

SUSTAINABLE CASHMERE STANDARD

A. Preamble

Introduction

The Preamble contains the following sections:

1. About the SFA
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1. About the SFA

The SFA is a non-profit, standard holding and capacity building organisation. Founded in 2015, we represent a global alliance of supply chain actors, stakeholders and industry experts and have offices in both the UK and Mongolia. We work with the end-to-end cashmere supply chain, connecting livestock herders to brands and retailers in the global fashion industry.

Our vision is a future where cashmere is produced in a way that minimises environmental impact, safeguards herder livelihoods and meets high welfare standards.

Our mission is to ensure the long-term viability of the cashmere sector by promoting the Sustainable Cashmere Standard.

2. Sustainable Cashmere Standard (SCS) Principles and Criteria

SFA first published codes of practice for rangeland stewardship, animal husbandry, and clean fibre processing. The focus for each of these is on continuous improvement with certification at three award levels to reflect compliance.

In 2021 these were consolidated into the Sustainable Cashmere Standard, a performance-based, outcome-oriented worldwide standard. The Principles and Criteria focus on the production of cashmere in a way that is measurably better for animals, the environment, and herding communities.

The SCS Principles are the essential rules or elements of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable cashmere production, and the Criteria provide the means of judging whether or not a Principle has been fulfilled.

3. Scope

The Principles and Criteria cover the most significant global issues associated with cashmere production and explain the intended outcomes achieved through their adoption. The Sustainable Cashmere Standard (SCS) covers cashmere production and first stage processing.

The Principles & Criteria can be applied at a global level. Evaluation and certification of producers and processors against the global cashmere standard must use an additional approved set of indicators adapted to national, regional or local conditions.

The SFA distinguishes between different types of cashmere production systems in recognition of the differences in the location, production methods and workforces they use. The 'Producer' is the term chosen to define the unit of licensing and can be either an individual SCS herder, a Producer Organisation (PO) (a group of herder households), or a large farm. The 'Processor' is the term chosen to define organisations engaged in first stage processing.

4. Scale, Intensity and Risk

The Principles and Criteria are generally independent of spatial scale and intensity of producer or processor activities. All licenced units must comply with all Principles and Criteria. Also, the Principles and Criteria recognize that ways of achieving compliance with the Principles and Criteria may differ depending on the scale and intensity of the licenced unit's activities, and on the risk of negative impacts related to the producer, processor or their activities.

Depending on scale, intensity and risk, the actions required to comply with the Principles and Criteria may vary from one licenced unit to another. The concept of scale, intensity and risk applies to almost all Criteria. Explicit reference is included in specific Criteria where it is known from experience that a level of flexibility arising from scale, intensity and risk is required to achieve compliance across the range of potentially certifiable producer or processor types, and related management systems. However, there are also requirements, for example, those requiring compliance with laws that are not liable to adjustments to scale, intensity and risk. Further details concerning the interpretation of scale, intensity and risk, including the types and limits of flexibility, are provided in the evaluation indicators.

5. Responsibility for Compliance

As a performance-based standard, the SCS Principles and Criteria are explicit about defining where responsibility lies. Responsibility for ensuring compliance with the SCS Principles and Criteria lies with the person(s) or entities that is/are the certificate applicant or holder. For the purpose of SCS certification these person(s) or entities are referred to as 'The Producer' or 'The Processor'. The Producer or The Processor is responsible for decisions, policies and management activities related to the Licenced Unit. The Producer or The Processor is also responsible for demonstrating that other persons or entities that are permitted or contracted by The Producer or The Processor to operate in, or for the benefit of the Licenced Unit, comply with the requirements of the SCS Principles and Criteria. Accordingly, The Producer or The Processor is required to take corrective actions in the event of such persons or entities not being in compliance with the Principles and Criteria.

