

GUIDE TO CLIP PREPARATION

INTRODUCTION

This is the third edition of the “Falkland Islands Guide to Clip Preparation”. It was first published in October 1992 with the first review taken in 2005. The first edition was prepared by Colin Smith, Peter Marriott, the Department of Agriculture, Falkland farmers and shearers with information from Australian and New Zealand “Codes of practice for clip preparation”, wool exporters, merchants, brokers, classers, and processors.

The first review of the booklet was prompted by the introduction of an accredited owner classer scheme in the Falklands Islands wool industry. The implementation of this scheme demonstrates that wool preparation standards in the Falklands are equal to, or better than world’s best practice. This second review follows from critique from stencil holders and DoA staff concerning certain anomalies between the “Guide” and the QFW Checklist.

In the short term this may not equate to better wool returns but will ensure the Falklands is known world-wide for the production of a quality product that is accurately prepared and described.

The aim of this guide is to clarify the role of everyone involved in the shearing and wool preparation process. In addition the guide is a brief reference for the requirements of quality wool preparation. For more details on wool preparation, processing and characteristics of wool in general, refer to the “Falkland Islands Wool Classing Workshops Participants Handbook March/April 2005”.

If the recommendations contained in the “Falkland Islands Guide to Clip Preparation” are followed, the Islands clip will be consistently prepared to a world class standard that meets the needs of the processors and at the same time maximises possible wool returns to the farmer. All involved in the presentation, marketing and processing of the clip will benefit. The key issue in a quality assurance scheme is that wool in a bale is precisely the same as described on the bale and on the accompanying classers specification.

OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure that all involved in the Falkland Islands wool industry are aware of the minimum standards for wool preparation.
- Make all those working in the shearing shed aware of their basic responsibilities and what is expected from others in the shed.
- To provide both the buyer and manufacturer with parcels of wool they can handle confidently, knowing they are uniform and meet the standards required for processing into quality yarns and textiles.

PART 1: RESPONSIBILITIES

To achieve the objectives of this booklet, it is necessary that all involved in the preparation of a clip know what is expected of them and what they can expect of others.

Farmer's or Manager's Responsibilities

1. To ensure the safety and welfare of all personnel and all animals;
 - A First Aid kit is kept in the woolshed,
2. To make clear arrangements with the shearing contractor in respect to;
 - Wool handling requirements and number of shed staff needed,
 - Who is responsible for providing particular shed staff, (classer, shed hands, presser, penner up and shearers),
 - Full details of the classes and number of sheep to be shorn,
 - Contract shearing staff travel to and from the farm, washing facilities, board and lodgings.
3. To ensure that the shed is prepared for shearing, this means providing;
 - Working areas of sufficient size, that are tidy and clear of all contaminants,
 - Approved lighting installed in all wool handling and shearing areas in good working condition,
 - Adequate bins/containers **all clearly marked** and permanently for dags, urine stain, black wool, skin pieces and rubbish,
 - Sufficient approved packs, clips, branding inks and stencils,
 - Recording book,
 - Drafting pens and counting-out pens free of dust and mud,
 - RUBBISH BINS FOR ALL REFUSE CLEARLY MARKED,
 - Polypropylene string, cans, cigarette butts, clothing, bale hooks, wire tools and cleaning rags not left lying around the shed,
 - Articles or products not associated with shearing removed from the shed,
 - No cats are allowed in the shed, no dogs allowed in the woolhandling area.
4. To present the sheep in good order for continuous shearing. The sheep must be;
 - DRY – Damp or wet wool should not be shorn,
 - DRAFTED – Sheep should be drafted to separate; breeds (wool or meat), wool length due to time of previous shearing, black/coloured sheep. Black and coloured sheep should not be in the flock. Black and coloured sheep must be shorn last after all other shearing has been completed.
5. Discuss the wool handling requirements with the classers, rousies, table hands and presser. Everyone must ensure the wool is COMPLETELEY free of nonwool contamination. Nothing must go into a bale but wool: no dividers, paper, cigarette ends, clothing, nor string.
6. Provide the classer with full information at the start of shearing, including:
 1. Age and sex of sheep to be shorn,
 2. Number of various flocks and their order of shearing,
 3. Size of each flock,

4. Variations between flocks if any,
 5. Previous seasons specifications and test results.
7. Ensure all wool bales are presented using approved materials and identification marks.
 8. Complete and sign with the classer a clearly worded classer specification immediately shearing is completed, or as the agent or merchant requests. Any specific lotting, testing or selling instructions should be included.

