Responsible Wool Standard 2.0 Revision and Responsible Mohair Standard 1.0 IWG Call

Date: 17th September 2019

Topic(s):
Animal Welfare

Attendees
From Textile Exchange: Hanna Denes, Callie Weldon, Ashley Gill, Selvilla Granger
- Gareth Jones – British Wool
- Georige Dolphin- Humane Society International
- Matt Jacobs- Darn Tough
- Anna Heaton – Animal Welfare Consultant
- Megan MeikleJohn – Eileen Fischer
- Nina Jamal – Four Paws International
- Felicity Lammas- ASOS
- Carol Shu- The North Face
- Karin Wiske - Varner
- Lindsay Humphreys – Mohair South Africa
- Mandy Lucas – Farm Animal Welfare Consultant
- Marco Coetzee - Mohair South Africa
- Pedro Otegui - Chargeurs Wool
- Ian Wicklen – Merry Thought
- Nathalie Borderie - Caroll
- Kate Cross -Red Tractor

Call Notes

News and Updates

Schedule: Next Call on September 24th at 3pm BST/10 am EDT
Register Here: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/482ff242064cc281d746f627e8486654

New Zealand/Australia Update Call
Register Here:https://zoom.us/meeting/register/e276e3f48fcd78b38c34be5db4a05ad8
RWS and RMS Revision Workplan*

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*subject to change

Social Module Feedback

Feedback

Social Module

- Draft module now available on the website.
- Feedback will be reviewed on October 1st call.
- Initial feedback received indicate that the module should be mandatory and focused on compliance with critical requirements. (Shall vs. Should)

Chemical management:

- Feedback will be reviewed on September 24th call.
Animal Management

Revisiting the Desired Outcomes

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 minimises pain and distress.

Five Provisions:
3. Good health: Prevent or rapidly diagnose and treat disease and injury, and foster good muscle tone, posture and cardiorespiratory function
Animal Welfare Aim: Minimise breathlessness, nausea, pain and other aversive experiences and promote the pleasures of robustness, vigour, strength and well co-ordinated physical activity.

4. Appropriate behaviour: Provide sufficient space, proper facilities, congenial company and appropriately varied conditions
Animal Welfare Aim: Minimise threats, and unpleasant restrictions on behaviour and promote engagement in rewarding activities

5. Positive mental experiences: Provide safe, congenial and species-appropriate opportunities to have pleasurable experiences
Animal Welfare Aim: Promote various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence and a sense of control.

Inspection: Requirements and Feedback

Inspection: Requirements and Feedback

Responsible Wool Standard

AW4.2 The farm shall conduct routine welfare inspections and monitor for signs of disease or production disorders.
AW4.2.1 The frequency of inspections shall be increased as required during, for example, extreme weather events, lambing times, flystrike etc.

Feedback received:
Inspection/monitoring minimums should be set. I would like to say daily inspections are ideal – but this may not be possible for many producers.

Due to the fact that sheep farming is conducted on different scales, it could be hard to set a specific requirement. Still, the welfare of the sheep should still be monitored regularly, no matter flock size, and there should at least be a rule of thumb on how often as a minimum is appropriate.

Responsible Mohair Standard

AW3.1 The farm shall conduct routine welfare inspections and monitor for signs of disease or production disorders.
AW3.1.1 The frequency of inspections shall be increased as required during, for example, extreme weather events, kidding times, flystrike etc.
The way the standard is currently worded talks about routine animal welfare inspections. Feedback received: this leaves it quite open for the sheep farmer to decide the frequency of the inspection. Needs to be a rule of thumb for the minimum.

**Inspection Frequency**

**Inspection Frequency**

**SHEEP PRODUCTION**
- 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).
- Although extensive production is a common factor there are many differences in global production systems.
  - 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 make it difficult if not impossible to set a meaningful minimum frequency of inspection that can be practically achieved by farmers.

It’s very difficult to set a minimum frequency of inspection across all the different scenarios, farm sizes, breed types, climates, etc.

