



SUSTAINABLE FIBRE ALLIANCE

C001 Animal Husbandry and Cashmere Fibre Harvesting Code of Practice







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INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the SFA developed the world's first holistic sustainability standard for cashmere – The SFA Cashmere Standard. At its heart are our codes of practice, which outline best practice requirements that must be followed in order for producers to become SFA-Certified.

We help producers to comply with the requirements of our codes of practice through training and capacity building and our credible assurance process involves independent assessment. The SFA Cashmere Standard is based on extensive research and consultation with herder cooperatives, national government, industry experts and conservationists.

Following ISEAL best practice guidelines, the codes of practice are refined and improved through a process of ongoing development, monitoring and evaluation. The SFA Cashmere Standard can be used by other groups, delivery partners and programmes to promote best practice in land management, animal welfare, fibre processing and supply chain transparency.

The Animal Husbandry CoP addresses the five freedoms of animal welfare in the context of cashmere production. The Code of Practice includes requirements relating to food and water, living environment, health, herd management, kidding and kid management, combing and shearing, handling and transport as well as end of life and risk management plans.

Note:

Where the Code of Practice uses the word 'must' there is a minimum requirement for an individual herder family or herder cooperative being able to demonstrate compliance with best practice.

Where the Code of Practice uses the word 'should' an individual herder family or herder cooperative is working towards achieving best practice.



Accreditation standards:



Bronze status

Producer organisations that have completed an external assessment in the Animal Husbandry and Cashmere Harvesting Code of Practice and have demonstrated compliance with the minimum criteria are awarded Bronze status.



Silver status

Producer organisations that have completed an external assessment in the Animal Husbandry and Cashmere Harvesting Code of Practice and have demonstrated compliance with the minimum requirements plus some, but not all other requirements are awarded Silver status. Organisations awarded Silver status will undergo an annual external assessment and must improve on at least one criterion each year to retain Silver status.



Gold status

Producer organisations that have completed an external assessment in the Animal Husbandry and Cashmere Harvesting Code of Practice and have demonstrated compliance with all the criteria are awarded Gold status. Organisations awarded Gold status will undergo an annual external assessment every two years.

Indicator

1 Food and Water

1.1. The rangeland environment must provide access to sufficient, fresh, clean water at all times.

1.2. Herders must ensure that goats have access to a diet that is adequate to maintain their full health and vigour.

1.3. When away from grazing ranges, forages must be provided at different heights so that goats can choose to browse/feed with their heads up.

1.4. Access to water bowls and troughs must be such as to avoid fouling and minimise the risk of water freezing in cold weather.

1.5. Water bowls and troughs should be kept thoroughly clean and be checked regularly.

1.6. Attention must be paid to ensuring that goats unable to range freely (those that are tethered or enclosed by fences or housing) have good access to sufficient trough or feeding points for food and water to avoid undue competition.

1.7. Where goats have been brought inside, feed must be palatable and be placed in suitable racks or containers.

1.8. Stale and fouled food must be removed from feed racks or containers.

1.9. Hay racks and nets must be properly positioned and designed to avoid the risk of injury, in particular to the eyes of all types of goats.

1.10. Hay nets should not be used for young kids and horned goats as there are dangers of them becoming entangled.

1.11. Pregnant and nursing females must be treated as a priority and receive sufficient food to maintain their health and bodily condition and ensure the development of healthy kids. This is particularly important during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy.



2 Living Environment

2.1 When choosing locations to set seasonal camps, herders must consider; the types of plants, exposure to sunlight, speed of wind and amount of snowfall.

2.2 Herders must identify camps to be conserved (left livestock-free) when seasons change.

2.3 When bringing livestock into enclosures herders must ensure that fittings, fastenings and internal surfaces of all buildings and equipment to which goats have access do not have sharp edges or projections.

2.4 All equipment used to manage livestock that comes into contact with goats, must be kept clean, be inspected regularly and kept in good working order.

2.5 Goats are very inquisitive, and all gate/door fastenings must be goat-proof.

2.6 Where goats are brought undercover, homestead floors must be maintained to avoid discomfort, distress or injury to the goats.

2.7 When goats are housed indoors, adequate ventilation should be provided at all times.

2.8 When herders construct fences, they must use natural materials such as timber poles and boards.

2.9 Fences and sheds must never be painted or treated with products that could be toxic to goats.

2.10 Mobile fences must be sufficiently robust to provide security and effectively manage livestock while they are enclosed in camps.

