



**THE GOOD
CASHMERE
STANDARD**
AbTF








THE GOOD CASHMERE STANDARD®

VOLUME 2.0



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Contact

Aid by Trade Foundation
Gurlittstraße 14
20099 Hamburg
Germany

Tel. +49 40 - 25 76 755 0
Email: info@abt-foundation.org

Title

The Good Cashmere Standard® v2.0

Standard Effective Date

This standard will enter into force in 2024, with mandatory implementation of the new or refined criteria and indicators from 2025. Until then, the requirements of version 1.2 are binding for assessing compliance.

Translation Accuracy

This document has been issued in two languages: English and Mandarin. In case of any discrepancy between versions due to translation, the English version prevails. This applies to any other translations.

Next Review

The standard is reviewed every 5 years at the latest.

For comments or questions please contact:

gcs@abt-foundation.org





Introduction

The Good Cashmere Standard® (GCS) is an independent standard for sustainable cashmere, developed by the Aid by Trade Foundation, that aims to improve the welfare of cashmere goats, the working conditions for herders and to protect the environment. It has been developed with input from animal welfare specialists, industry experts and, through a field-testing process, goat herders. The GCS is composed of four pillars:

- The **Goat Welfare Pillar** is the heart of the standard and is based on the Five Domains of Animal Welfare model, which emphasises the importance of positive subjective experiences for animals. In these criteria, requirements are placed on the physical resources in the animals' environment (e.g. shelter, feed, space, design), on management to achieve and maintain good living conditions and health, on social interaction with humans, animals and the environment.
- The **Planet Pillar** covers different dimensions of environmental protection. The criteria for land management, crop management and biodiversity are a starting point to ensure that cashmere production has no negative impact on the land and biodiversity. The Planet Pillar will be further expanded in the near future.
- The **People Pillar** contains the requirements placed on the various types of herders and cashmere producers (buying stations/dehairing stations). The criteria are differentiated between herders without workers, with temporary workers and permanent workers. This serves to ensure decent working conditions for all people associated with cashmere fibre production.
- The **Management Pillar** sets out the requirements related to responsible business conduct, the verification process, and commitment to GCS values. Requirements for documentation and training at the respective production levels are also defined here.

To ensure the reliability of The Good Cashmere Standard® and the correct implementation of its criteria, independent audits verify regularly whether cashmere goat herders and producers (buying stations/dehairing stations) comply with the criteria set out in the standard.

The standard criteria are only applicable to sedentary systems. They do not cover nomadic herding systems.



How to read this standard

The GCS covers the most significant aspects of sustainable cashmere production at the farm level and the first stage of marketing or processing¹.

The structure within the pillars is as follows:

- **Criteria** are requirements that need to be met. Criteria address herders as well as cashmere producers.
- **Intent** provides the rationale for a given requirement.
- **Indicators** are measurable/verifiable aspects that enable auditors to assess whether or not the corresponding criterion has been met.
- **Guidance** for implementation gives recommendations on how to fulfil the requirements.

Types of indicators

There are four different types of indicators in the standard. They differ in their relevance with regard to the consequences of non-compliance.

- **Core (C):** Indicators marked with a C lead to immediate exclusion from the GCS in the event of non-compliance. 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.
- **Major (M):** Indicators labelled M mean that non-compliance must be rectified and evidence of correction must be provided before cooperation with the GCS can continue.
- **Basic (B):** Basic indicators are mandatory, but there is more time granted to correct non-compliance.
- **Improvement (I):** Indicators labelled I indicate best or progressive practices that are not yet mandatory. Improvement indicators can be used to identify particularly advanced herders. They also point the way for further development, particularly in the area of animal welfare. Non-compliance does not require correction.

Timeframes for corrections may vary depending on the topic of the non-compliance. If a farm does not fulfil the corrections, it is excluded from the farm list. If a cashmere producer fails to fulfil necessary corrections, the entity will not receive a GCS certificate. Please consult the Verification Governance for details.