**What’s the Point of Inspection?**

**Inspection Frequency**

**WHAT’S THE POINT OF INSPECTION?**
- To ensure the health and welfare of sheep is maintained
  - Adequate feed and water are available
  - Sick or injured sheep are identified and treated
  - Predators are monitored and action taken to deter/control these as necessary

**HOW FREQUENTLY SHOULD INSPECTION BE CARRIED OUT**
- 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.

The health and welfare of the individual sheep within the flock is maintained with feed, water.
Sick or injured sheep can be identified and treated. Predators are monitored and action is taken to deter or control them as necessary.

So how frequently should inspections be carried out?

**Inspection Frequency**

IF INSPECTION FREQUENCY CANNOT BE SET, WHAT SHOULD THE STANDARD FOCUS ON?

- Outcomes are key:
  - Mortality – if health or predation problems go unrecognized and unchecked mortality will rise
  - Body condition – if there is insufficient availability of feed and water BCS will drop
  - 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.

When sheep rely on human interventions to provide daily feed and water, they must be checked daily. When sheep are in a system where natural water sources are accessible, the grass/forage stocks are up, topography ensures shade/shelter available and predators are either unknown or excluded → You could look at only checking the animals once a month with no ill effects being identified.

These two are the extremes on either end of the spectrum.

We can’t in the standard say you must go see your sheep x amount of times per x. We can look at the outcomes.

1) Mortality- if there are health issues that are being unchecked because the inspection is not frequently enough, the mortality rate would rise
2) Body condition – if there is insufficient availability y of feed and water the BCS will drop

Farmers must routinely inspect their animals. Farmers must also assess the risk to their flock. But there is no minimum amount of days that we can add into the standard.

**Comments/Questions:**

- We should be looking at welfare indicators not just health indicators. To provide the farmers with guidance-based assessment, such as AWIN welfare assessment for sheep and goats, which details all those indicators. Also, in terms of inspection frequency…there is a mention of key moments in time (extreme welfare conditions) perhaps checks could be times with those types of events.
- Is this for farmers or for the audit? → For the farmers to get familiar with them. The terms in AW4.2 are vague for farmers to know what to check. Also, the body conditions should be checked here too.
- There is different BCS guidance per country.
- There is a link between AW4.2 and the health guidance so we can look into providing a connection between the two. Before 4.1 we could have a sentence highlighting the need to have an assessment protocol.
Health Planning Suggestion

Health planning

Responsible Wool Standard
AW4.1 The producer shall have a management plan for flock health and animal welfare.
AW4.1.1 The plan shall be reviewed at least annually.
AW4.1.2 The farm shall keep sufficient records to allow assessment against the management plan.
AW4.4.1 Advice shall be sought as needed from a veterinarian or specialist advisor on prevention, treatment, and strategies to avoid the development of resistant parasites.

Responsible Mohair Standard
AW3.2 The producer shall have a management plan for flock health and animal welfare.
AW3.2.1 The plan shall be reviewed at least annually.
AW3.2.2 The farm shall keep sufficient records to allow assessment against the management plan.
AW3.2.3 Advice shall be sought as needed from a veterinarian or specialist advisor on prevention, treatment, and strategies to avoid the development of resistant parasites.

There is duplicate requirement in AW3.2.2 and AW4.4.1 and this statement will be kept in a different place.

Treatment of health issues

Treatment of health issues

Responsible Wool Standard
AW4.6 Sheep that are found suffering from serious health problems shall be treated promptly.
AW4.6.1 Responsible personnel shall identify and treat sick and/or injured animals and obtain veterinary advice when needed.
AW4.6.2 Sheep that cannot move on their own may only be moved using a humane conveyance method, such as a truck, sled, or cart.
AW4.6.3 Animals who will not recover should be promptly and humanely euthanized.

Responsible Mohair Standard
AW3.3 Goats that are found suffering from serious health problems shall be treated promptly.
AW3.3.1 Responsible personnel shall identify and treat sick and/or injured animals and obtain veterinary advice when needed.
AW3.3.2 Goats that cannot move on their own may only be moved using a humane conveyance method, such as a truck, sled, or cart.
AW3.3.3 Animals who will not recover should be promptly and humanely euthanized.

Feedback: Any animal suffering from health problems should be treated. Proposal to remove the word serious from AW4.6 and AW3.3

Remove the word serious

Controlling Parasites
Feedback on this requirement on the issue of appropriate breeds for local conditions. We are addressing breeding strategy in another section of the standard.

