



THE GOOD CASHMERE STANDARD

by AbTF

Version 1.2



The Good Cashmere Standard® by AbTF

Table of Contents

Introduction and Overarching Principles	4
Types of Clauses within the Standard	4
Development and Review of the Standard	5
CHAPTER I Goat Management	6
1. Feed, Water and Nutrition	6
2. Indoor Living Environment (Housing and/or Indoor Shelter).....	8
3. Outdoor Living Environment	10
4. Health	12
5. Goat Management	13
5.0 Overall Management.....	13
5.1 Breeding Management.....	13
5.2 Kid Management	13
5.3 Physical Alterations	14
6. Combing and Shearing (Harvest of Fibre from Live Animals).....	15
7. Handling and Transport	17
7.0 Handling	17
7.1 Transport	17
8. Euthanasia and Slaughter.....	19
8.0 Euthanasia	19
8.1 Slaughter	19
9. Plans and Records.....	21
9.0 Written Records	21
9.1 Written Plans.....	21
10. Training and Competence	22
11. Land Management, Wildlife and Biodiversity	23
11.0 Land Management	23
11.1 Crop Management	23
11.2 Fertilisers	23
11.3 Pesticides.....	24
11.4 Wildlife and Biodiversity	25
CHAPTER II Social Criteria	26
1. Small-scale Farmers.....	26
1.0 Rights of Children	26

1.1 Free Choice of Labour.....	27
1.2 Non-discrimination.....	27
1.3 Workers’ Organisations.....	27
1.4 Conditions of Employments	28
1.5 Hazard Prevention and Control.....	28
2. Large Farms with Employed Staff.....	30
2.0 Rights of Children	30
2.1 Free Choice of Labour.....	30
2.2 Non-discrimination.....	30
2.3 Workers’ Organisations.....	31
2.4 Conditions of Employments	31
2.5 Hazard Prevention and Control.....	32
CHAPTER III Management Criteria and Auditing	34
1. Small-scale Farmers.....	34
1.0 General Management	34
1.1 Audits for Small-scale Farmers.....	34
2. Large Farms with Employed Staff.....	36
2.0 General Management	36
2.1 Staff Capacity.....	36
2.2 Separation and Traceability of GCS Cashmere	36
2.3 Continuous Improvement	37
2.4 Audits for Large Farms	37
3. Buying Stations	38
3.0 General Management	38
3.1 Staff Capacity.....	38
3.2 Separation and Traceability of GCS Cashmere	38
3.3 Contracts with GCS Famers	39
3.4 Continuous Improvement	39
3.5 Audits for Buying Stations	40

Introduction and Overarching Principles

This Standard covers goats that are managed for the production of cashmere. The goat management, social criteria and management and auditing criteria could be applied to any cashmere goat production system. The land management clauses in this version of the standard is only applicable to farmed systems. It does not cover nomadic herding systems.

The principles underpinning The Good Cashmere Standard by AbTF are based on the 'Five Freedoms' as defined by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, which are as follows:

- 1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst** - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- 2. Freedom from Discomfort** - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- 3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease** - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- 4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour** - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- 5. Freedom from Fear and Distress** - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

This Standard has been drawn up using the Five Freedoms as a framework to cover all aspects of goats' lives.

Types of Clauses within the Standard

This Standard includes clauses that are required to be met in order for the farm and for the buying station¹ to be certified. These clauses say that the farm or the buying station must or must not do something or that something is prohibited.

Additionally, there are clauses that say the farm should or should not do something. These clauses are highlighted with **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**. Improvement criteria give information on suggested best practice, but do not have to be met by the farm in order for certification to be granted.

¹ The raw cashmere is usually sold from the farm to the buying stations. But the raw cashmere may be sold directly to cashmere processors via their dehairing station. In those cases, the buying station criteria apply to the dehairing station.

If an operation fails to meet a required clause in this Standard, it will be considered to be non-compliant. There are three categories of non-compliance: core, major and basic.

If this symbol **C** is shown next to a particular clause, it indicates that failure to meet the clause would be considered a core non-compliance. Discovery of a core non-compliance leads to exclusion from the program. There are only three topics that are considered serious enough to warrant this rating: abuse of goats, child labour outside the allowances of the standard and use of prohibited pesticides.

If this symbol **M** is shown next to a particular clause, it indicates that failure to meet the clause would be considered a major non-compliance.

If a farm receives any major non-compliance at its first audit it cannot be certified until action is taken to resolve the issue and the farm has submitted evidence to demonstrate that this has been done. Timeframes may vary depending on the topic of the non-compliance, please consult the Verification Governance for details. If a farm receives any major non-compliance at a renewal audit it will be removed from the certified supply chain until evidence is provided to demonstrate that action has been taken to resolve the issue. The same applies to the buying station: If the buying station fails to fulfil a major criterion it and its associated farmers will not be certified until the buying station has submitted evidence to demonstrate that the issue is resolved. If a buying station receives any major non-compliance at a renewal audit it and its associated farms will not be certified and will be removed from the certified supply chain until the issue is resolved and proof is provided.

If there is no core or major symbol next to the clause, it indicates that failure to meet the clause would be considered a basic non-compliance. If a farm or a buying station receives any basic non-compliance at its first audit it cannot be certified until it provides acceptable information on how it intends to resolve the issue and the timeline for doing so. If a farm or a buying station receives any basic non-compliance at a renewal audit it must submit an acceptable response to the auditor within 3 weeks of the audit report being issued. Its certification will then be maintained. If the farm or buying station does not respond to the non-compliance within 3 weeks, it may be removed from the certified supply chain.

Further details on compliance issues and their resolution can be found in the Verification Governance.

Development and Review of the Standard

This Standard has been developed with input from animal welfare specialists, industry experts and, through a field-testing process, goat farmers. After three years of implementation the Standard will be reviewed and revised based on findings from the audit process, as well as any new, relevant scientific findings. The revision process will again involve inputs from welfare and industry experts as well as from farmers.

Outside of the formal review and revision process clauses within the Standard may be amended or clarified if issues with their implementation arise, new technologies become available, or new scientific findings are made.

CHAPTER I

Goat Management

1. Feed, Water and Nutrition

Key principle: Goats have water and feed that meets their needs whatever their age or stage of production.