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. For this reason, the standard refers to cashmere producers, which may include the buying and dehairing stations.



History of change

The following table outlines the main structural differences between Volume 2 and Volume 1.2 of the Good Cashmere Standard®.

	GCS VOLUME 2.0	GCS V 1.2
General Structure	<p>The Good Cashmere Standard is divided into four pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goat Welfare 2. Planet 3. People 4. Management <p>Criteria and indicators are grouped into these pillars according to their specifics, along with the type of clause. In the case of Goat Welfare, the criteria were further assigned to the <i>five domains of animal welfare</i> according to their main affiliation. In the case of social and management criteria, the transparency of which criteria apply to which herder groups has been improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Chapters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goat Management • Social • Management • Subchapters • Key principles • Criteria <p>Criteria are assigned to a key principle belonging to the respective chapter, which is orientated towards certain management areas.</p>
Scientific Foundation for Animal Welfare	The five domains of animal welfare	Five freedoms of animal welfare
Formulation of Criteria	All criteria and indicators are formulated to describe intended/best practices. Wherever applicable, the Goat Welfare Criteria were formulated from the perspective of the goat.	Criteria are defined on the basis of unwanted or prohibited practices. The criteria focus on the herder and his management.



Pillar 1: Goat Welfare

Introduction: The Five Domains of Animal Welfare and Their Importance for Cashmere Goats

The criteria in the goat welfare pillar of the standard were developed on the basis of the five domains of animal welfare, a model developed by David J. Mellor. All domestic and farm animal species, including cashmere-producing goats, are covered in the model, as are other animal groups. Understanding the well-being of goats involves considering five fundamental domains: nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state. The five domains of animal welfare ensure that addressing each aspect not only meets the physical needs of goats but also nurtures positive emotional experiences. For instance, when it comes to nutrition, ensuring that goats have access to a diverse and nutritious diet not only supports their physical health but also satisfies their natural grazing instincts, leading to a pleasurable experience of satiation and the joy of tasting different flavours.

An enriched environment is essential for goats. Structures for climbing, opportunities for exploration, and varied terrain motivate goats to roam, play, and express their natural behaviours. This prevents boredom, fostering curiosity, engagement, and the joy of discovering their surroundings. An enriched environment is important because it guides the creation of spaces that enhance goats' well-being and prevents behavioural issues stemming from a lack of stimulation.

Health, as emphasised by the five domains model, is foundational for a fulfilling life for all goats. Regular veterinary care, disease prevention, and a balanced diet contribute significantly to their overall health. Illness, injury, and neglect are examples of health-related risks that can lead to pain, discomfort, nausea, malaise, and a lack of fitness. When in optimal health, goats experi-

ence the pleasures of fitness and vitality and can fully participate in the joys of life.

Positive human-animal interactions play a crucial role in the well-being of farm animals. Gentle handling, trust building, and meeting social needs foster feelings of security, self-sufficiency, and social bonding among goats. This positively influences their behaviour and emotional state, ensuring a positive experience and a sense of fulfilment within their living environment.

Mellor's holistic approach—combining good nutrition, a stimulating environment, optimal health, and positive interactions—supports a mental state characterised by contentment, security, and positive emotions. This fosters an overall sense of fulfilment in farm animals, including goats. By understanding and implementing the five domains model, we ensure the physical health of goats while nurturing an environment where they can experience positive emotions and lead fulfilling lives.

During the development of the criteria for the goat welfare chapter, the perspective of the goats was emphasised. The standard defines specific criteria for the first four domains. A high level of compliance with these criteria, many of which overlap with the fifth domain, allows the conclusion to be drawn that the animals on the farm have a good chance of positive affective responses and that the risk of negative emotional experiences, beyond the necessary level, is low; the necessary level means, for example, that tiredness or hunger are instinctive, unavoidable physical states and that the animals have to take action in order to have a positive experience (e.g. by satisfying their hunger or by resting).