6. Basis for certification

SFA does not insist on perfection in satisfying the SCS Principles and Criteria. Unforeseen changes in cultural, ecological, economic and social environments may cause occasional failures in performance. As the Principles and Criteria are main

components of a performance-based standard, certification decisions are guided by the following:

- The extent to which management activities satisfy each SCS Criterion as demonstrated by the achievement of a range of evaluation indicators.
 - The importance and/or consequences of failing to satisfy each SCS Criterion.
- Failures in performance detected by SFA in evaluations may result in minor or major Corrective Action Requests (CARs), depending on the severity of the nonconformity.

7. Evaluation Indicators

The evaluation indicators are used as the basis for certification. For all countries there is a common set of core indicators that specify how compliance with each criterion must be demonstrated. There are implementation regulations specific to individual countries that recognise the national context in which cashmere is produced.

In addition, there is a set of improvement indicators, which are not mandatory. These can be used to support the journey towards implementation of the standard. Taken together they describe how progress towards sustainable production and processing of cashmere may be achieved.

The evaluation indicators are in a separate document, ref xxxxxx.

8. Interpretations and Disputes

Questions of interpretation of the Principles and Criteria are addressed through procedures devised by SFA. When disputes arise between stakeholders concerning compliance or the interpretation of the Principles and Criteria and SCS, then the relevant SFA procedures for dispute resolution and interpretation shall apply.

This standard shall not be used for the evaluation and certification of the Sustainable Cashmere Standard without the additional use of an approved set of evaluation indicators adapted to national, regional or local conditions.

B. Sustainable Cashmere Standard Principles & Criteria

The Principles and Criteria of the Sustainable Cashmere Standard (SCS) lay out the definition of Sustainable Cashmere, by upholding the following six principles:

1. SCS Producers ensure the welfare of their goats
2. SCS Producers safeguard biodiversity and use land responsibly
3. SCS Producers preserve and enhance fibre quality
4. SCS Producers or Processors promote decent work
5. SCS Producers or Processors operate an effective management system
6. SCS Processors produce clean fibre.

Structure

The principle is an overarching statement which covers several themes. For each theme the desired outcome is described. What must be done to achieve each outcome is captured in a set of criteria.

Principles & Themes					
Goat Welfare	Biodiversity enhancement and land use	Fibre Quality	Decent work	Management	Fibre Processing
Feeding & drinking water	Rangeland management plan	Improving fibre quality	Hiring practices	Plans and Procedures	Health safety & Hygiene
The living environment	Soil	Fibre management	No Child Labour	Continuous Improvement	Human Resource Management
Goat health	Biodiversity & Water		Workign conditions and conduct	Training	Supply chain management
Fibre harvesting (Shearing & Combing)			Wages and Benefits	Data Management	Quality Management
Transport & Transfer			Communities		Environmental Management
			Health & Safety		The Raw Fibre Sorting process
					The Raw Fibre Scouring or De-Hairing Process
					The Fibre Sampling Process

The Criteria

Principle: Goat Welfare

C1.1 Feeding and drinking water

Desired outcome: All goats have access to sufficient forage and feed suited to their nutritional needs according to their breed, physiological stage and health condition so as to maintain health and prevent prolonged hunger, and access to water to prevent goats dehydrating.

- C1.1.1** Goats must have access to adequate nutrition and forage.
- C1.1.2** Goats must have access to sufficient, clean and fresh water.
- C1.1.3** Feeding equipment must be kept clean and uncontaminated.
- C1.1.4** Feeding equipment must not present a risk of injury to goats.
- C1.1.5** Goats must have daily access to long fibre.

C1.2 The living environment

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

- C1.2.1** Goats must have access to safe and comfortable shelter, housing or pens to protect from discomfort or injury.

C1.3 Goat Health

Desired outcome: Goats are managed and handled in way that avoids fear and distress and enables goats to express their normal behaviour, supports good health and prevents disease.

- C1.3.1** Goats must be handled humanely in a manner that is appropriate to the status of the animal and their specific needs.
- C1.3.2** Goats must be routinely monitored for signs of sickness, disease, injury or abnormal behaviour and immediate action taken when a problem is identified.
- C1.3.3** Animals must be handled following good hygiene practices and using suitable well-maintained equipment.
- C1.3.4** All other animals that are kept must be treated humanely.