- 1.0.1 **M** Goats must be able to drink their fill of fresh water at least once every 12 hours.
- Note: The best situation is when goats always have free access to water; however, this is not current practice on all goat farms and would require structural change and capital investment to ensure that all goats have a trough in every pen and every pasture area.*
- 1.0.2 If goats do not always have free access to fresh water, any new construction of housing, or enclosure of pasture areas must provide this.
- 1.0.3 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Goats must always have access to fresh water, including when they are on pasture, confined in housing or in yards.
- 1.0.4 **M** Goats must be offered a daily diet suitable for their age and stage of production.
- 1.0.5 Feed and water must be provided so that there is no competition between goats for access.
- Note: As a guide, each goat should have at least 45 cm feed space if feed is always not available or 22.5 cm feed space when feed is always available.*
- 1.0.6 **M** Goats' feed must include at least 50% long fibre roughage on a dry matter basis in their daily diet, to maintain digestive health.
- 1.0.7 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Goats should have access to material such as shrubs or bushes to browse.
- Note: Goats have a preference for browsing over grazing. Browsing material includes shrubs, bushes, hedges, and small trees.*
- 1.0.8 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Hay or other fodder should be offered in raised racks, not placed on the floor.
- 1.0.9 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
The majority of goats' nutrition should come from grazing and browsing.
- 1.0.10 Any change of diet must take place gradually to avoid digestive upset.
- 1.0.11 Example tags or ingredient lists must be kept for all feeds and supplements used.
- 1.0.12 **M** Goats must not be fed fishmeal or animal by-products.

- 1.0.13 Goats must be maintained in good body condition. Goat body condition will fluctuate throughout the year, but management must ensure goats are neither too thin nor too fat.
- Note: The expectation is that goats are maintained between Body Condition Score (BCS) 2 to 4 (on a five-point scale).*
- 1.0.14 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
- Body condition scoring of a representative sample of goats (at least 10% of the herd) should be carried out at least three times per year and the results recorded.
- Note: Key times to carry out body condition scoring include when kids are weaned, when does are being prepared for breeding and mid-pregnancy.*
- 1.0.15 Goats that drop below BCS 2 must be given special treatment to improve their score and if they do not respond they must be euthanized according to Section 8.0.
- 1.0.16 Feed must be stored so that it cannot be contaminated or spoiled.
- 1.0.17 Mouldy or otherwise compromised feedstuffs must not be fed to goats.
- 1.0.18 Feed and water troughs must be cleaned as necessary to maintain them in a hygienic condition.
- 1.0.19 Water troughs must be checked daily to ensure that water is flowing.

2. Indoor Living Environment (Housing and/or Indoor Shelter)

Key principle: Goats are protected from extremes of weather and have sufficient space to move around, interact with other goats and lie down somewhere dry.

- 2.0.1 **M** Goats must have access to housing/shelter that protects their thermal comfort, provides shade from the sun and protection from wind, rain, and snow.
- 2.0.2 Pens, gates, and any other structures in the indoor environment must be constructed and maintained so as not to cause injury.
- 2.0.3 Housing/shelter must provide natural light and fresh air ventilation.
- 2.0.4 If artificial light is used it must not extend the day length beyond 16 hours per day.
- 2.0.5 Air quality in housing/shelter must be maintained. Ammonia must not exceed 25 ppm and dust must not exceed 10 mg per cubic metre.

Note: Ammonia can be measured using testing strips, calibrated meters, or sensory evaluation. If sensory evaluation is used both the smell of ammonia and the presence of dust must be hardly noticeable for this clause to be met. If dust causes coughing or the smell of ammonia is noticeable or causes watery eyes it is unacceptable.

- 2.0.6 Manure must be removed from housing/shelter as necessary to keep the environment clean.
- 2.0.7 Goats must have a clean and dry place to lie down in housing/shelter.
- 2.0.8 Goats must always have bedding in housing.
Note: Acceptable bedding materials that will provide comfort for goats include wood shavings, wood chips, maize (corn) stalks, hay, or straw.
- 2.0.9 Housing/shelter must provide solid flooring for animals to lie down. Fully slatted floors are prohibited.
- 2.0.10 Goats must have at least the following space allowances when they are shut into indoor housing/shelter (see also clause 3.0.2 for space requirements for outdoor housing area).

<i>Type of animal</i>	<i>Minimum under cover lying area per animal m² (ft²)</i>
Doe	1.4 (15)
Doe and single kid	2.0 (21)
Additional kids	0.4 (4)
Weaned kids	0.9 (10)
Buck	2.0 (21)

2.0.11 Animals must not have access to any potentially toxic chemicals e.g. paints, wood preservatives, or disinfectants.

3. Outdoor Living Environment

Key principle: Goats have access to an outdoor area with sufficient space to exercise and interact with other goats.

3.0.1 **M** Goats must have continuous daytime access to an outdoor exercise area.

Note: An exception can be made at time of extreme weather when goats' welfare would otherwise be adversely affected. The outdoor exercise area could be a yard or pasture areas (see also clause 3.0.3 below).

3.0.2 Goats must have at least the following space allowances for their outdoor exercise area (see also clause 2.0.10 for space requirements for any indoor housing/shelter area).

Type of animal	Minimum outdoor exercise area per animal m ² (ft ²)
Doe	2.5 (27)
Doe and single kid	3.0 (33)
Additional kids	0.5 (5.4)
Weaned kids	1 (11)
Buck	3.0 (33)

3.0.3 **M** Adult goats must have access for at least four hours per day to areas where they can graze or browse vegetation during the growing season.

Note: The growing season for Inner Mongolia is defined as May to September. Cut vegetation such as maize (corn) stalks or hay is acceptable as well as plants growing in the area.

3.0.4 Fencing, equipment, and other structures in the goats' outdoor environment must be kept in good condition and free from debris so as not to cause injury.

3.0.5 Fencing must be of a design that does not allow goats to get their heads or limbs stuck.

3.0.6 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Fencing should be at least 1.2 m high.

3.0.7 Goats must be managed to avoid access to poisonous plants, shrubs, and trees.

3.0.8 Goats must be provided with environmental enrichment such as earth mounds, raised wooden platforms, tree stumps or similar in their outdoor exercise area.

3.0.9 There must be a raised enrichment area of at least 0.5 m² (4.5 square feet) for every group or part group of 50 goats.

Note: Goats are very agile and like to climb. If given the opportunity both adults and kids can be seen getting up on raised areas of ground, tree stumps or similar as part of their normal behaviour to browse and play.

4. Health

Key principle: Goats are managed so that they are in a state of good health and welfare. Management focuses on prevention of health problems, but if goats become sick or injured, they are treated promptly.

- 4.0.1 There must be a written health plan covering the prevention and treatment of health issues that are known to exist or be of risk to goats on the farm. At minimum, the plan must include details of the following:
 - 4.0.1.1 Internal parasite prevention and treatment
 - 4.0.1.2 External parasite prevention and treatment
 - 4.0.1.3 Infectious disease prevention and treatment
 - 4.0.1.4 Lameness and foot problems, prevention, and treatment
 - 4.0.1.5 Biosecurity and quarantine.
 - 4.0.1.6 Vaccinations
- 4.0.2 The health plan must be developed with the advice of a veterinarian or other expert in goat production.
- 4.0.3 There must be at least annual vet or goat expert visits to review the health plan and goat welfare, health, and disease management protocols on the farm.
- 4.0.4 **M** Any goat that is sick, injured or has parasites must be treated as soon as the health issue is discovered.