NUTRITION

ACCESS TO FEED AND FORAGE

CRITERION 1.1:

Goats are fed qualitatively and quantitatively nutritious feed that meets their physiological needs and is presented in a manner that is consistent with their natural species behaviour.

INTENT

Goats are frugal, adaptable ruminants and as such have a high requirement for fibre-rich forage. In Inner Mongolia, this includes plant-based feed such as grasses, alfalfa, hay, straw, bushes, and the dried stalks of maize and sunflowers. It is important that all animals can eat undisturbed and without stress. As a guideline, each goat should have at least 45 centimetres of feeding space if feed is not always available or 22.5 centimetres of feeding space if feed is always available.

Special production phases, such as growth, pregnancy, lactation, or fattening, may require the additional supply of concentrates such as grain maize or pellet feeds. Care must be taken to ensure a balanced ratio, as there is otherwise a risk of health problems such as acidosis or general malnutrition. The needs of young animals, especially during the nursing phase, must be considered separately.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
1.1.1	M	Goats are offered a daily diet suitable for their age and stage of production.
1.1.2	B	Forage presentation takes place at least twice a day in the case of restrictive feeding and at least once a day in the case of ad libitum feeding.
1.1.3	I	Goats have continuous access to feed during the day or around the clock (i.e. ad libitum). This is granted not only during the grazing period but also continuously during stable- and yard-restricted phases.
1.1.4	M	The feed ration contains at least 50 percent long-fibre roughage on a dry-matter basis
1.1.5	B	Concentrates are distributed over at least two meals per day, with more than two meals being preferred.
1.1.6	B	If concentrate is fed, it is always given after the roughage.
1.1.7	B	Feed is offered in raised racks, not on the floor.
1.1.8	B	Goats have access to natural pasture, and therefore grazing, according to the pasture requirements in domain 2.
1.1.9	B	If grass growth is not sufficient, supplementary roughage is fed.
1.1.10	I	Goats have access to safe shrubs or bushes to browse.
1.1.11	I	Feed is offered in hanging hay nets, mesh boxes, or similar containers that encourage browsing behaviour.
1.1.12	B	Kids are given access to long-fibre roughage feed, such as hay, when they are 14 days old at the latest.
1.1.13	I	Kids get concentrated feed suitable for kids and are able to feed separately from the adult animals.



GUIDANCE

Herders are able to produce sufficient basic fodder for their goats on the pastures or to purchase additional fodder. They have the necessary knowledge and equipment to collect and provide a balanced, animal-friendly feed ration. They are sensitised to the importance of giving all animals, even in special circumstances, sufficient feed in terms of quantity and quality. From the very beginning, kids are given the opportunity to imitate the feeding behaviour of their mothers, even if their main food consists of milk.



NUTRITION

FEED MANAGEMENT

CRITERION 1.2:

Feed management supports the goats in maintaining or restoring their health and fitness.

INTENT

Goats have the ability to produce digestible matter from very nutrient-poor or woody plants. This does not mean that they can or should eat everything. Digestion is carried out in the forestomach system by micro-organisms that occur in a certain balance. It is very important for these micro-organisms that there are no sudden changes in feed, as this can lead to a shift in balance with health consequences. Unhygienic, mouldy, or rotten feed can also make goats ill. Acidosis, bloat, diarrhoea, secondary infections, and many other illnesses can occur.

As goats are vegetarians, the feeding of animal products—with the exception of milk powder in goat rearing—is not permitted. Mineral feed is used to ensure an adequate supply of bulk and trace elements.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
1.2.1	B	Any change of diet takes place gradually to avoid digestive upset.
1.2.2	B	Feed salts or mineral feeds are supplemented as needed for a balanced physiological nutrition.
1.2.3	M	Goats are not fed fishmeal or animal by-products.
1.2.4	B	Mouldy or otherwise compromised feedstuffs are not fed to goats.
1.2.5	I	The body condition score of the herd is recorded and documented regularly or at certain times of production (e.g. breeding, birth, and end of lactation), no fewer than three times a year.
1.2.6	B	Goats whose body condition falls below a score of 2 receive special treatment to improve their body condition. If this treatment is unsuccessful, the animal will be euthanised, according to criterion 3.9, in order to avoid chronic suffering.
1.2.7	B	Goats whose body condition drops below a score of 2.5 or rises above a score of 4 are not used for further breeding until they have successfully adapted to a body condition score (BCS) in the range of 2.5 to 4.