Castration

Castration Feedback
Castration feedback

Feedback: The slower development, and smaller testes of the angora need slightly more time to identify the anatomical structure compared to sheep to burdizzo. The proposal for burdizzo is for goats to be carried out at 12 weeks of age.
Proposal: Additional sub-requirement (see previous slide)

Feedback: Surgical castration (unless a medical reason- example neoplasia) should not be allowed. Proved to be the most painful and puts the goat at most risk (tetanus, fly strike, infection). We advise against its use and would be happy if prohibited.
Proposal: Make intra operative and post operative pain relief mandatory for surgical castration

Feedback: The age limit is a problem in ram breeding as final ram selections are sometimes made after a year
Proposal: Apply derogation procedure where required.

Feedback: Vaccination against tetanus should be promoted when using rubber rings.
Proposal: Include in guidance or as a recommendation

Comments/Questions:

- Comment on Rubber rings. We believe that they should be phased out. Surgical castration should be first option and rubber rings should not be included.
- 2 weeks post lambing not convinced it is possible for all breeds of sheep. In some of the much larger systems in New Zealand and Australia. Merinos has issues of mismothering. If you gather them to castrate at a young age it becomes and issue.
- Also, the 24 hours should also be revised because this is too young.
- 4.12.5 We have to take account of legislation that may be in place in some countries.
- Final point on 4.12.4 is a bit too vague. Some guidance needs to be developed

Mulesing and Steining
Mulesing and Steining

Responsible Wool Standard
AW4.15 Mulesing is prohibited.
AW4.15.1 Farms with Ceased Mulesing status are accepted.

Feedback received:
- Steining must be prohibited in the standard.
- This procedure should not allow for the wool to be considered as mulesing-free wool, and this should be addressed in the standard.

Current status:
The RWS defines mulesing as the process of removing the folds of skin from the breech of a sheep rather than the method by which the removal is carried out. This means that steining would be included in that definition and aligns with most definitions of mulesing. However, the Australian / AWEX definition differs: “The removal of skin from the breech and/or tail of a sheep using mulesing shears.”

Proposed changes:
- Add Textile Exchange definition of mulesing in standard.
- Add under requirement prohibiting steining to standard.

Feedback that Steining must be prohibited in the standard. The way RWS defines mulesing is as the process of removing rather than the method of removing. Steining is included in this definition of mulesing. The problem is that the Australian definition differs from this. That definition specifies mulesing shears and steining is considered non-mulesing on the National Wool Declaration. We will keep our definition and make sure it’s in the standard and also for the sake of clarity make a sub-requisite prohibiting steining.

Animal welfare organizations perspective

FOUR PAWS AND HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL OPPOSE STEINING / FREEZE BRANDING
FOUR PAWS and Humane Society International are against any form of breech mutilation or modification. This includes mulesing (the removal of skin via cutting with shears) and steining (the use of liquid nitrogen). Research confirms that both methods are severely painful for lambs, with lambs showing signs of distress and discomfort even when some level of pain relief is applied.

“Freeze branded lambs suffer from painful, inflammatory skin lesions, respiratory distress, and lameness as a result of the procedure.” — Humane Society International

“Freeze brands and steining are extremely painful and cause significant suffering. They alter the lambs’ ability to walk, move, and breathe, causing immense distress and suffering.” — Humane Society International

“While we understand there have been some modifications to the steining practice since the 2018 study, there is still no scientific evidence to support the claim that steining is less painful than mulesing.” — Humane Society International

“The genetic solution has already been incorporated successfully by over 1,000 producers across Australia and we believe its potential has not yet been realized.” — Mr. Michael Dolpin, Program Manager for Animal Welfare, Humane Society International.

FOUR PAWS and Humane Society International are not advocating for such trials to be carried out, due to the potential for the welfare of the lambs involved, and instead are encouraging efforts to remain focused on rolling out the genetic solution and supporting farmers to make that transition.

“Trials with liquid nitrogen have shown physical signs of pain, distress, and discomfort lasting for several days. The affected skin is destroyed, reacting in oedema, exudation of fluid, redness, swelling, and changing of skin colour. Lambs show a rise in heart rate, respiratory rate and higher rectal temperature during and after the mutilation, lasting for hours until death. Lambs also show reluctance of having their tails handled.” — Humane Society International.