Note: See Section 8.0 for details on euthanasia for a goat does not respond to treatment within a reasonable time.
- 4.0.5 Medicine records covering the goat(s) treated, date of treatment, the product used, and the reason for treatment must be kept.
- 4.0.6 Protocols must be in place for the safe disposal of unused or expired medicines, insecticides, needles etc.
- 4.0.7 **M** Sub-therapeutic use of veterinary medicines is prohibited.

Note: Sub-therapeutic is defined as the use of veterinary medicines – including, but not limited to, antibiotics and parasiticides - when animals are not clinically ill or at immediate risk of illness.
- 4.0.8 **M** The use of any product – for example antibiotics, beta-agonists, or hormones - as a growth promoter is prohibited.
- 4.0.9 Records must be kept of mortality and culls and the reason for death/culling (where known).
- 4.0.10 Facilities to house and/or segregate sick or injured animals must be available.
- 4.0.11 Facilities for sick or injured animals must provide free access to water and clean and dry bedding materials.
- 4.0.12 Routine foot care including trimming and foot bathing as appropriate must be undertaken to ensure that lameness levels must not exceed 5% of the herd.

5. Goat Management

5.0 Overall Management

Key principle: Goat farmers are aware of and meet any relevant regulations and ensure their goats are maintained in stable groups.

- 5.0.1 **M** All relevant local and national laws and regulations as they apply to goat management must be met.
- 5.0.2 **M** Goats must be checked at least once daily.
- 5.0.3 Mixing of unfamiliar animals must be avoided. Goats must be managed in stable groups according to their age and stage of production.
- 5.0.4 Animals must not be kept in isolation unless this is necessary to manage health problems.
- 5.0.5 There must be a written emergency plan covering actions to protect goats in case of fire, flood, drought and/or other potential extreme weather/environmental conditions.

5.1 Breeding Management

Key principle: The selection of goats for breeding allows goats to thrive without the need for excessive human intervention.

- 5.1.1 **M** Breeding selection must consider conformation and health characteristics (for example strong straight legs; teeth flush with dental pad; sturdy and well-formed hooves) as well as fibre quality.
- 5.1.2 Cloned, genetically engineered or gene-edited goats are prohibited.
- 5.1.3 The techniques of embryo transfer and/or ovum pick up must not be used.
- 5.1.4 Young does must be at least one year old before being bred for the first time.
- 5.1.5 The area used for kidding must be kept clean.
- 5.1.6 Records must be kept of the total number of does that kid each year and the number that need assistance to give birth.
- 5.1.7 Action must be taken if more than 15% of does need to be assisted to give birth each kidding cycle.
- 5.1.8 Breeding males must have the company of other goats outside of the breeding season.

5.2 Kid Management

Key principle: Kids are given the best start in life with welfare a priority from birth onwards.

- 5.2.1 **M** Kids must be checked to ensure they have had colostrum within 6 hours of birth.

- 5.2.2 Provisions for managing orphan or excess kids must be in place prior to the start of kidding.
- 5.2.3 Equipment used to feed artificially reared kids must be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- 5.2.4 Artificially reared kids must always have access to water.
- 5.2.5 **M** Kids must not be weaned until they are at least 40% of their adult weight or a minimum of 8 weeks of age.
- 5.2.6 At weaning, does and kids must be separated, so they cannot see or hear one another.
- 5.2.7 Newly weaned kids must be kept with other kids they are familiar with.
- 5.2.8 Kids must have access to forage in their diets at least from the age of 15 days.

5.3 Physical Alterations

Key principles: Physical alterations that are necessary for goat management are carried out to minimize pain and distress.

- 5.3.1 **M** If buck kids are to be castrated, this must be achieved by the time they reach a maximum age of 8 weeks.
- 5.3.2 If buck kids are to be castrated the permitted methods are:
 - Scalpel
 - Emasculator (burdizzo)
- 5.3.3 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
If buck kids are to be castrated pain relief should be used.
- 5.3.4 Good hygiene practice must be followed when castration is carried out.
- 5.3.5 **M** All physical alterations aside from castration are prohibited. This includes a prohibition on the following:
 - Ear notching
 - Disbudding and dehorning
 - De-scenting bucks
 - Removal of goats' wattles

6. Combing and Shearing (Harvest of Fibre from Live Animals)

Key principle: Fibre is removed from goats using methods that minimize stress and injury and does not cause thermal discomfort.

- 6.0.1 **M** All combers/shearers must be trained and competent. This applies to contract shearers/combers as well as those employed on the farm.
- 6.0.2 If contract combers/shearers are used one person from the shearing team must be nominated to oversee goat welfare and to report any shearing injuries to the farmer.
- 6.0.3 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Goats should have their fibre removed with hand shears or electric clippers in preference to combing.
- 6.0.4 Hand or electric shearing equipment must be well maintained with suitable blades for goat fibre.
- 6.0.5 **M** When goats are restrained by ropes for combing/shearing, these must not be tied so tight as to reduce blood supply or cause any other injury.
- 6.0.6 Goats must always be supervised while they are under restraint.
- 6.0.7 Goats must be released from restraint if they are at risk of injury.
- 6.0.8 The time that goats are restrained for combing or shearing must be kept as short as possible.
Note: It takes around 30 minutes for a goat to have its fibre removed.
- 6.0.9 **M** Goats must only be combed when they are naturally starting to shed their coats.
- 6.0.10 **M** Combing/shearing must ensure that goats maintain thermal comfort post shearing. This can be achieved by: only combing/shearing in warm weather; leaving sufficient fibre on the goat to keep it warm; or giving goats a coat and/or housing them after combing/shearing in cold or wet weather.
- 6.0.11 **M** Combing/shearing must ensure that goats do not get sunburn post shearing. This can be achieved by leaving sufficient fibre on the goat to protect the skin or ensuring goats always have access to shade while their hair regrows.
- 6.0.12 Goats that are cut or otherwise injured during combing/shearing must be given treatment appropriate to the injury immediately.
- 6.0.13 Goats that are cut or injured during combing/shearing must be monitored for any sign of infection or other complications for at least three days post shearing.
- 6.0.14 Combers/shearers that cut or injure multiple goats during a single combing/shearing session must stop and be restrained before resuming combing/shearing.
- 6.0.15 Records of the volume of cashmere produced each year must be kept.

- 6.0.16 Fibre from goats that are certified under this Standard must be clearly identified when it leaves the farm.
- 6.0.17 Records must be kept of the number of goats sheared per day, the names of the shearers and the number of goats that were cut or otherwise injured.