2.11 Where fencing is used it should be strong enough and of sufficient height (at least 1.2m) to prevent escape.

2.12 Fencing should be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid the risk of injury.

2.13 Where there is an identified risk from predators, action must be taken to reduce the risk of injury e.g. use of fences, removal of carcasses etc.

2.14 Grazing should include a variety of plants to ensure an adequate intake of roughage and minerals.

2.15 During seasonal rotation, care must be taken to avoid access to poisonous shrubs, trees and plants within grazing areas.

Indicator

3 Health

3.1 Herders must be able to identify the normal behaviour of goats and recognise the first signs of goats being unwell taking the most appropriate action and seeking advice as required.

3.2 Herders must inspect their livestock regularly, with particular attention to the feet and parasitic infections of the skin.

3.3 Herders should be able to safeguard goat health by the appropriate use of preventive measures.

3.4 Herders must ensure that, as a minimum, goats are managed in compliance with Mongolian laws relating to the health and management of livestock.

Indicator

4 Managing Goat Herds

4.1 During the breeding season immature and non-breeding goats, together with kids, must be kept separately from the breeding herd.

4.2 Herders should be aware of the specific problems of lactating goats and the ways in which these problems can be avoided or alleviated.

4.3 Castration, if necessary, must be carried out by a trained herder.

4.4 Castration of kids must be carried out at no later than two months old.

4.5 Good hygiene practice must be followed when castration is carried out.

4.6 Pain relief should be used when castration is carried out.



5 Kidding and Kid Management

5.1 When close to birthing, herders should aim to place pregnant does within the herd to ensure warmth for the newly born kid and bonding with the herd.

5.2 If necessary, herders should provide some form of safe supplementary heating for kids, particularly during the early days of life.

5.3 Every newly born kid must receive colostrum from its dam or other source as soon as possible and in any case within 6 hours of birth.

5.4 Adequate supplies of colostrum should be stored for emergencies wherever practicable.

5.5 Every effort should be made to prevent the build-up and spread of infection by ensuring that kidding areas are provided with adequate clean bedding and are regularly cleansed and disinfected.

5.6 Kidding pens should be within sight and sound of other goats.

5.7 Any dead kids should be removed without delay.

5.8 Herders must be sufficiently familiar with problems arising at kidding to know when to summon help.

5.9 Herders must have a plan of management for orphan or excess kids.

5.10 Attention should be paid to cleanliness and hygiene when artificially rearing kids.

5.11 Young kids must always have access to milk or milk substitutes or be fed at least two times each day.

5.12 Fresh fibrous food must be available to kids once they are one week old.

Indicator
6 Combing and Shearing
6.1 Goats should be combed rather than shorn.
6.2 When combing and shearing, care should be taken not to nick or cut the skin.
6.3 Where a wound does occur, appropriate treatment must be given.
6.4 Unless housed, goats must only be combed or shorn in suitable weather conditions.
6.5 Protection by housing or by the use of a coat must be provided if inclement weather occurs after shearing.

Indicator
7 Handling and Transport
7.1 Goats must be handled calmly at all times.
7.2 Heavily pregnant females must be handled with care to avoid distress and injury, which may result in premature kidding.
7.3 Kids must never be tethered.
7.4 Where tethers are used for adult goats, herders must ensure that they are designed and maintained so as not to cause distress or injury.
7.5 If goats are transported by vehicle, goats should be appropriately loaded to reduce the risk of excessive movement or overcrowding resulting in injury.

Indicator
8 Euthanasia and Slaughter
8.1 Any person carrying out euthanasia or slaughter must be competent to do so.
8.2 In cases where animals are kept off pasture for long periods prior to slaughter, feed and water must be provided.
8.3 Where kids and goats are not required for fibre production or breeding purposes they should be treated humanely prior to slaughter.
8.4 Herders must remove any euthanized goat promptly and dispose of the carcass hygienically.
8.5 Goats should be stunned using captive bolt (or electric stun where this was available) rather than blunt force trauma prior to slaughter.

