



13 JULY 2023

# POSITION STATEMENT



SUSTAINABLE FIBRE ALLIANCE



As you may be aware, on July 11th a targeted campaign was released by a radical animal rights group attacking the cashmere industry, global brands, and certifying standards such as the Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA). In light of these targeted campaigns, the SFA have released the following statement.

The Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA) is a non-profit organisation that was established with an aim to support the production of cashmere whilst minimising environmental impacts, supporting the livelihood of herders and providing high animal welfare standards.

At the heart of our work is our aim to support herders with education and training in best practices for rangeland stewardship, animal husbandry and fibre harvesting. The SFA believes in building the capacity of herding communities to adopt responsible land management practices and meet high animal welfare standards, both of which are vital to securing resilient herding livelihoods.

The SFA is working to improve the sustainability of a global cashmere industry that supports the livelihoods of thousands of pastoral herder communities. We are currently working together with 190 herder communities in Mongolia to bring essential training and education, including animal welfare practices, across 17 provinces and 120 districts – encapsulating a third of all Mongolian herders. The cashmere industry is hugely important to the livelihoods of herding communities and contributes to over 80% of herder income. Cashmere is a natural fibre produced as a by-product from the winter down of goats. Nomadic herders have been raising cashmere goats along with other livestock species for many centuries, and natural fibre production is tightly linked with peoples' livelihoods and cultural heritage.

Since its conception in 2015, the SFA has implemented a variety of capacity building activities with herders and cashmere processors and have worked effectively towards developing long-term cooperation and partnership within the cashmere industry. Over time we have evolved our approach to animal welfare, shifting from the Five Freedoms to the Five Domains model to ensure that mental health and emotional needs are also considered alongside physical requirements. This approach focuses on overall well-being and promotes opportunities for positive experiences in environments that encourage the expression of natural behaviours.

As a registered charity and community member of ISEAL, the SFA aims to make a difference on the ground by continuously improving and developing our standard system. Since 2015, we have developed a global network of supply chain actors, from herders to retailers, as well as various stakeholders and industry experts, that have come together with a mission to ensure the long-term viability of the cashmere sector.

We remain steadfast in our commitment in increasing certified fibres on the market and continue to ensure high animal welfare, environmental impact and herder livelihoods remain our top priorities.

The SFA is continuously looking for ways to improve animal welfare standards. An updated SFA Cashmere Standard was published earlier this year and we will be looking to further improve and strengthen our standards in future iterations.

For more information on what being "SFA Certified" means, please see the [SFA Cashmere Standard section of our website](#). All "SFA Certified" herders must meet these requirements, as assessed by an independent third party.