7. Handling and Transport

7.0 Handling

Key principle: Calm handling promotes good relationships between farmer and goats and reduces fear and stress.

- 7.0.1 **C** All goats must be handled calmly and without excessive force. Painful physical contact – for example hitting the goats or using sticks or goads – is prohibited.
- 7.0.2 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Audible or visual measures (e.g. flags, rattles) should be used in preference to physical contact to encourage animals to move.
- 7.0.3 The use of electric prods is prohibited.
- 7.0.4 There must be handling facilities of a suitable size and design for the number of goats on the farm.
- 7.0.5 Handling facilities must be designed, constructed and maintained to minimize potential injury and distress.
- 7.0.6 Handling areas must be high enough to prevent goats attempting to jump out.
- 7.0.7 Lighting in handling areas must avoid creating shadowed areas.
- 7.0.8 Goats must not be exposed to sudden loud noises during handling.
- 7.0.9 Goats must not be closely confined or tethered unless temporarily for feeding, veterinary treatment, or other similar activities.
Note: See Section 6.0 for details of restraint at combing.
- 7.0.10 **M** Goats must not be lifted solely by their hair, ears, horns, tails, limbs, or heads.
- 7.0.11 **M** Goats must not be dragged.
- 7.0.12 When goats are moved on foot this must be at a pace that does not cause exhaustion or heat stress.
- 7.0.13 **M** Extra care must be taken when handling young kids, heavily pregnant does and any goats that are sick or injured.

7.1 Transport

Key principle: Goats are handled carefully during loading, unloading and transport.

- 7.1.1 **M** Transport duration must not exceed 8 hours.
Note: Transport duration is calculated from loading the first goat at the source to unloading the last goat at the destination.
- 7.1.2 **M** Goats must have access to water up to the point of being loaded.
- 7.1.3 Goats must have enough space in transport to stand naturally without their heads touching the roof (if there is one).

- 7.1.4 Goats must be protected from heat and cold stress during transport.
- 7.1.5 Goats must not be moved or loaded unless the way forward for the lead animal is clear and there is sufficient space in front of them.
- 7.1.6 Transport vehicles must be cleaned between uses.
- 7.1.7 Transport vehicle ramps and flooring must be non-slip.
- 7.1.8 **M** Goats must be fit for transport. Any goat that falls into one of the following categories must not be transported unless this is to receive veterinary treatment:
- Unable to walk onto the transport vehicle unaided
 - With open wounds
 - With a prolapse
 - Which has undergone surgery in the previous two weeks
 - In the last month of pregnancy
 - That has given birth in the previous 48 hours
 - That is extremely debilitated
- 7.1.9 There must be a written transport plan that includes actions that the driver must take in case of emergency.
- 7.1.10 Stocking density in transport must not exceed the following:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Weight kg (lbs)</i>	<i>Area per animal m² (ft²)</i>
Pregnant does	<55 kg (<120 lbs)	0.4 m ² (4 ft ²)
	>55 kg (>120 lbs)	0.5 m ² (5 ft ²)
All other goats	<55 kg (<120 lbs)	0.3 m ² (3 ft ²)
	>55 kg (>120 lbs)	0.4 m ² (4 ft ²)

- 7.1.11 The slope of any loading ramps must not exceed 20 degrees.
- 7.1.12 Goats must be penned within the transport vehicle in groups of similar size or age.
- 7.1.13 Goats must not be mixed with goats they are unfamiliar with during transport.
- Note: This includes unfamiliar goats from the source farm or goats from other farms.*
- 7.1.14 A record must be kept of any deaths in transport.

8. Euthanasia and Slaughter

Key principle: Slaughter is the planned death of goats. Euthanasia is the death of goats in response to illness or injury. Both euthanasia and slaughter that takes place under the control of the certified farmer (e.g. on-farm slaughter) must be carried out using methods that cause immediate irreversible unconsciousness and death.

8.0 Euthanasia

- 8.0.1 **M** If an animal is in pain and/or suffering from disease or injury that is either very severe or not responding to treatment it must be euthanized without delay.
- 8.0.2 **M** Animals to be euthanized must be handled, restrained, and killed in such a manner as to minimize unnecessary pain and distress prior to death.
- 8.0.3 The person carrying out euthanasia must be able to recognize the signs of death.
- 8.0.4 The person carrying out euthanasia must stay with the animal until they have confirmed death.
- 8.0.5 **M** Goats must only be euthanized using the following methods:
- Veterinary administered overdose of barbiturates
 - Electric head only stunning
 - Electric head and heart stunning
 - Blunt force trauma ONLY for kids up to seven days old
- If a recoverable method such as electric head only stunning is used, a secondary method such as exsanguination must be used within 15 seconds of stunning.
- 8.0.6 The spinal cord must not be severed or broken in any animal, until after death.
- 8.0.7 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
The farmer or a full-time employee should have attended training on the correct way to euthanize a goat according to this Standard.
- 8.0.8 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
The person who attended the training in clause 8.0.7 should be the preferred person to carry out euthanasia when this is necessary.

8.1 Slaughter

- 8.1.1 **M** All animals must be effectively stunned pre-slaughter using a method that causes instantaneous unconsciousness that lasts until death.
- 8.1.2 **M** Goats must only be stunned using the following methods:
- Electric head only stunning
 - Electric head and heart stunning
- 8.1.3 If a recoverable method such as electric head only stunning is used, the goat must be slaughtered by a secondary method such as exsanguination within 15 seconds of stunning.

8.1.4

IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA

All slaughter sites should have undergone and passed an independent welfare review covering handling welfare of goats from their arrival at the slaughter operation to their point of death.

9. Plans and Records

Key principle: Farmers have plans to help maintain goat welfare and keep records to demonstrate the outcomes of their management.

9.0 Written Records

- 9.0.1 All records must be retained for at least five years.
This Standard requires the following written records.
See the relevant clause number for more information:
- Lists of all feeds/supplements and their ingredients; clause 1.0.11
 - Medicine records; clause 4.0.6
 - Mortality and culls; clause 4.0.10
 - Kidding and number of does that need assistance; clause 5.1.6
 - Volume of fibre production; clause 6.0.15
 - Number of goats sheared or combed, names of shearers/combers and number of cut or injured goats; clause 6.0.17
 - Deaths in transport; clause 7.1.14
 - Staff training; clause 10.0.2

9.1 Written Plans

This Standard requires the following written plans. See the relevant clause number for more information:

- Health plan; clause 4.0.1
- Emergency plan; clause 5.0.5
- Transport plan; clause 7.1.9

10. Training and Competence

Key principle: All those working with goats are trained and competent to carry out the work required of them.