 Comments/Questions:
o Fully support that because our stance is that we don’t support and breech modifications and we’re advocating for genetics to be used for a means of fly-strike control and avoiding flystrike. There are draft regulations that are going through the consultation for the state of Victoria for this issue. They are out on public consultation. They have changed the definition of mulesing in this.

Pain Relief

Pain relief

Responsible Wool Standard
Castration: AW4.12.1 For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available.
Tail docking: AW4.11.1 For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available.

Responsible Mohair Standard
Castration: AW3.9.1 For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available.

Feedback received:
Further definition needed on suitable and available.
Guidance is needed on pain relief options available globally.

We received feedback that we need to be more specific with the words ‘suitable and available’.
Why is pain relief needed? What does ‘suitable mean?’

**Pain Relief**

**WHY IS PAIN RELIEF NEEDED?**
- Management tasks such as tail docking and castration are painful operations
- Different methods (rubber ring, cautery blade, scalpel, burdizzo) are available, and the operations may take place at different lamb ages, but there will always be some pain involved.

**WHAT DOES “SUITABLE” MEAN?**
- A suitable product is one that has a pain relieving effect for the method of castration/tail docking that is used
- 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).
- Some products are specific to certain methods/applications

The background papers offer more detail on what suitable pain relief products are. Some target acute pain and some target longer acting pain. Farmers under the RWS are required to think about what the purpose of the pain is and how they should treat it.

**Pain Relief – What does available mean?**

**Pain Relief**

**WHAT DOES “AVAILABLE” MEAN?**
- Veterinary pharmaceuticals, including pain relieving drugs, have to be licensed for use in individual countries by the companies that produce these.
- 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 another 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 relieving drugs, that are not otherwise available. Depending on the licensing rules, such products may only be used by the vet or under the control of the vet.
- 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 vet as to whether they are willing and able to facilitate this.
- 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.

There are country requirements as to what is licensed to be used in individual countries by the companies that produce these, which pharmaceuticals are intended for which therapeutic indication, and the mode of application and the withholding period.

Some products are only available when vets prescribed them, some only vets can administer, some are available over the counter for farmers to purchase.
In some rules of usage, they may only be allowed to be used by the vet. It is not guaranteed that the farmer will be able to access medications for their own free usage.

It is 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.

**Table of Product that are Suitable and Available**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of product</th>
<th>Product name</th>
<th>Countries where licensed for human use*</th>
<th>How applied</th>
<th>When applied</th>
<th>When it works</th>
<th>What the product does</th>
<th>Must Withdraw Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Local anaesthetic (two formulations)</td>
<td>Tricoffen</td>
<td>Australia New Zealand, South Africa, Registration underway in Europe, Canada, US and South America</td>
<td>To the wound (not used for rubber ring castration/docking)</td>
<td>After the procedure</td>
<td>30 to 60 seconds after application and lasts for 24 hours</td>
<td>Contains local anaesthetic to deaden pain, adrenalin to stop bleeding and an antispetic</td>
<td>90 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local anaesthetic</td>
<td>Nummuts</td>
<td>Australia now, UK 2020, NZ 2020</td>
<td>Injected as the rubber ring is applied</td>
<td>At the time of the procedure</td>
<td>30 to 60 seconds after injection and lasts for 60-90 minutes (the acute pain phase)</td>
<td>Contains local anaesthetic to deaden pain</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSAID</td>
<td>Bucogelatine</td>
<td>Australia New Zealand</td>
<td>Gel, inside the cheek</td>
<td>Prior to the procedure</td>
<td>From 10 minutes after application lasting up to 24 hours</td>
<td>Relieves pain by reducing inflammation</td>
<td>10 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSAID</td>
<td>Metacam</td>
<td>Australia New Zealand, Canada</td>
<td>Intramuscular injection</td>
<td>Prior to the procedure</td>
<td>From 10 minutes after application lasting up to 24 hours</td>
<td>Relieves pain by reducing inflammation</td>
<td>11 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australia is pretty well covered, other countries and regions do not have many pain relief products

**Pain Relief – What is reasonable to expect from RWS/RMS certified farmers?**

**Pain Relief**

**WHAT IS REASONABLE TO EXPECT FROM RWS/RMS CERTIFIED FARMERS?**

- If farmers are in countries where pain relieving products are licensed for use (see previous slide); 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**

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 **Nummuts** in conjunction with cautery blade tail docking, but this as not yet been evaluated.