Indicator
9 Preparedness Plans
9.1 Herders must have Preparedness Plans for winter for dealing with emergencies such as extreme weather, flood, fire or disruption of supplies.
9.2 The Preparedness Plan should include measures to ensure that herders are familiar with the appropriate action to: Minimise animal stress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sufficient grazing and watering opportunities • Ensure effective health and safety in the management of goats • Ensure best practice in handling and the harvesting of cashmere fibres.



10 Management and Compliance

10.1 Herding families that raise cashmere goats in common pasture areas are formed into cooperatives. The Pasture User Groups and all their members must have responsibility for implementing the AHCFH Code of Practice in the common areas of land.

10.2 A continuous education and training program for herders to develop knowledge and skills for good animal welfare practices is the method for ensuring that the code of practice is disseminated to individual herding families and cooperatives. Herders who receive training will be provided with a skills passport that must be regularly updated and maintained.

10.3 Herder cooperatives must comply with all applicable regional legislation on animal health and welfare.

10.4 To aid traceability of fibre each herding family or herding cooperative that meets the requirements of the Code of Practice will be issued with an SFA registration number. This must be used at all time to identify fibres traded from SFA registered herders.

10.5 Each herding cooperative shall be assessed and monitored for implementation of the AHCFH Code of Practice through audits (Second Party and Third-party auditors) and must provide full access to all sites including private interviews with the herders involved and provide a random sample of goats to audit.

10.6 Herders must follow the animal welfare requirements of the SFA (See sections 1-6 of this document) and demonstrate that the requirements of animal welfare regulations are being met. If required, evidence must be provided during an audit. (Herders will be deemed to have read and understood the code of practice.)

10.7 Herders must keep documentation showing the movement of fibres from place to place. This is to be maintained onsite and available for review by the auditors.

10.8 Herder cooperatives and herding families must be committed to continuous improvement and implement all corrective action items found during the audit process in a mutually agreed upon timeframe.



SFA Herder Competency Requirements

Overview

These competency requirements cover maintaining the health and welfare of animals. It includes monitoring the animals' physical condition and behaviour, carrying out measures to promote health and welfare and reporting any concerns or unexpected changes. Herders will need to be aware of their own limitations and ensure that they are able to meet the legal responsibilities for duty of care under any animal health and welfare legislation that exist in their country.

Maintain the health and welfare of animals

Performance criteria

As a herder you must be able to:

P1

carry out all work following appropriate Instructions

P2

carry out all work in accordance with relevant environmental, health and safety requirements, codes of practice and other processes

P3

maintain appropriate levels of hygiene and bio-security in accordance with rangeland practices

P4

maintain the health and welfare of the animals and reduce the risk of stress and injury

P5

monitor animals' physical condition and behaviour

P6

monitor environmental conditions (including fences) and adjust if necessary

P7

ensure animals are provided with the appropriate feed and water, and monitor their intake

P8

ensure animals are able to maintain their own physical condition and appearance (including exercise)

P9

seek assistance immediately for any animal health emergency and initiate action appropriate to the situation

P10

keep accurate and up-to-date records as required by relevant legislation and the herder co- operative

Maintain the health and welfare of animals

Knowledge and understanding

As a herder you must be able to:

K1

the fact that animals are sentient and have the capacity to suffer and feel pain

K2

the importance of carrying out activities in accordance with appropriate Instructions

K3

your responsibilities under relevant environmental, health and safety requirements, codes of practice and other processes

K4

the importance of maintaining appropriate levels of hygiene and bio-security in a rangeland environment and how this can be achieved

K5

your responsibilities in managing the welfare of the animals and reducing the risk of stress and injury

K6

the purpose for which the animals are kept and how this may affect their husbandry

K7

the difference between animal health and animal welfare

K8

how to assess the welfare needs of the animal in your care and how they can be maintained

K9

signs that indicate potential problems with animals' health and welfare, and the actions that should be taken

K10

the accommodation requirements for the animals

K11

the animals' requirements for feed and water (including cleaning and feeding routines)

K12

how the environmental conditions can impact on the health and welfare of the animals

K13

how animals maintain their own physical condition and appearance

K14

how to recognise a health emergency in an animal and the correct actions to take

K15

the limits of your responsibility and ability in relation to health problems in animals

K16

the importance of maintaining complete and accurate records, as required by relevant legislation and the herder



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SUSTAINABLE FIBER ALLIANCE
Creating the Sustainable Cashmere Value Chain Worldwide

info@sustainablefibre.org