- 10.0.1 **M** All those looking after goats (including family labour, full-time, contract or temporary workers) must be trained and competent to do the tasks required of them.
- 10.0.2 Records of initial and ongoing staff training must be kept.
- 10.0.3 A copy of this Standard must be available on-farm for all those looking after goats to refer to.
- 10.0.4 A named person must have responsibility for goat welfare.
- 10.0.5 All those looking after livestock (including contract or temporary workers) must be aware of this Standard and their part in ensuring the farm meets them.
- 10.0.6 Stock people must be assessed at least annually to review their performance.
- 10.0.7 Where farmworkers speak different languages, best management protocols, biosecurity, welfare standards, and other relevant documentation must be translated into the language that is used by those workers.
- 10.0.8 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Stock people should get the opportunity at least annually to participate in courses for ongoing training or other professional development.

11. Land Management, Wildlife and Biodiversity

11.0 Land Management

Key principle: Activities of goat farmers protects the land and does not cause pollution.

- 11.0.1 **M** Goat farmers must not cause pollution. Manure and other animal wastes must be disposed of to minimize disease risk to other animals and to protect the environment.
- 11.0.2 Goat farmers must ensure that any hazardous materials are not disposed of on land used by goats unless specifically allowed by law.
- 11.0.3 **M** Cutting of primary forest or destruction of other forms of national resources which are designated and protected by national law or currently valid international legislation to convert land for grazing or cropping is prohibited.

Note: Relevant internationally legislation can be found as follows

- a) *Important Bird Areas (IBA):*
www.birdlife.org/datazone/site
- b) *World Heritage Sites / IUCN Categories I-IV:*
<http://www.protectedplanet.net/>
- c) *Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:*
<http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/sitelist.pdf>

- 11.0.4 Grazing land must be managed to maintain vegetative cover and avoid erosion.

- 11.0.5 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Rotational grazing management should be used.

Note: Rotational management is when some pasture areas are rested while others are in use.

11.1 Crop Management

This section covers crops that are grown by the certified farmer. It does not include crops bought in by the farmer that are grown elsewhere.

- 11.1.1 Plastic sheeting/film used for crop growing must either be degradable or be collected and disposed of properly after the crop is harvested.

- 11.1.2 **IMPROVEMENT CRITERIA**
Soil tests to monitor soil health or grazing and cropping land, including major nutrients, pH and soil organic matter should be carried out at least every three years.

11.2 Fertilisers

- 11.2.1 Fertilisers must only be used when there is demonstrable crop need.
- 11.2.2 Fertilisers must only be applied when soil conditions allow uptake of the nutrients. Applying fertiliser to frozen or waterlogged soil is prohibited.

11.3 Pesticides

- 11.3.1 Pesticides must only be used when monitoring shows that pests or diseases are present at a level where they will cause crop harm and cannot be controlled by other means.
- 11.3.2 Pesticides must only be applied to target areas. They must not be used when there is a risk of drift to non-target areas.
- 11.3.3 Pesticides must be mixed and applied as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- 11.3.4 Biological, cultural, and physical pest control methods must be used in place of chemical pesticides if the non-chemical methods are effective.
- 11.3.5 **C** The use of pesticides a) banned under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), b) listed in the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC), c) listed under the Montreal Protocol, and d) pesticide active ingredients categorized as WHO Class Ia (extremely hazardous) or Class Ib (highly hazardous) – all in the latest revisions - is prohibited.

Note: See the GCS Prohibited Pesticide Active Ingredients List 2022 issued by AbTF. For further information about prohibited pesticides see:

a) *Stockholm Convention: Annexes A and B*

English version (page 38ff): <http://chm.pops.int/Portals/0/download.aspx?d=UNEP-POPS-COP-CONVTEXT-2017.English.pdf>

Chinese version (page 32ff): <http://chm.pops.int/Portals/0/download.aspx?d=UNEP-POPS-COP-CONVTEXT-2017.Chinese.PDF>

b) *Rotterdam Convention: Annex III*

English version (page 33 ff): <http://www.pic.int/Portals/5/download.aspx?d=UNEP-FAO-RC-CONVTEXT-2019.English.pdf>

Chinese version (page 32ff): <http://www.pic.int/Portals/5/download.aspx?d=UNEP-FAO-RC-CONVTEXT-2019.Chinese.pdf>

c) *Montreal Protocol: Annexes*

English and Chinese version: <https://ozone.unep.org/treaties/montreal-protocol>

d) *The WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard and Guidelines to Classification, 2019 edition*

English version (page 21 ff): <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332193/978240005662-eng.pdf?ua=1>

11.4 Wildlife and Biodiversity

Key principle: Farmers co-exist with wildlife and do not negatively impact biodiversity on and around the areas they manage.

- 11.4.1 **M** Goats must be protected from predators.
- 11.4.2 **M** Snares, leg hold traps and any other traps aside from live traps must not be used to catch or control wildlife.
- 11.4.3 Lethal control of wildlife must only take place when non-lethal control methods have failed
- 11.4.4 Lethal control must only target the problem animal.
- 11.4.5 Lethal control must immediately cause unconsciousness and death.
- 11.4.6 **M** Wildlife must not be poisoned.
Note: Wildlife does not include rats and mice.
- 11.4.7 When poison is used to control rodents, it must not be accessible to anything other than the target animals.
- 11.4.8 Harvesting/gathering rare, threatened, or endangered plant species is prohibited.

CHAPTER II

Social Criteria

1. Small-scale Farmers²

1.0 Rights of Children

Key principle: The small-scale farmer respects the rights of children and ensures that there is no child labour.

- 1.0.1 **C** The small-scale farmer respects the rights of children and ensures that there is no child labour in accordance with ILO Conventions 138 and 182.
- Note: In the case of small-scale farming families, children may help on their family's farm provided that the work is not liable to negatively affect their health, safety, well-being, education, or development and that they are supervised by adults and given appropriate training.*
- 1.0.2 **C** The small-scale farmer does not employ children below the age of 16.
- 1.0.3 **C** The small-scale farmer's household members below 16 years may help on their family's farm after school or during holidays only under the following conditions:
- The child's work is structured to enable him/her to attend school and have leisure time
 - The child's work is appropriate for his/her age and physical condition
 - The child does not perform tasks that are hazardous for him/her
 - The child does not work for long hours or under dangerous or exploitative conditions
 - The child is supervised and guided by his/her parent or legal guardian
- 1.0.4 **C** Hazardous work is not to be performed by anyone under the age of 18.

² Small-scale farmers are farmers without employed staff, farm work is done by the farmer, family members or the community; workers are not hired all year round.

The following criteria below (1.1 to 1.5) only apply to small-scale farms that employ temporary or casual staff, e.g. during the shearing/combing season.