C1.4 Fibre harvesting (shearing and combing)

Desired outcome: Fibre harvesting is conducted in a way that minimizes fear, distress, pain and injury.

- C1.4.1** The fibre harvesting method must be appropriate to the production setting.
- C1.4.2** Cashmere fibre must only be harvested when the fibre begins naturally to shed.

- C1.43** During fibre harvesting, discomfort to goats must be minimized and injuries avoided or prevented.

C1.5 Transport and transfer

Desired outcome: Goats are transported in a way that minimizes fear and stress and protects the welfare of goats.

- C1.6.1** All goats must be fit for transport.
C1.6.2 On journeys over 8 hours, goats must be provided water, feed, and rest.
C1.6.3 Handling and transportation must avoid distress and injury.

Principle: Biodiversity enhancement and land use

C2.1 Rangeland Management Plan

Desired outcome: Management of Rangelands to conserve and enhance biodiversity is planned.

- C2.1.1** A plan must be developed for conserving and enhances biodiversity on and around the rangeland area or the farm.

C2.2 Soil

Desired Outcome: Rangelands are managed to conserve and enhance soil health.

- C2.2.1** Land health must be monitored to minimise degradation by overgrazing.
C2.2.2 Hazardous materials must not be disposed of on the farmland unless specifically allowed by law and it is safe to use the affected land for grazing.

C2.3 Biodiversity and Water

Desired outcome: Rangelands are managed to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

- C 2.3.1** Forage resources must be monitored to protect the biodiversity of the rangeland or farm.
C 2.3.2 The Producer must not intentionally introduce any invasive alien species.
C 2.3.3 Hunting, fishing or gathering of protected, threatened or endemic plant or animal species is prohibited.
C 2.3.4 Lethal control of pests or predators must be minimized and done humanely.
C 2.3.5 Use of poison, leg hold traps, and snares are prohibited.
C 2.3.6 Lethal control is not permitted for protected, threatened, or endemic species.
C 2.3.7 Deforestation and the conversion of natural ecosystems to agricultural land is prohibited.
C 2.3.8 Natural wetlands must not be drained.

Principle: Fibre quality

C3.1 Improving fibre quality

Desired outcome: XXXXXX

- C 3.1.1 A breeding improvement plan must be developed and implemented.
- C 3.1.2 Breeding strategy must address welfare traits and suitability for the type of environment in which the goats are raised.

C3.2 Fibre management

Desired outcome:XXXXXXXX

- C 3.2.1 Good post-harvest management practices must be specified and enforced.

Principle: Decent work

C4.1 Hiring Practices

Desired outcome: There are good practices regarding fair hiring, which is free of discrimination and intimidation and directly combats risk factors for forced labour.

Note: Small scale herders with no employed staff where the herding work is mostly done by the herder, family members or the community only need to demonstrate compliance with C4.2, C4.5, C4.6.'

- C 4.1.1 The producer or processor must operate in accordance with local /national laws and ensure fair hiring practices.
- C 4.1.2 The farm must not engage in or support the use of forced or compulsory labour, including prison labour, as defined in ILO Convention 29.
- C 4.1.3 The farm must ensure all employees understand their contract of employment.

C4.2 No child labour

Desired outcome: Children are protected from exploitation, not engaged in dangerous work, and able to participate fully in formal education.

- C 4.2.1 Workers under the age of 18 must not be engaged in the worst forms of child labour or hazardous child labour, as defined in ILO Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 190.
- C 4.2.2 Children can safely learn farming from their family members by engaging in age-appropriate activities outside of school hours and lessons.

C4.3 Working Conditions and Conduct

Desired Outcome: Workers work in a respectful environment, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and abuse. Workers are enabled to speak out and have their concerns addressed in a clear, timely, and courteous manner.

- C 4.3.1** Discrimination, as defined in ILO Convention No. 111, is prohibited.
- C 4.3.2** Harassment, verbal abuse, or physical abuse of any kind at any time is prohibited.
- C 4.3.3** Corruption, extortion and/or bribery of workers or families are prohibited.