*Images from left to right: **Nummuts**, **Tricoffen**, **Metacam**, and **Bucogelatine**.
This statement will require that RWS monitors the licensing of veterinary products and letting farmers know what is available for use in their area. This will affect auditing as well. There are still a lot of countries where farmers cannot access pain-relieving products. If we require that they do and say ‘must’ that would form a barrier to people coming into the program.

Comments/Questions:

- Are these products available for goats or just sheep (referencing previous slide)? The table is focused just on sheep.
- In regards to Tail docking, many farmers have been able to remove the need to Tail dock through the use of genetics. May be something to provide further resources for if the pain relief is not available in their area.
- Rubber rings not be a solution. If we look at Numbnuts, the impact of the injection lasts 60-90 minutes but the pain lasts for weeks. This is an indicator that this is not a viable solution.

Comment on the table:

- All surgical procedures have long term effect and will cause inflammation. Suggestions that long-term pain med is required not just local anesthetics. All of the pain medications available do not cover the entire period of time that the animal feels pain. The slide that follows is one step in the right direction, but we need to move in the direction of pre and post-operative pain relief should be applied.
- We need to keep in mind that these are standards that need to be measured against. Farmer education needs occur alongside this.
- In terms of who can administer pain relief, are farmers allowed to supervise a lay person administering it as well or just the farmer who is allowed to administer it? It could be farm workers who can administer the medication or procedures under the farmer’s supervision.
- Overarching RWS requirement that anyone doing anything with the sheep needs to be properly trained. Maybe we need to specify this more and say people who are carry out the procedures need to be properly trained and understand the RWS requirements. This is addressed in the general training and competency requirement of the standard as well as the contractor declaration.
Identification

Why use ear nothing instead of ear tags?

EAR NOTCHING

WHY USE EAR NOTCHING INSTEAD OF EAR TAGS?

- Ear notching is a permanent mark that cannot be altered.
- Ear notching is required by law for Icelandic sheep farmers: Each registered flock is issued with its own pattern of notching and all their sheep must be ear notched to meet this.
- Ear notching can be a useful tool for sheep farmers whose flocks live in environments where:
  - There is a risk of ear tags being caught and torn out in the environment
  - There is a risk of theft, with removal/replacement of ear tags to hide the original identity of the animal.
- There are welfare problems related to ear tags as well as ear notching:
  - Results of one study: After examination of the ears of over 700 sheep, approximately 28% of the animals had suffered slight to moderate ear damage associated with plastic ear tags, including local inflammation, pronounced thickening, traces of haemorrhaging and mild sepsis. Poor application of ear tags could result in infections and ear damage.

The concern is the fact that we’re cutting tissue from the animal’s ear, it is worth remembering that ear tagging is not problem free either (see study comment about results from ear tagging).
How can sheep welfare be protected if ear notching is allowed?

**Ear Notching**

**HOW CAN SHEEP WELFARE BE PROTECTED IF EAR NOTCHING IS ALLOWED**

- Ear “notching” or “marking” removes varying amounts of tissue from the ear
  - Specific notching tools or knives may be used
  - Ear marking includes splits, removal of the tip of the ear and/or notches cut around the edge of the ear
  - Ear marking may be carried out in one or both ears
- Some sheep standards have restrictions on ear notching for example:
  - Global Animal Partnership standards for meat sheep state that
    - Ear notching must be performed with an ear-notch tool made for this purpose or a surgically sharp knife; AND
    - Ear notching must not exceed 10% of the area of the ear.
  - Animal Welfare Approved standards: where ear notching is permitted, it must only be carried out with a notching tool and never with a knife.
- Other sheep standards have no restrictions on notching e.g. Certified Humane and RSPCA which just says all forms of ID (including notching) must be carried out as quickly and humanely as possible.

Notching or marking removes various amounts if tissue from the ear. Sometimes tools are used and sometimes knives are used. See slide for other sheep standards (in the meat industry) that have restrictions on ear notching.

