



NewMerino® Standards



version: 18.5.1

References

Animal Health Australia Sheep Standards and Guidelines

<http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/sheep/>

Agriculture Victoria

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management>

RSPCA

Knowledge base <http://kb.rspca.org.au/72/>

A Code of Welfare for Australian Livestock Working Dogs

<http://www.wkc.org.au/PDF/AnimalWelfare-LivestockWorkingDogs.pdf>

For information on the use of 1080 poison

[Pestsmart](#)

[Agriculture Victoria](#)

[RSPCA](#)

Objectives of the Standard

Management:	Farmers have a clear strategy and set of protocols to safeguard the welfare of sheep.
Nutrition	Sheep have access to sufficient feed and water – suited to the animals’ age and needs – to maintain normal health and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.
Health:	The farmer demonstrates a good understanding and a proactive approach to ensure the health of the sheep is maintained through all stages of life. Sheep are free from pain, injury or disease through prevention, rapid diagnosis, and treatment.
Behaviour and Handling:	Good human-animal relationships are in place that allows the sheep to be in a positive emotional state and express natural behaviour. Sheep should always be handled with the goal of minimising stress for both humans and animals.
Soil:	Farmers have an understand what will impact the health of their soil and have a strategy to mitigate damage and improve soil health.
Biodiversity:	Farmers will have an understanding of what will impact the biodiversity of their land and have a strategy to protect and improve it over time.
Fertilizers:	Farmers use the minimal amount of inputs to meet the nutritional needs of their land and to maintain carrying capacity.
Pesticides:	Farmers use the minimum amount of pesticides to achieve adequate control of pest burden on the farm.

Non-conformances by category

The standard details non-conformance codes on the following page.

The number of non-conformances in each category is as follows:

Animal welfare	NC1 = 25	NC2 =21	NC3 = 5
Land Management	LM Maj = 10	LM Min = 15	

NewMerino standards are designed to enable farmers to operate a merino growing enterprise in a fully responsible manner regarding both the welfare of the sheep and the land on which they graze.

Non-Conformance codes & corrective action

Below is a summary of non-conformance categories. Full details are provided in the standard.

Animal Welfare

NC-1 Non-conformances that are regarded as critical. Specifically, these will relate to practices such as mulesing, castration, tail docking, euthanasia.

Corrective action: NC 1 is not permitted. Wool cannot be drawn from farms where NC-1 have been identified.

NC-2 Non- conformances that are deemed to be not critical.

Corrective action: The goal of the standard is to have these corrected promptly, preferably within 30 days of the audit report. However, it is acknowledged that for practical reasons this may not always be possible. In such cases a time line should be agreed with the auditor. This time line should be within a maximum 12 months of the audit.

Wool may be drawn from farms with NC-2 initially, providing there is an undertaking to correct within the agreed timeframe.

NC-3 Usually relate to documentation, record keeping or infrastructure.

Corrective action: It is desirable that these should be corrected with 90 days of receiving the audit report.

While wool may be drawn from farms with **NC-3** initially, but farms with outstanding **NC-3** after 12 months will not be eligible to supply wool for a second time until they are corrected.

Land Management

Maj = Major Min = Minor

Maj Major non-conformances must be corrected prior to full certification.

Wool can be supplied from farms where a major non-conformance has been identified for initial period of 12 months providing that within 90 days of the audit a plan put in place to correct these non-conformances.

Min 50% of the Minor non-conformances shall be corrected in the first year of certification.

In subsequent years, minor non-conformances must be corrected at the rate of 10% each year until 90% rating has been achieved.

Management

Desired outcome: Farmers have a clear strategy and set of protocols to safeguard the welfare of sheep.