C4.4 Wages and Benefits

Desired outcome: Workers receive payment in a transparent and consistent manner that is non-discriminatory and provides for appropriate rest and leave for the worker.

- C 4.4.1** Workers must receive wages that comply with local legal minimum wages or collectively bargained wages, whichever is higher.
- C 4.4.2** Equal pay for equal work must be provided for all workers regardless of gender, work status, religion, political affiliation, nationality, or other factors.

C4.5 Communities

Desired outcome: Farm activities respect the rights of and have minimal negative impact on communities.

- C 4.5.1** Farms must acknowledge and adhere to legal rights of communities regarding sites, land, and other resources.
- C 4.5.2** Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) must be obtained for any activity that may affect the lands, territories, and resources that Indigenous Peoples customarily own, occupy or otherwise use.

C4.6 Health and Safety

Desired outcome: Workers work in facilities and environments that are safe and healthy.

- C 4.6.1** Potentially hazardous work situations must be clearly identified, and unnecessary risks eliminated.
- C 4.6.2** Machinery must have clear instructions on safe use, are maintained and stored to limit hazards.
- C 4.6.3** Appropriate PPE must be provided at no cost to the worker.
- C 4.6.4** Access to clean and potable water must be provided.
- C 4.6.5** Facilities for proper hygiene and comfort, must be available.

Principle: Management

C5.1 Plans and Procedures

Desired Outcome: Producers have a clear strategy and set of protocols to safeguard the welfare of their animals, and to demonstrate compliance to the relevant SCS. The integrity of certified material is maintained through to the final consumer.

- C 5.1.1** The Producer must comply with all applicable legislation on animal welfare and land management.
- C 5.1.2** There must be procedures in place to maintain goat welfare in exceptional circumstances.
- C 5.1.3** Producers must understand the requirements of SCS.
- C 5.1.4** Herders or Workers must be made aware of the parts of the SCS that are relevant to their role.
- C 5.1.5** All external workers that come onto the farm to perform work involving the goats shall be made aware of the relevant parts of the SCS.
- C 5.1.6** The Producer must give auditor full access to the farm and operations that fall under certification.
- C 5.1.7** The Producer must provide the certification body or their representatives with the information required to assess the status of compliance with SCS.
- C 5.1.8** The Producer must be SCS certified at the time the fibre is sold.
- C 5.1.9** The Producer must ensure that SCS fibre is kept separate from non-SCS fibre.

C5.2 Continuous Improvement

Desired outcome: an inclusive, efficient approach to more sustainable cashmere production through continuous improvement, with the potential to reach a large number of producers globally and enable transformational change.

- C 5.2.1** The Producer must monitor performance and progress against Core and Improvement Indicators through the collection of the SCS Results Indicators.
- C 5.2.2** Herders must apply learning to their activities to enable compliance with the core indicators and progress against improvement indicators.
- C 5.2.3** Non-compliance with SCS core indicators must be identified and corrective actions must be planned and enforced.

C5.3 Training

Desired outcome: Management indicators ensure that the workforce undergoes ongoing training, that noncompliance risks are identified and remediated.

- C 5.3.1** The workforce must be trained or experienced and competent in handling animals, and must possess and practice the ability, knowledge, and competence necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the animals.
- C 5.3.2** A training plan for the workforce must identify the key sustainability issues to be addressed.
- C 5.3.3** The workforce must participate in training on sustainability practices.

C5.4 Data management

Desired outcome: Management indicators ensure that progress against fibre production criteria is monitored and assessed, and that field-level data is accurately maintained and systematically reported.

- C 5.4.1** The Producer must collect and maintain accurate and complete data on the organisation in the format required by the SFA, which is updated annually.
- C 5.4.2** Records must be kept for a minimum of five years.

Principle: Fibre Processing

(Note: This Principle applies to Fibre Processors only)

C6.1 Health, Safety and Hygiene

Desired Outcome: Operational health, safety and hygiene policies and procedures that set out the general approach, commitment, and arrangements in place for managing safety and hygiene within the organisation.