1.1 Free Choice of Labour

Key principle: The small-scale farmer with temporary staff guarantees free choice of employment and ensures that there is no forced or compulsory labour, which includes bonded or trafficked labour.

- 1.1.1 The small-scale farmer guarantees free choice of employment and ensures that there is no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour at any stage of production.
- 1.1.2 Labour by prisoners or those working under the regiment of imprisonment must not be used, even when this is permitted by national or local labour or other laws.
- 1.1.3 Workers are not required to submit deposits or identity papers, nor are salaries, benefits or properties retained to force workers to remain on the work site.
- 1.1.4 Debt is not imposed on workers (e.g., through large pay advances, for food, equipment, or transportation fees) that is difficult or impossible to repay on low wages.
- 1.1.5 Workers' rights to leave employment after giving reasonable notice is respected.

1.2 Non-discrimination

Key principle: The farmer does not tolerate any form of discrimination.

- 1.2.1 The small-scale farmer does not tolerate any form of discrimination. This includes benefits or discrimination in terms of hiring, contracting, promotion, remuneration, training, allocation of work, termination of employment, retirement, general treatment in workplace, or other activities on any basis, including gender, age, religion, race, colour, caste, ethnicity, nationality, social background, disability, political opinion, type of worker (permanent, temporary or migrant), sexual orientation, family responsibilities, pregnancy, childbirth, marital status, diseases, and membership in trade unions or workers' representative bodies.

1.3 Workers' Organisations

Key principle: The small-scale farmer guarantees all workers the right to establish and join workers' organisations and bargain collectively.

- 1.3.1 The right of all workers to establish and join workers' organisations and bargain collectively is guaranteed.

1.4 Conditions of Employments

Key principle: The small-scale farmer ensures that all workers enjoy fair conditions of employment.

- 1.4.1 Wages are set according to any applicable legal or sectoral CBA regulations or to the regional average wages or to official minimum wages for similar occupations, whichever is the highest.

This applies equally to seasonal workers, casual workers, and/or workers who are paid per unit or result. Wages are specified for all functions and employment terms, such as casual workers or piecework.
- 1.4.2 The small-scale farmer offers equal pay for equal work to all workers without discrimination based on gender or any other factor. This includes equivalent benefits and employment conditions for equal work.
- 1.4.3 Workers are paid regularly and on time through an appropriate method of payment.
- 1.4.4 Payments are documented with a clear and understandable payslip containing all necessary information (including the time, the gross and net wage and benefits, wage calculations for piece rates, and the amount and reason for any deductions).
- 1.4.5 Workers must sign for payments received in cash.
- 1.4.6 Payroll records must be kept 2 years.
- 1.4.7 The rights and health of workers are protected through appropriate working hours.
- 1.4.8 The farmer complies with applicable national and local legislation and industry standards and respects collective bargaining agreements regarding working hours and overtime regulations.

Note: This applies equally to all workers including workers that are paid per unit or result.
- 1.4.9 The farmer grants and respects meal and work breaks in accordance with national legislation.
- 1.4.10 Overtime work is voluntary, does not extend over a period of more than three consecutive months, and is paid according to national law or collective bargaining agreement. This applies to all employees and workers equally, including seasonal workers, casual workers, and workers who are paid per unit or result.
- 1.4.11 Workers can file a complaint.

1.5 Hazard Prevention and Control

Key principle: The small-scale farmer ensures that measures are in place to manage health and safety.

- 1.5.1 Measures are in place to deal with accidents and emergencies including first aid.
- 1.5.2 First aid boxes are placed at central locations and are accessible to all workers. The first aid boxes are complete and up to date.

- 1.5.3 Transport to medical facilities is provided if necessary.
- 1.5.4 Workplace hazards are managed effectively.
- 1.5.5 Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided for all workers free of charge. Workers know how to use PPE, especially when handling any potentially hazardous chemicals.

2. Large Farms with Employed Staff

2.0 Rights of Children

Key principle: The large farmer respects the rights of children and ensures that there is no child labour.

- 2.0.1 C The large farmer must respect the rights of children and ensures that there is no child labour in accordance with ILO Conventions 138 and 182.
- 2.0.2 C The large farmer does not employ children directly or indirectly (through sub-contracting) below the age of 16.
- 2.0.3 C Robust age-verification mechanisms are part of the recruitment process to ensure compliance to the minimum age.
- 2.0.4 C Hazardous work is not to be performed by anyone under the age of 18.

2.1 Free Choice of Labour

Key principle: The large farmer with temporary or casual staff guarantees free choice of employment and ensures that there is no forced or compulsory labour, which includes bonded or trafficked labour.

- 2.1.1 The large farmer guarantees free choice of employment and ensures that there is no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour at any stage of production.
- 2.1.2 Labour by prisoners or those working under the regiment of imprisonment must not be used, even when this is permitted by national or local labour or other laws.
- 2.1.3 Employees and workers are not required to lodge deposits or identity papers, nor are salaries, benefits or properties retained to force employees or workers to remain on the work site.
- 2.1.4 Debt is not imposed on workers (e.g. through large pay advances, for food, equipment, or transportation fees) that is difficult or impossible to repay on low wages.
- 2.1.5 Workers' rights to leave employment after giving reasonable notice is respected.

2.2 Non-discrimination

Key principle: A policy of non-discrimination and support for disadvantaged groups is implemented.

- 2.2.1 The farmer must not tolerate any form of discrimination. This includes benefits or discrimination in terms of hiring, contracting, promotion, remuneration, training, allocation of work, termination of employment, retirement, general treatment in workplace, or other activities on any basis, including gender, age, religion, race, colour, caste, ethnicity, nationality, social background, disability, political opinion, type of worker (permanent, temporary or migrant), sexual orientation, family

responsibilities, pregnancy, childbirth, marital status, diseases, and membership in trade unions or workers' representative bodies.

- 2.2.2 There is a written code of conduct or non-discrimination policy that is communicated to employees and workers.
- 2.2.3 Tests for pregnancy or genetic problems must not be conducted during recruitment of employees and workers.

2.3 Workers' Organisations

Key principle: The large farmer guarantees all employees and workers the right to establish and join workers' organisations and bargain collectively.

- 2.3.1 The right of all employees and workers to establish and join workers' organisations and bargain collectively is guaranteed.

2.4 Conditions of Employments

Key principle: The large farmer ensures that all employees and workers enjoy fair conditions of employment.