Clause	NC Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW1.1	NC1		Farmers are required to give full access to farm records and facilities including the opportunity for physical inspections of infrastructure, livestock and access to workers and including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>access to documents and records</i> - <i>permission to take photographs.</i> - <i>sheep to be made available for inspection if requested</i> 	
AW1.2	NC1		Farmers are required to operate within state and federal laws in relation to animal welfare, land and water management, bio-security and the protection of endangered flora and fauna.	
AW1.3	NC2		Farmers shall be knowledgeable of current best practice regarding animal welfare and land management in a sheep production enterprise in Australia (see link for general Australian guidelines and standards for sheep) http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/sheep/	
AW1.4	NC2		Staff should be trained and competent for the tasks they are asked to do, be aware of best practice and made aware of any required standards.	
AW1.5	NC2		Contractors coming on to the farm should be made aware of the standards required for the area in which they will be operating and/or the jobs they are required to do. Farmers should keep records of major tasks undertaken by contractors.	
AW1.6	NC3		Records of all key activities should be kept for a period of five years. - see list of suggested records in the appendix	

Nutrition

Desired outcome: Sheep have access to sufficient feed and water – suited to the animals’ age and needs – to maintain normal health and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW2.1	NC1	*	Sheep shall have access to sufficient feed and water to maintain health and prevent prolonged hunger and thirst resulting in malnutrition or dehydration.	
AW2.2	NC1	*	Watering points should be clean and maintained to provide good quality water and in sufficient volume to cater for all sheep in the paddock within a reasonable time frame.	
AW2.3	NC1	*	Stocking rates should be in accordance with the volume of feed and water available and should be measured in grazing days.	
AW2.4	NC1		Body condition of sheep should be regularly monitored and with attention during times of limited feed availability (dry times). The goal should be to have all sheep in (body score condition) BCS3. Where the condition of sheep appears to have fallen to BCS2, every effort should be made to increase feed availability, including supplementary feeding, and sheep should be monitored to ensure they have energy levels to maintain full mobility.	
AW2.5	NC1		The period sheep are deprived of feed and water for the purpose of shearing, transport or slaughter shall be a minimum of 8 hours but will not not exceed 24 hours. Note: Pregnant or lactating sheep or sheep or sheep in poor condition should not be deprived of food and water for more than eight hours.	
AW2.6	NC2		Changes in diet (eg grazing crops or supplementary feeding) should be introduces gradually.	
AW2.7	NC2		Hazardous materials shall not be stored near feed storage areas	
AW2.8	NC2		Routine checks should be conducted regularly to ensure feed and water quality and quantity are maintained.	
AW2.9	NC2		In exceptional circumstances (extreme weather events) measures shall be taken to ensure adequate feed and water are available to sheep.	

* In some international standards this clause is regarded as an NC2

Infrastructure

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

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW3.1	NC2	*	All sheep shall have access to adequate shade and shelter to protect them from adverse weather conditions. In making this assessment, the auditor need to keep in mind the topography of the region and the different forms of shade and shelter that may be available.	
AW3.2	NC2	* See Note 1	Shearing sheds, yards should be designed, constructed and maintained to minimise stress and the potential for injury of both livestock and workers during sheep handling operations Specifically, they should be free of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharp protrusions in sheep yards and sheds • flooring and ramps should have good traction and • holes, broken or weak flooring 	
AW3.3	NC3		Fencing to be maintained in good repair not only to be effective as a barrier but also to minimise injury to animals and workers.	
AW3.4	NC3	**	Chemical storage: Veterinary chemicals, herbicides and pesticides should be stored in accordance with state laws and Codes of Practice	

* Some standards regard this as an NC3 ** Not included in some standards

Note 1: This requirement needs to acknowledge the age and poor design of many old shearing sheds and the cost of redesigning/replacing them. They must however be rendered safe for both animals and workers.

Health

Desired outcome: The farmer demonstrates a good understanding and a proactive approach to ensure the health of the sheep is maintained through all stages of life. Sheep are free from pain, injury or disease through prevention, rapid diagnosis, and treatment.