GUIDANCE

It is the herders' task to support the health of the animals through foresighted and prudent feed management. They are responsible for the proper harvesting and storage of the feed; neither the hygienic quality nor the nutritional value of the feed should be impaired beyond an unavoidable level. For example, mouldy feed not only poses a health risk but also results in a loss of nutritional value. Feeding must be controlled by the herders in such a way that the goats do not experience any sudden changes in feed and that their body condition remains within acceptable limits.



NUTRITION

WATER ACCESS

CRITERION 1.3:

Goats have regular access to water and can quench their thirst regardless of rank, age, or production phase.

INTENT

Water is essential for the survival of all living creatures on Earth. Goats ingest water directly or indirectly through the fluid content of their food. The water requirement depends on the animal's physiological condition, weight, dry matter intake, and salt intake as well as on the stage of production (e.g. lactation), temperature, and humidity. It is essential for their well-being and health that each goat can drink as much as it wants without stress or competition. Inadequate water intake may result in reduced feed intake, reduced performance, poisoning (e.g. sodium), hyperthermia, and an increased risk of urinary stones.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
1.3.1	M	All goats, including those separated or quarantined, have the opportunity to quench their thirst at least every twelve hours all year round.
1.3.2	I	Goats have access to water more than twice a day, but not ad libitum.
1.3.3	I	Goats have ad libitum access to water (24/7 in housing, yards, or pasture).
1.3.4	B	Water is provided in such a way that there is no competition between goats.
1.3.5	I	Young kids have their own water access, e.g. troughs or drinking buckets.
1.3.6	I	The water troughs for young kids are appropriate for their body size, and accessible troughs are safe so that the kids cannot drown.

GUIDANCE

Herders are responsible for ensuring that the animals have sufficient water in the barn, in the yard, and during the grazing period. The quantity of drinking troughs or the trough width per animal must be selected in such a way that rationed drinking troughs do not lead to scuffles or to lower-ranking animals not being able to drink as much water as they would like.



NUTRITION

WATER QUALITY AND WATERING EQUIPMENT

CRITERION 1.4:

The goats receive clean water from well-maintained stable equipment.

INTENT

The water offered to the animals must be suitable. This means that it must be palatable, well tolerated by the body and usable in the drinking system. The quality can be checked on site in terms of appearance (e.g. turbidity and colour), smell, and taste. For example, high amounts of iron or manganese reduce palatability. High levels of iron or calcium ions can lead to functional impairments in the drinking equipment. Regular cleaning to maintain hygiene is just as important as checking the water flow rate because both measures are essential for unhindered drinking comfort.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
1.4.1	B	The water's smell, taste, and appearance are consistent with good water quality.
1.4.2	B	Water sources and troughs are checked daily for sufficient water flow and cleaned as necessary to maintain them in a hygienic condition.
1.4.3	B	There are no films or dirt in the water trough.
1.4.4	B	Newly constructed buildings are planned and equipped with water pipes and drinking technology.

GUIDANCE

Water troughs, buckets, and other drinking devices must be placed in such a way as to avoid water contamination, in particular by faeces and dirt. Water should be prevented from spilling or freezing. Herders must regularly inspect drinking facilities to ensure that they are in good working order.



ENVIRONMENT

GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

CRITERION 2.1:

The goats live in a structured environment where they can choose their surroundings according to their species-specific needs.