**Ear Notching Proposal for RWS/RMS**

**PROPOSAL FOR RWS/RMS**

- Permit ear notching under the following conditions:
  - Where there is a risk of loss of tags from the natural environment or theft;
  - Where ear notching does not remove more than 10% of each ear; and
  - When ear notching tools or surgically sharp scalpels are used.

*Note: A scalpel can potentially remove a lot more tissue than a notching tool; but if there is a limit on the total amount of ear that can be removed either tool should be acceptable.*

We could permit ear notching if there is a risk for loss of tags. Follow something like the Global Animal Partnerships requirement so that there are specifications around notching.
Comments/Questions:

- Are ear tags required for example in Australia? Yes, there are some countries where ear tags or electronic IDs are required.
- Interesting discussion, if you have to use ear tags should you still be able to ear notch as well?

Comment in chat:

- For me it is important to add specifications and ear nothing tool and % of the area of the ear but is possible to use Australia requirement (electronic method) instead of ear notching.
- Electronic id is still a tag, so it doesn’t get us much further ahead. If we have to use an ear tag by your countries regulation you shouldn’t be allowed to notch as well since there is already identification in place.

Shearing

Shearing: Feedback

Feedback: Competence needs to be defined.
Proposal: Should the standard include reference to accreditations / trainings by production country in the guidance?

Feedback: Supervision of shearing should be included.
Proposal: New requirement proposed

Feedback with questions regarding the contractors declaration and how this works. The RWS contractors declaration can be accessed here: https://resources.livestock.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Contractor-Declaration.pdf
Shearing: Proposed changes

**Responsible Wool Standard**

AW4.16 Shearing shall be performed by or under the direct supervision of a competent shearer, using techniques and equipment designed to minimize animal stress and injury.

Shearing shall be carried out under the direct supervision of the farmer or a person appointed by him, using techniques and equipment designed to minimize stress and injury.

AW4.16.1 Sheep should be handled calmly and confidently to minimize stress.

AW4.16.2 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.

AW4.16.3 An action plan shall be instituted to address and prevent any recurring problems with injuries or mishandling.

AW4.16.4 Shearers shall sign the "RWS Contractors’ Declaration" (see RWS Farmer Guidebook).

AW4.16.5 Written and/or visual “Shearing Standard Operating Procedures” (see RWS Farmer Guidebook) shall be posted in a visible location of the shearing shed.

**Responsible Mohair Standard**

AW3.13 Shearing shall be performed by or under the direct supervision of a competent shearer, using techniques and equipment designed to minimize animal stress and injury.

Shearing shall be carried out under the direct supervision of the farmer or a person appointed by him, using techniques and equipment designed to minimize stress and injury.

AW3.13.1 Goats should be handled calmly and confidently to minimize stress.

AW3.13.2 Particular care shall be taken not to cut or injure the animal, especially the teats/udders of female goats and the penis/sheath and scrotum of rams.

AW3.13.3 An action plan shall be instituted to address and prevent any recurring problems with injuries or mishandling.

AW3.13.4 Shearers shall sign the "RMS Contractors’ Declaration" (see RMS Farmer Guidebook).

AW3.13.5 Written and/or visual “Shearing Standard Operating Procedures” (see RMS Farmer Guidebook) shall be posted in a visible location of the shearing shed.

Timing of shearing and thermal comfort

**Responsible Wool Standard**

Proposed new requirement:

Shearing shall be planned to coincide with local climatic conditions favorable to good welfare.

**Responsible Mohair Standard**

Proposed new requirement and sub-requirement

Shearing shall be planned to coincide with local climatic conditions favorable to good welfare.

- Sheared goats should be left with enough hair to maintain thermal comfort.

**Feedback:** The timing of shearing and climate conditions should be considered. The ability of goats to regulate temperate was also raised.