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW4.1	NC1		A record of all drenches, vaccines etc used or planned to be used should be kept?	
AW4.2	NC1		Routine inspections should be conducted to monitor signs of disease or production disorders. The frequency of inspections should be relative to the risk eg - Flystrike - Lambing - Drought	
AW4.3	NC1		Sheep found to be suffering from serious health problems shall be treated promptly. Animals that are judged not to recover should be euthanized humanely and promptly using an approved method. <i>See section titled euthanasia.</i>	
AW4.4	NC1	*	Suitable measures shall be taken for the prevention and /or control of internal and external parasites such as gastro-intestinal worms, lice, flystrike etc. Attention should be paid to the potential for the development of resistant parasites.	
AW4.5	NC1	*	Sheep shall be monitoring for lameness.	
AW4.6	NC2		All treatments shall be appropriately administered and in accordance with manufacturers dosage recommendations unless specifically recommended by a veterinarian	
AW4.7	NC2		Good hygiene to be practiced in relation to facilities, personnel, handling and instruments.	
AW4.8	NC3		Mortality records to be kept and monitored for abnormal trends.	

* Some standards regard this as an NC2

Animal Husbandry Procedures

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW4.9	NC1		Animal husbandry procedures must be supervised or carried out by a competent stockperson using well maintained equipment designed for the purpose.	
AW4.10	NC1	Note 1	<p>Tail docking</p> <p>Tail docking must be carried out between the age of seven days and 10 weeks. Approved methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cauterising (hot knife) • Rubber rings <p>Tails should be docked at a length to cover the vulva and equivalent length in ram lambs (one palpable joint left free).</p>	
AW4.11	NC1	Note 2	<p>Castration</p> <p>Procedure must be carried out between the age of seven days and 10 weeks.</p> <p>Approved method: Application of a rubber ring</p>	
AW4.12	NC1		<p>Dehorning</p> <p>Dehorning and disbudding is prohibited.</p> <p>Horn trimming to prevent horn growing into the face is permitted.</p> <p>Substantial horn trimming to be performed by a vet using anaesthesia.</p>	
AW4.13	NC1		<p>Mulesing</p> <p>Mulesing is not permitted. Parallel production is not allowed. All wool from farms that have ceased mulesing will be accepted providing the following AWEX clause applies <i>“No lamb born on this property in the last 12 months has been mulesed”.</i></p> <p>Mulesed Sheep that have been purchased do not qualify under CM status</p>	
AW4.14	NC2	Note 3	<p>Identification markings methods must be in accordance with legislation and best practice.</p> <p>Methods approved;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tags • Ear marking (notching) only if it is a legal requirement <p>Hot branding and horn branding are not allowed unless it is legal requirement of the state</p>	

Shearing

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW4.15	NC1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheep should be shedded for a minimum of 8 hours prior to shearing, or a period mutually agreed with the contractor. • Sheep should not be denied food and water in excess of 24 hours. • Shearing shall be performed by – or under the direct supervision of a competent shearer, using techniques and equipment designed to minimise animal stress and injury. • It is desirable that all shearers have been trained by attending an approved shearing course. • Low stress handling; sheep must be handled calmly and confidently to minimise stress • Particular attention must be taken to avoid cuts or injuries to the sheep. • Shearing ‘Shearing Contractors Code of Conduct’ to be displayed in the shearing shed where all members of the team can gain access to it. • A copy of the <i>NewMerino</i> “Shearing Contractors Code of Conduct” is to be signed by the contractor. <p>Note: The <i>NewMerino</i> Shearing Contractors Code of Conduct is an integral component of this standard. It places the responsibility with the contractor to ensure that each shearer is fully aware of his individual welfare responsibilities.</p>	
AW4.16	NC2		<p>All shearing injuries must be attended to promptly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of severe cuts or injury the shearer will cease shearing immediately and treat the injury. • Pain relief shall be applied when available • A record of injuries should be kept 	

Euthanasia

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW4.17	NC1		<p>Sheep shall be euthanized without delay if they are experiencing severe pain or illness and do not have a reasonable expectation of improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workers shall have a clear set of criteria to recognise when an animal needs to be euthanized, and be instructed to act accordingly. • Euthanasia shall be carried out by a method which is quick and causes minimal stress and pain and results in rapid loss of consciousness followed by death without regaining consciousness. • Stunning (using a rifle or captive bolt) prior to killing is required. Stunning may only be ignored in cases where the animal is in severe pain and finding access to tools for stunning would prolong the suffering. 	

