf
Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (Qld)	The Act promotes the responsible care and use of animals. It places a legal duty of care on people in charge of animals to meet those animals' needs in an appropriate way. The Act is administered by Biosecurity Queensland. Specially trained Biosecurity Queensland or RSPCA animal welfare inspectors, or the police, investigate complaints about alleged offences.	https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/pdf/inforce/current/act-2001-064
Animal Welfare Act 1985 (South Australia)	The Act applies equally to all animals regardless of their value or status Under Section 13 of the Act, anyone who ill-treats an animal is guilty of an offence. This Act is enforced by the RSPCA, DEWNR wardens, livestock animal health officers, biosecurity officers and the police.	https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Animal%20Welfare%20Act%201985.aspx
Animal Welfare Regulations 2012 (South Australia)		https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/R/Animal%20Welfare%20Regulations%202012.aspx
Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: The Sheep	The Code is intended as a set of guidelines that provides detailed minimum standards for assisting people in understanding the standard of care required to meet their obligations under the laws that operate in Australia's States and Territories.	https://books.google.com.au/books/about/Model_Code_of_Practice_for_the_Welfare_o.html?id=n_hDeD_6yQoC&redir_esc=y

Animal Welfare Act 2002 (Western Australia)	The Act and its accompanying regulations provide the legal framework for ensuring that all animals in Western Australia have appropriate standards of care. The Act intends to promote and protect the welfare, safety and health of animals, ensure the proper and humane care and management of animals in accordance with generally accepted standards and reflect the community's expectation that people in charge of animals will ensure that they are properly treated and cared for.	https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_50_homepage.html
Code of Practice for Sheep in Western Australia (2003)	This Code has been prepared to assist all persons handling or using sheep in Western Australia, and reference to this Code is made in Regulations provided under Section 25 of the Animal Welfare Act 2002 for the purposes of a defence against cruelty.	https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/sites/gateway/files/Code%20of%20Practice%20for%20Sheep%20in%20Western%20Australia_0.pdf
Animal Welfare Act 1993 (Tasmania)	Under the Animal Welfare Act, persons who have the care or charge of animals have a legal "duty of care" for the welfare of those animals, and must take all reasonable measures to ensure their welfare. In the case of sheep, persons with this legal duty of care include the owner, the person with control or custody, the operator or manager of the premises where the sheep are kept and the manager or director of a body corporate which owns them.	http://dpiw.tas.gov.au/Documents/Animal-Welfare-Guidelines--Sheep.pdf
Animal Welfare Guidelines - Sheep (2008)		www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/sheep/
Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Sheep (2016)	The 'Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Sheep' has been developed to provide nationally consistent rules for sheep care and management across Australia. They have been endorsed by state and territory Ministers who will use these to guide legislation in their respective states. Under this system guidelines are accepted good industry practice that should be complied with and would replace those state-based codes highlighted in yellow.	www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/sheep/
New Zealand		
New Zealand Animal Welfare Act (1999)		Welfare Act(1999) http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1999/0142/latest/whole.html#DLM49664
New Zealand Sheep and Beef Cattle Code of Welfare (2018)		https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1450/direct