- C 6.1.1** The Processor must appoint an employee to be responsible for labour safety, improved working conditions, implementation and monitoring of law and legislation.
- C 6.1.2** Clean, safe working conditions with access to sanitation facilities and access to adequate rest and food consumption facilities must be provided.
- C 6.1.3** Access to medical care must be provided including a first aid kit, health examinations and appropriate transportation to local medical facilities.
- C 6.1.4** Potentially hazardous work situations must be clearly identified, and unnecessary risks eliminated.
- C 6.1.5** A Chemical Management Systems (CMS) must be in place.

C 6.2 Human Resource Management

Desired Outcome: A sustainable Human Resource Management Strategy that fulfils business objectives and complies with regulations in relation to recruiting, employing, managing, and evaluating staff.

Note: these criteria are in addition to those under principle 4- Decent Work

- C 6.2.1** A human resource management strategy must be in place, that covers all labour law and legislation requirements.
- C 6.2.2** There must be an appointed employee responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Human Resource Management Strategy.

C 6.3 Supply Chain Management

Desired Outcome: A traceable, transparent, and sustainable cashmere fibre supply chain that's meet the Sustainable Fibre Alliance Chain of Custody guidelines.

- C 6.3.1** A Supply Chain Management system must be in place that supports sustainable business practice.
- C 6.3.2** Supply Chain Management processes and procedures must be followed in practice.

C 6.4 Quality Management

Desired Outcome: Quality control and approval systems, based on recognised quality standards in relation to the clean fibre process and the end product.

- C 6.4.1** There must be formal quality control assurance procedures for the clean fibre process.
- C 6.4.2** There must be clearly defined quality standards and standard operating procedures.
- C 6.4.3** There must be an appointed employee responsible for quality control and assurance.

C 6.5 Environmental Management

Desired Outcome: Sustainable business practice that implements environmental policy and manages, monitors, and evaluates environmental operations, impact, performance, and continuous improvement.

- C 6.5.1** There must be an Environmental Management System and Plan which reflects legislation and includes environmental targets.
- C 6.5.2** There must be an appointed employees responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Environmental Management Plan.
- C 6.5.3** Working practices that reflect efficient use of energy and water and waste control must be in place.
- C 6.5.4** Waste water must be either treated on site or there must be suitable arrangements for the treatment of waste water through a third party.

- C 6.5.5** The Environmental Management Plan must include instructions that restrict the use of Alkylphenol (AP) and Alkylphenol Ethoxylates (APEOs) to maximum permitted limits, including ensuring that any detergents used are certified as APEO free by the chemical manufacturer.

C 6.6 The Raw Fibre Sorting Process

Desired Outcome: Sustainable business practice in relation to the hand sorting and grading of raw/greasy animal fibre.

- C 6.6.1** Appropriate natural light must be provided
- C 6.6.2** Sorting operations must be standardised and efficient with performance targets in place.
- C 6.6.3** Appropriate waste segregation and disposal must be integrated into working practice.

C 6.7 The Raw Fibre Scouring or De-Hairing Process

Desired Outcome: Sustainable business practice in relation to organising, implementing, overseeing, and controlling the fibre processing.

- C 6.7.1** Scouring or De-hairing operations must be efficient with performance targets in place.
- C 6.7.2** Machines, equipment and conditions must be appropriate to requirements.
- C 6.7.3** The finished scoured product must be inspected against the required quality standard.
- C 6.7.4** Appropriate waste segregation and disposal must be integrated into working practice.
- C 6.7.5** The fibre must be labelled appropriately allowing traceability before being forwarded to the next process.

C 6.8 The Fibre Sampling Process

Desired Outcome: Sustainable business practice in relation to the analysis and evaluation of cashmere fibre samples.

- C 6.8.1** Testing facilities must have appropriate equipment, atmosphere, and conditions for accurate fibre analysis.
- C 6.8.2** Accurate identification, qualitative, and quantitative analysis of fibre and fibre blends must take place.
- C 6.8.3** Staff must be competent in fibre testing, analysis, and evaluation.

Glossary

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