On-Farm Slaughter

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW4.18	NC1		<p>When an animal is slaughtered on-farm it shall be carried out by a method which is quick and causes minimal stress and pain and results in rapid loss of consciousness followed by death without regaining consciousness.</p> <p>Slaughter shall be carried out by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A trained and competent person • Licenced slaughterman • A veterinary surgeon <p>Acceptable methods for sheep;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firearm • Captive bolt followed immediately by a second method to ensure death. see appendix for further details on captive bolt. <p>Spinal cord should not be severed or broken until after confirmation of death through observation of pupils, heart beat and lack of respiration.</p> <p>Sheep shall be slaughtered away from the sight of other animals except in unavoidable circumstances.</p>	

Breeding, Pregnancy and Lambing

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW4.19	NC1		<p>Artificial breeding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cervical artificial insemination and pregnancy diagnosis to be carried out by trained people using competent techniques. • Electro ejaculation is prohibited • Laparoscopic artificial insemination to be performed by veterinarians or trained and competent people under supervision of a veterinarian. • Appropriate pain relief shall be used. 	
AW4.20	NC2		Breeding strategy to address welfare traits and suitability of the environment in which they will be raised.	
AW4.21	NC2		<p>Lambing to be supervised with minimal disturbance.</p> <p>In extensive systems where supervision is not practical breeds suited to easy births and good maternal care should be chosen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers to be trained to recognise lambing difficulties and how to provide appropriate assistance or seek additional help. • Ewes with a prolapse must be treated immediately using appropriate technique or euthanized. 	
AW4.22	NC2		Lambing should be planned to coincide with favourable climatic conditions.	
AW4.23	NC2		Practices and procedures for lamb feeding and fostering should be planned before lambing starts.	

Behaviour and Handling

Desired outcome: Good human-animal relationships are in place that allows the sheep to be in a positive emotional state and express natural behaviour.

Sheep should always be handled with the goal of minimising stress for both humans and animals.

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
AW5.1	NC1		Any form of mistreatment or rough handling is unacceptable - Kicking, striking, throwing, pulling by ears, tail, fleece dragging head, neck or by back legs is prohibited. Special care should be taken with young lambs and pregnant ewes. Electric prodders are not permitted.	
AW5.2	NC1		Long term confinement in crates or by tethering are permitted only for minimum time for the provision of medical care.	
AW5.3	NC1		Moving sheep on foot: Sheep should be driven in calm manner at a relaxed pace that is natural to the animal, and not faster than the pace of the slowest animal. Sick, injured, severely lame or heavily pregnant to me moved only when necessary and only at a pace to suit their condition.	
AW5.4	NC1		Transport of sheep must be in accordance with state laws and guidelines.	
AW5.5	NC2		Care to be taken when introducing rams to a new group, monitoring for sign of aggression.	
AW5.6	NC2		Isolation of individual animals to be minimised. Use companion animal unless quarantine is required. Visible contact with other sheep wherever possible.	
AW5.7	NC2		Stock persons must have good control of dogs working sheep. Dogs which have a tendency to bite must be muzzled while working sheep. Dogs must be prevented from forcing sheep too quickly, or to continue to force sheep when they have nowhere to go.	
AW5.8	NC2		Continuous confinement of any animal is prohibited. All animals must receive adequate nutrition, shelter and attention to ensure their good health and comfort.	
AW5.9	NC3		Records to be kept of deaths or injuries associated with transport of their sheep. Action to be taken to address high rates.	

Land Management

MAJ = Major non-conformance. All requirements must be met to achieve certification.