**Proposal:** New requirement and sub requirement to be added to the standard. Further details on good practices regarding timing of shearing can either be added as sub requirements, recommendations or in the guidance.
Hand Shearing

Hand shearing

Responsible Mohair Standard
AW1.6 Hand shearing is prohibited

Feedback Received:
• Why is hand shearing prohibited?
• Hand shearing is not adequately defined — using a hand piece can also be regarded as “hand shearing”, and; • In developing countries, such as Lesotho, blade shearing is the only shearing practice and prohibiting this would automatically disqualify Lesotho from the RMS.
• It is unclear why such shearing is prohibited. Yes it can be more risky versus mechanical/electric clippers, but it also can be less stressful for the animal, providing that the shearer is properly trained, and can provide more income for the farmer, which can then be reinvested in better care of the fiber producing animals, and/or to provide for the family, whose livelihood also should be considered in the context of sustainable and responsible fiber production.
• What is the reason for prohibiting hand shearing; done well it poses no additional welfare concerns.

Hand shearing background

There are a number of practical reasons why this point needs to be reviewed and an alternative proposal needs to be made.

1. Farms in the Karoo are vast and remote and not all farms have electricity or power supply.
   • To transport goats to farms or facilities with power and again back to their natural grazing areas raises many welfare concerns.
   • To herd goats great distances to reach powered facilities again raises welfare issues.

2. Crutching usually done at 3 months of hair growth. Removing soiled hair from the perianal area, the axilla, the inguinal area and belly helps prevent the goat getting tangled up in vegetation or entangled vegetation causing discomfort. Removal of hair around the face to improve vision and are all important welfare actions that need to be taken.

These can be done in sheds in remote areas by hand shears without having to herd the goats great distances or having to transport them to sources of power.

Hand shearing proposal

Hand shearing, by competent and trained hand shearers, is permitted when the use of machine shears would otherwise be detrimental to the welfare of the Angora goat due to logistical reasons.

It must also be noted:
3. Hand Shearing by competent (trained, accredited shearers)
   • Leaves a longer fleece after shearing than a machine so provides more protection against adverse weather conditions.
   • Accidental wounds with machine shears are often larger (machine shears move faster over body)

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SA Mohair Veterinarian
We need a system to accommodate areas that have lack of power supply to allow hand sheering. These hand shearsers need to be trained. The length of fiber in hand-sheering is longer. Also, if there is an accident, the cuts in hand-sheering are smaller. There are welfare advantages of hand-sheering as long as they are competent and trained.

**Comment in chat:**

- Does there need to be something about the suitability of the stock to be sheared, i.e. wool at correct stage - ensure the sheep owner has the responsibility as shearsers can only work with the animals presented? Look at the timing of the sheering to see if we can look at the wording around it.
- How will someone learn how to sheer competently if they have to be competent in the first place to abide by RWS? We can come back to how competency is defined.
- Also, if competent sheering is defined and required, does it really matter if it’s hand sheering versus machine? It shouldn’t make a huge difference in terms of the sheering technique.

**Artificial Breeding**

**Artificial breeding**

**Responsible Wool Standard**

AW4.21 Artificial breeding procedures shall be carried out by competent operators.
AW4.21.1 Cervical artificial insemination and pregnancy diagnosis shall only be carried out by persons trained and competent with the techniques.
AW4.21.2 Electro-ejaculation is prohibited.
AW4.21.3 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.

**Responsible Mohair Standard**

AW3.17 Artificial breeding procedures shall be carried out by competent operators.
AW3.17.1 Cervical artificial insemination and pregnancy diagnosis shall only be carried out by persons trained and competent with the techniques.
AW3.17.2 Electro-ejaculation is prohibited.
AW3.17.3 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.

Feedback received:
- Proposal that laparoscopic artificial insemination is prohibited.
- Request that electro-ejaculation is allowed.

Currently, laparoscopic artificial insemination is permitted. Feedback that this. This should be prohibited in the standard. Also, got feedback that electro-ejaculation be allowed.
Electro-ejaculation

If someone feels like they have a particularly strong case to use electro ejaculation, they can use the derogation policy. Proposal that the standard will stay the same and prohibit electro-ejaculation, but a particular farm could use the derogation policy.

Comments/Questions:

- The derogation needs to be clearer that anesthesia would be a requirement. The wording is too weak, and the animal needs to be under full anesthesia.

Laparoscopic AI – Why Use it?

WHY USE AI?