- 2.4.1 There must be a system in place to maintain adequate records of employment.
- This must include at least the following:
- A personnel file for each employee and worker
 - Pay records
 - Records of hours worked (regular and overtime)
 - Workforce statistics
 - Policies
 - Health & safety
- 2.4.2 Wages are set according to any applicable legal or sectoral CBA regulations or to the regional average wages or to official minimum wages for similar occupations, whichever is the highest.
- This applies equally to seasonal workers, casual workers, and/or workers who are paid per unit or result. Wages are specified for all functions and employment terms, such as casual workers or piecework.
- 2.4.3 Equal pay for equal work is offered to all employees and workers - permanent, seasonal, or casual - without discrimination based on gender or otherwise. This includes equivalent benefits and employment conditions for equal work.
- 2.4.4 Employees and workers must be paid on time regularly and at least through an appropriate method of payment.
- 2.4.5 Payments are documented with a clear and understandable payslip containing at least all necessary information (the time, the gross and net wage and benefits, wage calculation for piece rates, and the amount of and reason for any deductions).
- 2.4.6 Employees and workers must sign for any payments received in cash.

- 2.4.7 Payroll records must be kept 2 years.
- 2.4.8 All employees and workers, including permanent, seasonal, casual and migrant workers, must receive legally binding written contracts of employment signed by both the worker and the employer prior to work commencing. A copy is handed over to the worker.
The contract includes at least the following:
- Job description
 - Working hours and rest periods
 - Wage
 - Form and frequency of payment
 - Overtime regulations
 - Social benefits
 - Entitlements and deductions
 - Annual paid leave, sick leave, protection of the worker from loss of pay in the case of illness, disability, accident, or loss of life
 - A notice period for termination that is the same as the notice period for the employer
- When written contracts are not required by law for casual workers, the farmer ensures that casual workers understand and agree with the terms of the verbal contract.
- 2.4.9 The rights and health of employees and workers must be protected through appropriate working hours.
- 2.4.10 The farmer complies with applicable national and local legislation and industry standards and respects collective bargaining agreements regarding working hours and overtime regulations.
Note: This applies equally to employees and workers including seasonal workers, casual workers and/ or workers that are paid per unit or result.
- 2.4.11 The farmer grants and respects meal and work breaks in accordance with national legislation.
- 2.4.12 Overtime work is voluntary, does not extend over a period of more than three consecutive months, and is paid according to national law or collective bargaining agreement. This applies to all employees and workers equally, including seasonal workers, casual workers, and workers who are paid per unit or result.
- 2.4.13 Contracted workers have access to a grievance mechanism.

2.5 Hazard Prevention and Control

Key principle: The large farmer ensures that measures are in place to deal with accidents and emergencies, including first aid.

- 2.5.1 Measures are in place to deal with accidents and emergencies including first aid.
- 2.5.2 First aid boxes are placed at central locations and are accessible to all workers. The first aid boxes are complete and up to date.
- 2.5.3 Transport to medical facilities is provided if necessary.

- 2.5.4 Workplace hazards are managed effectively.
- 2.5.5 Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided for all employees and workers free of charge. Employees and workers must know how to use PPE, especially when handling any potentially hazardous chemicals.

CHAPTER III

Management Criteria and Auditing

1. Small-scale Farmers³

1.0 General Management

Key principle: The small-scale farmer must operate effective management systems to deliver the requirements of this Standard.

- 1.0.1 Cashmere marketed by the farmer as Good Cashmere must be produced and certified according to The Good Cashmere Standard (GCS).
- 1.0.2 The small-scale farmer must report complete and accurate data in the GCS self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ).
- 1.0.3 The small-scale farmer must ensure the service provider (for example those contracted to shear the goats) comply with all relevant criteria in the GCS, particularly the animal welfare criteria in Chapter I. The minimum actions the small-scale farmer must undertake to fulfil this requirement include:
 - Effectively communicating the requirements of the GCS to third parties
 - Ensuring that the significant risks of not meeting the requirements of the GCS are effectively addressed by third parties
- 1.0.4 Sales records of cashmere to traders and/or local buyers, including the buyer's name, date, and volume, must be kept for at least two years and be available to AbTF or the auditor upon request.
- 1.0.5 The small-scale farmer implements and documents corrective actions. Their effectiveness is monitored and adjusted where necessary.

1.1 Audits for Small-scale Farmers

Key principle: The small-scale farmer ensures an effective GCS audit.

- 1.1.1 The small-scale farmer must cooperate appropriately with the auditors to ensure an efficient and effective audit.
- 1.1.2 Confidential interviews with workers, randomly chosen by the auditor must be conducted without any influence from the farmer.
- 1.1.3 Worker representative participation in audits must take place during working time and workers must not lose income.

³ Small-scale farmers are farmers without employed staff, farm work is done by the farmer, family members or the community; workers are not hired all year round.

- 1.1.4 The small-scale farmer must commit to provide the buying station with required information listed in Chapter III 3.0.1 below.
- 1.1.5 The small-scale farmer must grant auditors unlimited access to all facilities in the farm.

2. Large Farms with Employed Staff

2.0 General Management

Key principle: The large farmer must operate effective management systems to deliver the requirements of this Standard.

- 2.0.1 There must be a system in place to collect, compile and report complete and accurate data in accordance with the GCS self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ).
- 2.0.2 The large farmer must ensure subcontractors (for example those contracted to shear the goats) comply with all relevant criteria in the GCS, particularly the animal welfare criteria in Chapter I. The minimum actions the large farmer must undertake to fulfil this requirement include:
- Effectively communicating the requirements of the GCS to third parties
 - Ensuring that the significant risks of not meeting the requirements of the GCS are effectively addressed by third parties
- 2.0.3 The large farmer must record how the actions relating to employment and subcontracting are fulfilled.

2.1 Staff Capacity

Key principle: There must be adequate staff capacity to implement The Good Cashmere Standard (GCS).

- 2.1.1 The large farmer must appoint a person responsible for GCS matters, who has the relevant knowledge and experience to carry out this post.
- 2.1.2 The tasks of the person that is responsible for GCS subjects includes:
- The overall coordination of GCS matters on the farm
 - Handling all necessary GCS related communication
 - The submission of annual Self-Assessments and annual Continuous Improvement Plans
 - Overseeing compliance, implementation, and monitoring of the farm's performance regarding the GCS requirements

2.2 Separation and Traceability of GCS Cashmere

Key principle: The large farmer ensures the separation of GCS cashmere from non-GCS cashmere and must follow the AbTF rules regarding the chain of custody, especially with respect to the preservation of traceability of the cashmere produced according to the criteria of the GCS.

- 2.2.1 Cashmere marketed by the large farmer as Good Cashmere must be produced and certified according to The Good Cashmere Standard.
- 2.2.2 **M** If the large farmer has multiple sites and not all these sites are taking part in the audit programme for GCS, the large farmer must ensure the separation of GCS cashmere from non-GCS cashmere. If necessary, a separation system must be in place, applied and documented at all stages.