MIN = Minor non-conformance. 50% of minor requirements shall be met in first year. In subsequent years an improvement of 10% must be achieved until 90% or above is attained.

Soil

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

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
LM1.1	MAJ		Soil shall not be degraded by overgrazing and/or other management strategies.	
LM1.2	MAJ		Soil compaction shall be monitored and managed.	
LM1.3	MAJ		Soil erosion shall be monitored and managed.	
LM1.4	MAJ		Hazardous materials shall not be disposed of on farmland unless it is specifically allowed by law and will not affect land for grazing	
LM1.5	MIN		Soil organic matter shall be monitored and managed.	
LM1.6	MIN		Farmers shall monitor key indicators of land health.	

Biodiversity

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

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
LM2.1	MAJ		Sensitive and high conservation value areas and wildlife species on the property shall be monitored and managed.	
LM2.2	MAJ		Lethal control of feral animals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be minimised and done humanely • Targeted at the specific animal (species) that is/are in conflict • Shall result in instantaneous unconsciousness and death. • Use of poisons for lethal control is permitted providing it is done in full compliance of state laws and codes of practice. 	
LM2.3	MAJ		Deforestation for conversion to agricultural land is prohibited	
LM2.4	MAJ		Hunting, fishing, or gathering of rare, threatened or endangered plant or animal species is prohibited unless under a formal regeneration program.	
LM2.5	MIN		Forage resources shall be monitored and managed. Steps shall be taken to prevent or minimise degradation of forage resources especially native range lands and perennial cover and to restore degraded areas.	
LM2.6	MIN		The farmer shall monitor and manage the infestation of unwanted exotic or invasive plants.	
LM2.7	MIN		Farmers to monitor the population of predators and wildlife (birds, mammals and reptiles) on the farm and apply livestock husbandry practices that maintain biodiversity.	

Fertilizers

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

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
LM3.1	MAJ		There shall be a fertilizer management strategy that should be reviewed annually.	
LM3.2	MIN		Farmers shall test and record soil nutrient levels, at intervals relevant to maintaining a healthy vibrant soil.	
LM3.3	MIN		Fertilizers shall be appropriate to the specific situation. A focus on minimising side effects especially to soil microbial life.	

Pesticides

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

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
LM4.1	MIN		Farmers shall have a monitoring program for crop, pastures and parasites.	
LM4.2	MIN		Biological, physical and cultural control methods shall be used over chemical methods if they provide satisfactory control.	
LM4.3	MIN		Pesticides shall be appropriate to the specific situation as possible with minimal side effects.	
LM4.4	MIN		Farmers shall use the minimum amount of pesticides to achieve adequate control of the pest burden on their farm. - Pre-emptive use of pesticides is prohibited.	
LM4.5	MIN		Measures shall be in place to limit the impact of pesticide use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers shall take care to avoid damage to beneficial organisms • Risks from pesticide application to human and animal health or the environment shall be minimised • Systems shall be in place to ensure that pesticides reach all targeted areas and to minimise loss to non-targeted areas or to the atmosphere. 	
LM4.6	MIN		Actions shall be taken to avoid pesticide resistance	
LM4.7	MIN		Application record shall be kept for all pesticides used.	

Shearing facilities for workers

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
WHS 1.0	NC2		Adequate washing and toilet facilities must be made available for shearers and shed hands	
WHS 1.2	NC2		An eating area should be set aside for workers lunch and smoko	
WHS 1.3	NC2		If shears are staying on farm during shearing, appropriate cooking, eating and sleeping and bathroom facilities must be made available and maintained in a clean and safe operating condition	

Working animals

Clause	Level	<i>m</i>	Standard	Pass or NC
WHS 1.0	NC2		General principal: The principal of the Five Freedoms applies to working animals as well as animals bred for wool or meat production.	
WHS 1.2	NC2		Dogs should be housed in cages rather than on chains and have access to water, shade and shelter at all time when not working.	
WHS 1.3	NC2		Horses should have access to clean drinking water and the ability to graze at will if not working.	