Norway

Animal Welfare Act (2010)	The Animal Welfare Act establishes the legislative framework for animal welfare in Norway. The intention of the Act is to promote good animal welfare and respect for animals. The Act also contains a duty to help animals and to alert relevant authorities if there is reason to believe that an animal is exposed to mistreatment or serious neglect.	https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/animal-welfare-act/id571188/
Dyrevelferdslova (2010)		https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2009-06-19-97?q=dyrevelferdslova
Welfare regulations for livestock	The regulations shall contribute to good health and well-being of livestock.	https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2006-07-03-885
Forskrift om velferd for produksjonsdyr		
Welfare regulations for small ruminants (sheep and goats)	The purpose of the regulations is to facilitate conditions for good health and well-being of sheep and goats, and to ensure that the animals' natural needs are met.	https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-02-18-160
Forskrift om velferd for småfe		
Animal health regulations	The regulations shall promote good animal health and contribute to good public health and animal welfare by regulating how diseases of animals should be prevented, controlled, restricted and eradicated.	https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2002-06-27-732
Forskrift om tiltak mot sjukdommer og zoonotiske agens hos dyr (Dyrehelseforskriften)		
Regulations on animal health conditions for the import and export of sheep and goats	The purpose of this regulation is to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, through strict regulations of import and export of live sheep and goats.	https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-03-14-232
Forskrift om dyrehelsemessige vilkår for innførsel og utførsel av småfe.		
Regulations on marking, registration and reporting of sheep and goats	The regulations ensure identification and registration of all sheep by using ear tags. Animals born after 2010 need to have electronic ear tags. It regulates what information the ear tags need to contain, and how to register the information in public registers.	https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-11-30-1356
Forskrift om merking, registrering og rapportering av småfe.		
Regulation on the commercial transport of animals	The regulations shall promote proper welfare of animals during transport. The maximum length of time of transport is eight hours.	https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2012-02-08-139
Forskrift om næringsmessig transport av dyr.		
Animal welfare program for sheep	The animal welfare programs give a framework for working systematically on documentation and improvement of animal welfare in livestock herds.	The program for sheep production will be launched in 2021.
Dyrevelferdsprogram for sau		

South Africa

Performing Animals Protection Act, 1935 (Act No. 24 of 1935)	South African animal welfare legislation falls under the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Directorate Veterinary Services. The welfare of animals is regulated under the Animal Protection Act, 1962 and Performing Animals Protection Act, 1935. The Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1993, governs the organisation of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.	https://www.gov.za/documents/performing-animals-protection-act-8-may-1935-0000
Animals Protection Act, 1962 (Act No. 71 of 1962)		https://www.gov.za/documents/animals-protection-act-22-jun-1963-0000
Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1993. (Act No. 169 of 1993)		https://www.gov.za/documents/societies-prevention-cruelty-animals-act
Code of Best Practice (in revision)	The National Woolgrowers Association of South Africa developed the Best Practice Reference Manual for wool sheep farming in South Africa.	http://www.capewools.co.za/view-pdf/17/1/cape-wools-code-of-best-practice#PDF/1

United Kingdom

UK Animal Welfare Act (2006)	The UK Animal Welfare Act (2006) established the legislative framework surrounding animal welfare in UK. It is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. The Act also contains a Duty of Care to animals - to ensure all reasonable steps are taken so that the animal's needs are met.	www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents
The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007	The Animal Welfare Act 2006 and its detailed subsidiary guidelines, The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007, prescribe the high animal welfare standards that English farmers are required to meet. Very similar legislation exists for the other UK countries: Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2010 and The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/2078/contents http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2012/156/contents/made http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2007/3070/contents/made
Best Management Practices	A comprehensive summary of the husbandry, health and environmental standards under which British Wool is produced	https://www.britishwool.org.uk/ksupload/userfiles/Shearing/Best_Management_Practices_27092017.pdf

USA

Sheep Care Guide	This Sheep Care Guide was developed to serve as a reference for US sheep producers and has been written in recognition of an ethical responsibility for the humane care of animals.	https://sheepusa.org/resources-publications-sheepcareguide
Animal Welfare Act	The Animal Welfare Act was signed into law in 1966. It is the only federal law in the United States that regulates the treatment of animals in research, exhibition, transport, and by dealers.	https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2015-title7/html/USCODE-2015-title7-chap54.htm

Animal Welfare Act Regulations		https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2016-title9-vol1/xml/CFR-2016-title9-vol1-chapl-subchapA.xml
Individual State Animal Cruelty Statutes	The National Agricultural Law Center, authorized by the U.S. Congress, has collected and made available for easy reference each of the 50 states' animal cruelty laws and provides updates as state legislatures pass new laws or make revisions.	https://nationalaglawcenter.org/state-compilations/animal-cruelty/ .