- Artificial insemination is a useful tool for farmers to introduce specific genetics into their flocks.
- The use of AI allows the genetics from a single ram to be introduced to many more ewes than would be possible with natural breeding not just across one farm but multiple farms.
- The use of AI allows farms to access high value genetics from rams they would otherwise not be able to afford.
- It is common for such genetics to include health and welfare benefits such as resilience to footrot and internal parasites.
- AI also allows lambing to be timed more precisely to the optimum time of year.

WHY USE LAPAROSCOPIC AI?

- Non-surgical (vaginal) AI has a low success rate due to the complex structure of a ewe’s cervix. Only 40 to 50% of ewes get in lamb from this procedure.
- Laparoscopic AI has a success rate of between 60 to 80%
Laparoscopic Al

Laparoscopic AI

HOW CAN EWE WELFARE BE MAINTAINED WHEN LAPAROSCOPIC AI IS USED

- Veterinary guidelines for laparoscopic AI must be met [e.g. from Australian Veterinary Association]
  - Laparoscopic AI must be carried out by, or under the control of, a registered veterinarian [some countries/states and territories only permit a vet to carry out the procedure]
  - Feed and water should be withdrawn for at least 12 hours to reduce any risk of regurgitation and aspiration of stomach contents during the procedure
  - The procedure must be conducted using effective anaesthesia or sedation, plus analgesia, and an aseptic technique, to ensure the welfare of the animal.
  - Wound sprays can be used post-procedure; e.g. aluminium based non-antibiotic sprays.

OTHER POINTS

- Ewes must be well cared for to ensure optimum pregnancy rates. If farmers want to use this technique 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.

Age at First Lambing

Age at First Lambing

Responsible Wool Standard
AW4.23 The lambing period shall be planned to coincide with local climatic conditions favorable to good welfare and survival.

Responsible Mohair Standard
AW3.19 The kidding period shall be planned to coincide with local climatic conditions favorable to good welfare and survival.

Feedback received:
There is currently no requirement in the standard addressing the age of first lambing / kidding.

Proposal:
Amend AW4.3/3.19 to also incorporate the timing and age of first lambing / kidding.

This was not originally included in the RWS.
Options for Breeding Ewe Lambs

Age at First Lambing

OPTIONS FOR BREEDING EWE 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-waaning and mated when they are around 18 to 19 months of age so that they lamb when they are two.
- Anecdotally, breeding to lamb at one year of age is more common in flocks that focus on meat production rather than merino flocks, but it is possible in all flocks.

WHY IS LAMING TOO EARLY AN ISSUE?

- 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.

Is Age the Key Factor?

Age at First Lambing

IS AGE THE KEY FACTOR?

- Weight of ewe lamb is far more important than age when it comes to avoiding negative outcomes at first lambing.
- A 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 on the previous slide for herself or her lambs.
- Management is a greater factor than age of ewe lamb when it comes to positive outcomes at first lambing.

OTHER FACTORS

- A ewe lamb that is not bred until she is 18/19 months of age will produce a greater weight of wool in her first year [a possible reason for the anecdotal information that merino farms tend not to breed ewe lambs early].

PROPOSAL

- New wording for AW4.23 The lambing period shall be planned to coincide with local climatic conditions favorable to good welfare and survival.” to broaden this requirement to cover both timing and age at first lambing.
Artificial rearing and weaning

Euthanasia and On-Farm Slaughter

Comments/Questions:
- Vote that killing of animals shouldn’t be done in view of other livestock. Yes, this is in the standard.
Follow up

Requests for feedback

Requests for Charters to be signed and returned

Join the IWG

Join IWG as an observer

- Notify responsiblewool@textileexchange.org.

Join IWG as a voting member.

- Sign and return the IWG Charter to responsiblewool@textileexchange.org.

Reminders for next call

The next call will take place on 24th of September at 3pm BST/10 am EDT. Joining instructions will be sent out by Textile Exchange Communications and also posted on www.responsiblewool.org.

We will revisit today’s topic and review feedback. Also look at handling and transport, optional slaughter module.

Register in advance for this meeting:

Link to register: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/482ff242064cc281d746f627e8486654
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting, including a calendar reminder.

**We are organizing a separate call for New Zealand and Australia that will take place on Wednesday, September 25th at 8am BST**

Link to register: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/e276e3f48fcd78b38c34be5db4a05ad8