Contractor's Responsibilities

1. To arrange and provide:
 - The agreed number of competent shearers,
 - The agreed number of competent wool handlers and rousies,
2. To ensure:
 - Key wool handling personnel do not change during the shearing and that a consistent standard of staff is maintained,
 - Liaise with the farmer or manager at all times.

Shearer's Responsibilities

1. Ensure shearing equipment is clean,
2. Avoid injury and minimise stress to the sheep,
3. Avoid second cutting and prevent contamination of wool,
4. Remove the complete fleece from each sheep,
5. Separate the belly wool from the fleece,
6. If unable to remove black spots, make the rousie aware of the black wool/spots in the fleece,
7. Ensure shed staff are aware of any discharging boils on sheep and keep gear clean to minimise spread of boils (For organic farms, Iodine is perfectly acceptable).

Rousie's Responsibilities

1. Place shorn belly wool in the appropriate bin, removing pizzle stain if required by farmer/classer and any wether hoggett scrotal remains, in particular, the rubber ring that may still be there,
2. Keep the shearing board clear of fleeces and swept of locks (second cuts, crutch wools etc),
3. Pick up and throw fleeces correctly at a 45-degree angle onto the wool table, so that locks fall aside and fleeces are spread evenly for accurate skirting,
4. Remove dags and black wool during shearing,
5. Place all faults and oddments in appropriate containers,
6. Colour mark sheep as required. This should be done on the sheep's head as raddle does not scour/wash out fully.

Table-Hand's Responsibilities

1. Remove and discard any remaining dags,
2. Remove all stains from fleeces (blood, urine stain, and pen stain),

3. Remove black wool, unscourable brands, skin pieces and contaminants from fleeces,
4. Remove the minimal amount of short, cotted neck wool containing kemps and vegetable matter,
5. Remove remaining locks and bits of belly wool from fleece,
6. Avoid the removal of good fleece wool by removing faults using fingers,
7. Place oddments in appropriate containers and bins,
8. Keep woolroom floor swept and free of locks.

Classer's Responsibilities

Before commencement;

1. The classer should discuss the clip with the farmer and consider all relevant details;
 - Last year's lines and measurement details,
 - Number of sheep and flock composition,
 - Possible differences between flocks, e.g. age or fibre length,
 - Any recently bought in lines or changes in breeding strategy,
 - Formulate lines appropriate for the season with particular emphasis on understanding of any changes from the previous year.
2. Each wool bin should be marked with its description before the start of shearing. Separate bins for stained pieces (STN PCS), black/coloured (BLACK) and skin pieces (SKN PCS) should be provided and kept clear of main line bins,
3. A clearly marked bin is provided for rubbish, ie dags, vegetable matter etc.

During the season;

4. The classer should set up and class to the minimum number of lines required to present the clip for sale,
5. The classer should SUPERVISE AND MONITOR ALL ASPECTS OF WOOL HANDLING, pressing and recording of bales, ensuring that:-
 - The shed equipment is arranged to give the best possible workflow,
 - Agreed wool handling procedures set out to each individual before shearing begins are followed consistently by the wool handling team, so that each fleece is carefully prepared,
 - Contamination of lines by foreign objects is prevented,
 - The pieces bin is checked on a regular basis to ensure that sound fleece wool is not being removed with inferior pieces,
 - Wool is classed consistently to standards appropriate for the particular clip, taking into account variations of flock and environmental effects.
6. Wool from mature sheep generally low in dust/peat content, free or nearly free of vegetable matter and of sound strength is classed as A, B or C,
7. Dusty/peaty or inferior fleeces should be classed AA, BB, CC,
8. Ensure the presser records the bale number and its contents correctly in the bale book and the branding of bales is done accurately and clearly,
9. Classers' specifications are prepared and presented to the farmer/manager.

Presser's Responsibilities

1. Master the safe and efficient operation of wool press,
2. Maintain a tidy work area and avoid any contamination,

3. Inspect wool packs for any loose material, which must be removed and placed in rubbish bins,
4. Organise the pressing of fleeces and oddments to avoid unnecessary mixed bin bales,
5. Dividers are not to be used,
6. Undertake careful and accurate packaging, branding and recording. Bales should be **clearly marked on two sides and two ends, with farm brand, bale number and description**. Bale numbers shall not be duplicated under any one farm brand in any one season.

