

SFA Statement on Animal Welfare

The SFA believes that all animals, domestic and wild, should be treated with kindness, compassion and respect.

Cashmere can, *and should*, be produced in a way that meets high animal welfare standards while minimising its environmental impact and ensuring the long-term security of herder livelihoods.

The well-being of cashmere goats is fundamental to the sustainability of cashmere production and represents a core pillar of our work. As with any livestock production system, there are challenges in achieving the five freedoms of animal welfare and the challenges faced in Mongolia are different to those faced in China. Our aim is to promote the adoption of practices that prevent suffering and minimise discomfort.

How the SFA ensures the welfare of goats

- We ensure the ethical treatment of cashmere goats through our **Animal Husbandry and Cashmere Fibre Harvesting Code of Practice**. This code of practice was developed via an extensive consultation process and is based on ten criteria that link directly to the ‘five freedoms’ of animal welfare. These freedoms are globally recognised and encompass both the mental and physical well-being of animals.
- We have a robust assurance process involving independent assessment to ensure high welfare standards. To become SFA Certified, herders must demonstrate that their goats are healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, are not suffering from pain, fear of distress and are able to express behaviors that are important for its physical and mental state. They must also take appropriate measures for disease prevention, veterinary care and humane handling for end of life.
- Herder Organisations that meet the minimum criteria of our code of practice are certified at bronze, silver or gold level. We then use feedback from assessment reports to work with herders, helping to improve compliance and encouraging continuous improvement toward best practice.

Mongolia Context

Our current code of practice on Animal Husbandry and Cashmere Fibre Harvesting was developed for the Mongolian context of semi-nomadic pastoralism, where goats are grazed extensively on shared rangelands and herders move periodically throughout the year. In Mongolia, the traditional nomadic herding system is at the opposite end of the scale from intensive farming systems and is more akin to the ways natural ecosystems function. Herds are grazed on large, open areas of rangeland that are typically remote and shared by wildlife. Herders are extremely attentive to the health and welfare of their livestock. Not

only is it in their financial interest to maintain the health of their herd, but herders have a level of care and connection with their land and animals far beyond what many in the west would perceive as the accepted model of animal welfare. Good animal husbandry is vital to the resilience of these herding communities, and therefore the long-term viability of the cashmere industry.

China Context

In 2021 the SFA will expand the SFA Cashmere Standard into Inner Mongolia, a major cashmere-producing region of China. Mongolia and Inner Mongolia share a cultural history; however, cashmere production in the latter is now primarily farming based. With goats being kept in fenced pastures and barns, farmed cashmere presents different welfare challenges relative to the nomadic grazing system in Mongolia. Thus, we are currently developing a new code of practice in collaboration with ICCAW (the International Cooperation Committee on Animal Welfare) that is appropriate to the farming context and will help raise welfare standards across Inner Mongolia.