Uruguay

Wools of Uruguay	General information regarding wool production in Uruguay including the guidelines to achieve high animal welfare standards	www.wool.com.uy/animal_welfare.htm www.sul.org.uy/sitio/Publicaciones
Decreto No 369/983	For the humanitarian slaughter of animals including transport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre mortem (Art. 17 to 38) and post mortem (Art. 39 to 86) vet inspection Pen facilities (Arts. 23), pre mortem (Art. 158) and post mortem handling (Art. 165) Transportation (Art. 284, 285, 286, 288, 289) Loading and un-loading (Arts. 287, 290) Stunning and Slaughter (Arts. 79, 178, 179, 180) 	www.impo.com.uy/bases/decretos-reglamento/369-1983
Law 18.834 (2011), Article 160	Gives MGAP the powers to regulate and control Animal Welfare of Productive species.	www.impo.com.uy/bases/leyes/18834-2011
SUL (Secretariado Uruguayo de la Lana, Uruguayan Wool Secretariat), created by law no. 13.602 in 1966	SUL seeks to promote sustainable development of the sheep sector, maximizing economic performance through research, technology transfer, training and supply of highly specialized services.	www.sul.org.uy
INIA (National Institute of Agricultural Research), created by law no. 16.065 in 1989	INIA seeks to generate and adapt knowledge and technology aiming at contributing to the sustainable development of the agricultural sector and overall to Uruguay's economic and social development. With a focus on national policies, social inclusion and market demands.	www.inia.uy
INAC (National Institute of Meat), created by law no. 15.605 in 1984	The Institute has a wide scope of action given that it monitors performance for several species, namely beef, sheep, pigs, and poultry, and various links of the meat chain concerning processing in the domestic and international markets. They are in charge of the Animal Welfare Certification Program, including the farm, transportation and the slaughter plant.	www.inac.gub.uy

6. Wool Industry Resources

International

International Wool Textile Organisation
www.iwto.org

Argentina

Federación Lanera Argentina (FLA)
<http://www.flasite.com/index.php/es/>

Australia

Australian Wool Innovation
www.wool.com

Wool Industries Australia Inc.
www.fawo.org.au

WoolProducers Australia
www.woolproducers.com.au

The Woolmark Company
www.woolmark.com

New Zealand

National Council of NZ Wool Interests (Inc)
Email: ncnzwii@gmail.com

Norway

Norilia
www.norilia.com

South African

Cape Wools SA
www.capewools.co.za

United Kingdom

British Wools
www.britishwool.org.uk

United States

American Sheep Industry Association
www.sheepusa.org

Uruguay

Cámara Mercantil de Productos del País
www.camaramercantil.com.uy

Wools of Uruguay
www.wool.com.uy



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The objective of this document is to clearly define and widely promote animal welfare practices in wool production, with respect to the wide diversity of production environments around the globe. While specifically relevant to the global wool sheep production industry, these good welfare practices are closely aligned with the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code.

DISCLAIMER: Please note that this guidance document is intended for information purposes only. It has been produced by the IWTO to provide informal, non-binding advice on the legal requirements and best practices guiding the wool industry internationally. As the area of environmental and animal welfare legislation is continuously evolving, it is not possible for this guidance document to cover all possible applicable rules and practices globally. Therefore, users should not base their actions on the contents of this report only and conduct their own due diligence where it comes to conducting the business of wool production and providing guarantees concerning sheep welfare. This guidance should be read in conjunction with local applicable rules and regulations. The legal requirements and practices described in this guidance should not be taken as an authoritative statement or interpretation of the law, as only the courts have this power. It is ultimately the responsibility of individual businesses to ensure their compliance with the law. The IWTO expressly declines responsibility and liability for any misinterpretation or damage incurred by persons, entities (private or public) or organisations as a result of the contents of this guidance document.





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