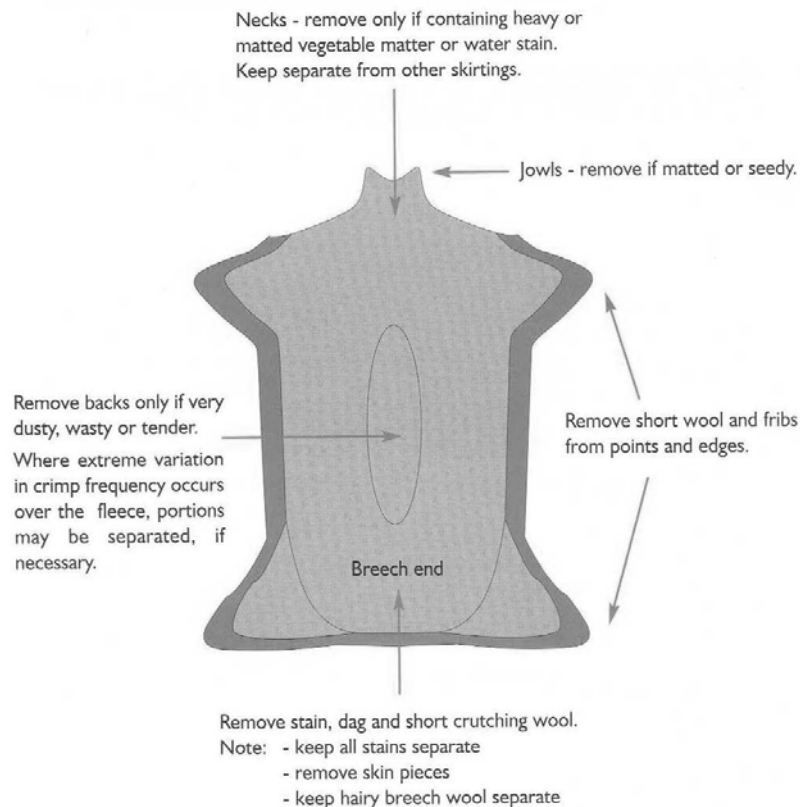
It cannot be stressed enough the importance of having the three bale brands on **both** sides and on **both** ends with the increased use of coring and the use of containers for shipping bales. It is both frustrating and time wasting to have to pull bale stacks apart to determine exactly what they are.

PART 2 – PREPARATION

Sets out minimum preparation standards that need to be followed to ensure that clips meet the requirements of the customer.

SKIRTING

The object of skirting a fleece is to remove any inferior wool that could cause discounting of the whole fleece line. Check the pieces bin on a regular basis to ensure that sound fleece wool is not being removed with inferior pieces.



CLASSING

The aim is to produce lines of wool that have uniform quality, fibre diameter, fibre length and colour. To achieve this, faults should be kept separate. (See Glossary for definitions). Listed below are wools and faults that may be present and should be removed from each fleece:

Sheep age/sex

- HOG: Hogget wool.
- SHER: Shearling wool.

Some smaller farms may not have enough hogget or shearling wool to class into separate lines. If this is the case comment should be made on the classer's specification as to the uniformity of the line.

- E: Ewe wool (main flock)
- W: Wether wool (main flock)

Ewe and Wether wool is all classed. Classing extent depends on wool variation and quantity.

Main Fleece Lines

Within each line it is important to ensure the fibre diameter, length, strength, style, character, condition, colour and vegetable matter are consistent throughout the line of wool.

Bale Brand

Description

- | | |
|----------|--|
| A | Fine line, approximately 2 microns finer than the next branding line. Generally must be mature wool (not from sheep shorn for the first time), soft, of good character, length, strength and colour. |
| B | Middle line wool, approximately 2 microns broader than the fine line, showing good character, length, strength and colour. |
| C | Broad line. May only be required in large clips, where there is a significant quantity of coarser, harsher wool types. |

NOTE: On farms with a wide variation of sheep breeds or types, further main lines (i.e. D; E; etc.) can be added.

Other Fleece Lines

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| AA | Off type wools with similar micron to the main fleece line; but having excessive colour, peat, tender, short or overlength staple. |
| BB | Wools showing similar traits to the above line, but distinctly broader. Should also include the very coarse edge. |