- 2.2.3 Sales records of cashmere to traders and/or local buyers, including the buyer's name, date, and volume, must be kept for at least two years and be available to AbTF or the auditor upon request.

2.3 Continuous Improvement

Key principle: The large farm regularly assesses risks of non-compliance with the GCS and implements corrective actions.

- 2.3.1 The large farmer must develop a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and its actions must be implemented, documented, and monitored. The CIP must be reviewed and updated annually.
- 2.3.2 The large farmer implements and documents corrective actions. Their effectiveness is monitored and adjusted where necessary.

2.4 Audits for Large Farms

Key principle: The large farmer ensures an effective GCS audit.

- 2.4.1 The large farmer must provide sufficient and appropriate assistance to the auditors to ensure an efficient and effective audit. This includes the provision of staff with local geographical knowledge as well as transportation and logistical support if applicable, e.g. when the large farmer has multiple sites.
- 2.4.2 The large farm's responsible for GCS matters must be available to participate in the audits.
- 2.4.3 Confidential interviews with employees/workers' representatives, employees, and workers all randomly chosen by the auditors must be conducted without any influence from the large farmer.
- 2.4.4 On farms that employ 10 or more workers at least one worker representative must participate in the audit to increase worker involvement and understanding of the process of compliance.
- 2.4.5 Worker representative participation in audits must take place during working time and workers must not lose income.
- 2.4.6 The large farmer must commit to provide the buying station with required information listed in Chapter III 3.0.1 below.
- 2.4.7 The large farmer must grant auditors unlimited access to all facilities in the farm.

3. Buying Stations

3.0 General Management

Key principle: The buying station must operate an effective management system to deliver the requirements of this Standard.

- 3.0.1 The buying stations must have a system in place to accurately collect, maintain and update annually at least the following farmer/farmer group information:
- Name
 - Location
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Number of goats
 - The farmers' grazing permit number or farm ID
 - Cashmere price at market
 - Training participation

3.1 Staff Capacity

Key principle: There must be adequate staff capacity to implement The Good Cashmere Standard (GCS).

- 3.1.1 The buying station must appoint a person responsible for GCS matters, called the GCS Officer who has the relevant knowledge and experience to carry out this post.
- 3.1.2 The GCS Officer must be responsible for:
- The overall coordination of GCS matters in the buying station
 - Handling all necessary GCS related communication
 - Acting as a liaison between AbTF, the verification body, the auditor, and farmers regarding GCS matters
 - The submission of annual Self-Assessments, annual Continuous Improvement Plans and Corrective Action Plans
 - Overseeing compliance, implementation, and monitoring of the farmers' performance regarding the GCS requirements
- 3.1.3 All employees or workers that are involved in the processes relevant for the GCS are trained to the GCS requirements and the procedures that are established for this purpose. The training takes place once a year. New employees are trained before taking up their duties. The trainings are documented.

3.2 Separation and Traceability of GCS Cashmere

Key principle: The buying station ensures the separation of GCS cashmere from non-GCS cashmere and must follow the AbTF rules regarding the chain of custody, especially with respect to the preservation of traceability of the cashmere produced according to the criteria of the GCS.

- 3.2.1 **M** Cashmere marketed by the buying station as Good Cashmere must be produced by and purchased from farmers that are certified according to The Good Cashmere Standard (GCS).
- 3.2.2 **M** If not all the farmers selling to the buying station are taking part in the audit programme for GCS, the buying station must ensure the separation of GCS cashmere from non-GCS cashmere. If necessary, a separation system must be in place, applied, and documented at all stages.
- 3.2.3 All farmers must be given receipts of sales of their cashmere, including the buyer name, date, and volume. The buying station must maintain copies of these receipts for at least two years and must be able to submit these sale records to AbTF or the auditor upon request.
- 3.2.4 Sales records of cashmere to international traders and/or local producers, including the buyer name, date, and volume, must be kept for at least two years and be available to AbTF or the auditor upon request.

3.3 Contracts with GCS Farmers

Key principle: The buying station must have clear and equitable contracts with GCS farmers.

Note: Contracts are preferably written but may be verbal.

- 3.3.1 All GCS farmers or GCS farmer groups (in case of group contracts) receive contracts in language(s) understandable to them.
- 3.3.2 Contracts must as a minimum clearly indicate:
 - Grading and pricing
 - Delivery and payment terms and conditions
 - An arbitration system to resolve conflicts separate from jurisdiction
- 3.3.3 The buying station must ensure that GCS farmers have a good understanding of the contract and the associated rights and obligations.
- 3.3.4 There must be a transparent grading and payment system for cashmere in place that pays different prices for different cashmere quality levels.
- 3.3.5 GCS farmers must be paid for their cashmere in a timely manner, and not later than 30 days after delivery of fibre to the buying station.
- 3.3.6 GCS farmers must have easy access to the buying station's arbitration system or grievance mechanism if they consider that they are not receiving a fair price for their cashmere.

3.4 Continuous Improvement

Key principle: The buying station regularly assesses risks of non-compliance with the GCS and implements corrective actions.

- 3.4.1 The buying station annually carries out a risk assessment to identify possible risks of non-conformity with GCS at farm level.
- 3.4.2 The buying station annually carries out a risk assessment to identify possible risks of non-conformity with GCS at buying station level.

- 3.4.3 In case risks of non-conformity, the buying station plans and implements corrective actions to address the risks.
- 3.4.4 The buying station must develop a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and its actions must be implemented, documented, and monitored. The CIP must be reviewed and updated annually.

3.5 Audits for Buying Stations

Key principle: An effective GCS audit process must regularly assess the risks of non-compliance with the standard and implement corrective actions.

- 3.5.1 The buying station must provide sufficient and appropriate assistance to the auditors to ensure an efficient and effective audit. This includes the provision of staff with local geographical knowledge as well as transportation and logistical support.
- 3.5.2 The buying station's GCS Officer must be available to participate in the audits.
- 3.5.3 Confidential interviews with employees/workers' representatives, employees, workers, and farmers, all randomly chosen by the auditors must be conducted without any influence from the buying station.
- 3.5.4 At least one worker representative must participate in the audits as well as opening and closing meetings to increase worker involvement and understanding of the process of compliance.
- 3.5.5 Worker participation in audits must take place during working time and workers must not lose income.
- 3.5.6 The buying station must grant auditors unlimited access to all their facilities.

Aid by Trade Foundation

The Good Cashmere Standard® by AbTF is an independent standard for sustainably produced cashmere wool. Developed in 2019 in close collaboration with animal welfare specialists and independent cashmere-production experts, its goal is to improve the welfare of cashmere goats, the lives of the farmers, and the condition of the environment in which they live. The standard focuses on cashmere production in Inner Mongolia (China). The standard is administered by Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF), founded by Prof. Dr. Michael Otto in 2005.

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