

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEME FOR FALKLAND ISLANDS WOOL

Background

Processing mills around the world expect to process wool with complete confidence and assurance. This requires wool to meet guarantees for maximum dark coloured fibre (BCF) content, freedom from contamination plus numerous of other standards.

The Quality Falkland Wool (QFW) assurance scheme's objective is to introduce and maintain, **BCF and contamination risk reduction** measures.

The aim of QFW is to set attainable and maintainable standards, which when fully complied with will result in the highest level of preparation and will limit the risk of obtaining BCF readings above 5 bcf / 100 grams. In conjunction with this, the aim is to eliminate contamination from foreign matter.

Farms that are accredited will use the QFW stencil on bales of wool that they feel have been prepared under the guidelines. The wool specification will be QFW stamped, signed and dated by the person ultimately responsible for the clip. This will clearly indicate that this wool has been prepared and handled using '**Best Practices**'.

Leading wool producing countries have found that woolgrowers who are members of a recognised quality assurance scheme may receive a premium for their wool, however, in difficult trading years the 'mark' can make the difference between selling and not selling.

The Way Forward

The scheme is VOLUNTARY. The booklet and papers are a guide for you to check your work practices and procedures. Once your woolshed complies with the standards, you can apply for an inspection. This is carried out by the Department of Agriculture's (DoA) Wool Advisor and is known as the **pre-shearing audit**.

The prime responsibility then lies with the farm owner/manager to put in place all the correct practices during shearing and woolhandling. Annual, random checks will be carried out by an officer of the DoA to ensure that standards are being maintained. Wool not prepared under the recognised standards will be prohibited from carrying the QFW stencil.

The scheme's goal is that ultimately all Falkland Islands farms will be preparing their wool using these standards.

Standards Required

The standards required in the Quality Assurance Scheme concern the handling and preparation of the wool clip, but also include the work place. Before applying for

accreditation there is a list of points to check and have correct concerning the yards, pens and woolshed. These are laid out within the “Pre-Shearing Audit”.

The “Falkland Islands Guide to Clip Preparation”, compiled by the DoA and published in 1992, contains the required standards to be met for shearing, woolhandling and classing. If you require a copy of this booklet please contact the DoA. The booklet provides clarification for the requirements laid down for “Prior to and during shearing”.

Crutching of ewes and wethers is advisable as it:

- Reduces the risk of dark coloured fibres entering the shed.
- Reduces the risk of dark coloured fibre contamination on the wool table by removing the crutch wool on the board.
- Ensures that any dark coloured fibres present on the wool table are removed by quality skirting assisted by correct lighting.
- Eliminate dark coloured fibre contamination after classing due to correct storage of fleeces.

Further Information

The people involved with this project are the Rural Business Association, working with staff at the DoA and in collaboration with Falkland Wool Growers Ltd and Falkland Wool Marketing.

Please contact the DoA for further information on 27355.