CC	Wools showing similar traits to the above but distinctly broader.
AA COTT	All severely cotted fleeces or part fleeces.
MIX FLC	All fleeces from which black or pigmented staples have been removed. Depending on the quantity two lines could be made – fine and broad: A MIX FLC and B MIX FLC
BLACK	All fleeces showing distinctly pigmented regions. These fleeces should be directly placed into the designated black bin or butt. These should not be skirted, and the bellies should not be separated.
D/F	All fleeces with two years growth or more. These fleeces should not be skirted and the bellies should not be separated.
NKS	Necks wool that is shorter than the fleece with thick vegetable matter and/or cotts that cannot be easily pulled apart.
A HOGGETS	Fine line, soft handling, good style, good length and sound.
B HOGGETS	Broader line, 2-3 microns broader than the above. Should still be good style, good length and sound.
AA HOGGETS	All short, tender, discoloured hogget wool.
<u>Skirtings</u>	
A PCS	All pieces free of stain, good length.
STN PCS	All stained wool from the crutch area, pizzle wool from wethers/rams, raddle stain etc.
A BLS	Bellies that have had all stain removed.
BLS	Bellies with urine stain not removed.
LOX	All second cuts and board locks, eye wigs, jowls, kempy top knots and socks, if accidentally removed.
SKN PCS	Should be kept separate from all lines and dumped.

QUALITY FALKLAND WOOL AND OWNER CLASSER BRANDING

1. Farms with a QFW accreditation and a certified Owner Classer.

Wool is classed by an accredited classer and the Owner Classer QFW stencil is applied to all bales of wool produced on the farm. An Owner Classer specification is completed for all wool.



2. Farms with no QFW accreditation but a certified Owner Classer

The owner classer can apply the Owner Classer stencil to all bales classed by them and complete the Owner Classer specification for all wool. The number on the stencil relates to a particular owner classer.



3. Farms with QFW accreditation but no Owner Classer.

It is recommended to apply QFW stencilling to all bales on the farm.



4. Other Farms

Any farms not involved in QFW or the Owner Classer scheme will continue to brand their bales as best suits their farm.

PART 3: FALKLAND ISLANDS WOOL GLOSSARY

BELLIES (BLS): Wool off stomach area, often poor colour. Stained brisket (frib) wool and pizzle wool may be removed into STN PCS.

BLACK (BLACK): Fleece wool containing black, brown and other coloured fibres. Coloured fibres of any description must be removed from white wool. Coloured sheep must NOT be shorn with white sheep, but done separately, and with the shed being thoroughly cleaned afterwards to avoid contamination.

FLEECE WOOLS: Fleece wools should be of good length, free of vegetable matter and without stain.

CAMP WOOL (CAMP): Wool plucked from dead sheep. Roots of fibres contain variable amounts of thin papery skin tissue. Has a cold feel and may smell.

DOUBLE FLEEC (D/F): Very long wool from 18 months to several years growth. Too long for normal processing.

CLIP: All wool from the farm.

COTTS (COT): Fibres entangled between staples so fleeces cannot be freely opened by hand. High fibre breakage in processing. Common around the neck region.

CRUTCHINGS (CRT): Wool from under the tail and udder area, shorn from ewes pre-tupping or pre-lambing. Remove stain from crutchings and place in STN PCS. Crutchings are much shorter than fleece wool and should therefore be kept separate.

DAGS (DAG): Wool heavily contaminated with dung should be kept separate during shearing. Afterwards, dung can be removed and discarded whilst lightly stained wool can be added to the STN PCS.

EWE (E): Wool shorn from ewes.

EYE CLIPS (E/C): Very short, fine, crimped, soft wool, usually containing kempy fibres that do not dye. Put eye clips in with the locks, rather than the necks.

A PIECES (A PCS): Fleece skirtings free of stain, good length. Slightly shorter than equivalent fleece wool, of poor colour or with vegetable matter. The quantity of wool skirted from in and around the fore and back legs can vary a great deal – keep to a minimum to enable fleece improvement.

FLOCK: Sheep of the same breed that have run together under similar environmental conditions since the previous shearing.

HAIRY BRITCH WOOL.: This can be removed and placed in a (separate) pieces line, since it contains medullated fibres which dye badly.

HOGGET WOOL (HOG): Wool from sheep shorn for the first time at about 14 months of age. This wool has a pointed curly lamb tip which may be weathered. Wool long for micron and tests finer than the crimp suggests.

LINE: Classed wool assessed to be of similar average characteristics.

LOCKS (LOX) Very short pieces, second cuts, eye wigs, topknots, jowls and socks (containing medullated fibres), if accidentally removed, which fall through the wool table or are swept off the floor.

NECKS (NKS): Neck collars should be removed only if the wool is shorter than the fleece, is cotted (matted fibres) or contains vegetable matter. Neckes should not include full-length wool from the shoulder.

PEN STAIN: Dung/faeces stain contamination of wool. No daggy sheep should be penned with clean sheep and sheep straight off feed should be kept in a bare

paddock or loosely yarded for 24 hours, before they are close penned for shearing. Pen stained wool must be removed to the STN PCS.

SAND (SND): Wool containing sand. Bale separately if severe.