INTENT

Goats are herd animals with a clear hierarchy that is fought over. As the animals in human care generally have a physically restricted habitat, for example due to fences or stables, it is particularly important to create an environment that is suitable for goats. Sufficient space for each goat is just as important as fresh air, light, protection from the weather, and areas for resting, playing, eating, and social interaction. The more the natural behaviour of the goats is encouraged, the more balanced and resilient they will have the chance to be. If, on the other hand, the environment is dull and monotonous, this can be very stressful for lower-ranking animals and can lead to mischief and behavioural anomalies.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
2.1.1	B	Goat husbandry is oriented towards the outdoor climate and allows a self-determined choice of an appropriate environment.
2.1.2	M	Goats have year-round daytime access to an outdoor exercise area, e.g. a yard.
2.1.3	M	Goats have daily daytime access to pasture unless this is prevented by extreme weather conditions or environmental and legal requirements.
2.1.4	B	Pens, gates, fences, and other structures in the goats' indoor and outdoor environments are constructed so that they are safe against breakouts. They are kept in good condition and free from debris so as not to risk injury.
2.1.5	B	Pens, gates, fences, and other structures in the goats' indoor and outdoor environments are of a design that does not allow goats to get their heads or limbs stuck.
2.1.6	I	Fencing is at least 1.2 metres high.
2.1.7	B	The flooring in the lying areas is solid and neither fully slatted nor fully perforated.
2.1.8	B	If slatted or otherwise perforated floors are installed in the goats' living area, they are stable and level and do not pose a risk of injury to the goats. The gap width is no larger than 12 millimetres, with a bar width of at least 36 millimetres using materials that offer grip to the goats' hooves and that are easy to clean and disinfect.
2.1.9	B	Goats have a clean and dry place to lie down. This applies to both indoor and outdoor areas. If the outdoor area is not dry and clean due to the weather, the goats must be allowed to access the indoor area.
2.1.10	B	Whenever the housing/shelter is occupied by goats, deformable and dry bedding is provided.



2.1.11	B	Droppings are removed regularly to keep the indoor and outdoor environment clean.
2.1.12	B	An enriched environment (e.g. with earth mounds, raised wooden platforms, and tree stumps) is permanently available in each goat yard.
2.1.13	B	For every group or partial group of 50 goats, there is a raised outdoor enrichment area of at least 0.5 square metres.
2.1.14	I	In housing/shelter, there are no dead ends for the animals.
2.1.15	I	The barn gates are at least 1.5 goat lengths wide, or there are two or more gates.
2.1.16	I	Goats housed for periods exceeding 48 hours have access to an enriched environment.
2.1.17		An enriched environment (e.g. with raised wooden platforms or tree stumps) is available in housing/shelter to minimise rank fights and to provide varied activities and comfort.
(a-e)	I	a) Functional rooms, such as partitions and escape rooms (e.g. separated by walls or by strategically placed feeding troughs)
	I	b) Climbing and resting facilities (e.g. raised wooden platforms or tree stumps)
	I	c) Materials for grooming (e.g. brushes or tree stumps)
	I	d) Play equipment specifically for kids (e.g. buckets, seesaws, or climbing equipment)
	I	e) An indoor kids' zone with bedding, forage, and water

GUIDANCE

When designing the goats' habitat, it can be taken into account what the natural environment of wild goats looks like. In nature, goats find plenty of space, shelter under trees or rocks, climbing opportunities, and a diverse range of food to conquer. Alternatively, herders can take the goats' needs into account and organise the areas accordingly. Areas for resting, feeding, social behaviour, climbing, and playing can be set up using simple and inexpensive means. Elements necessary for management, such as fences or the floor, must be designed in such a way that they do not pose any avoidable risks to the goats.



ENVIRONMENT

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

CRITERION 2.2:

The goats have sufficient space, both indoors and outdoors, to fulfil their needs for ingestion of feed and water, social behaviour, exercise, and rest.

INTENT

Traditionally, cashmere farms in China have either paved or sandy yards where the goats can stay 24 hours a day. There are also shelters of various designs, with access regulated on a farm-by-farm basis. Access to pasture outside the grazing ban (which lasts from April to June) is usually allowed at least during the growing season or all year round. The growing season for Inner Mongolia is defined as May to September. The comfort and well-being of the animals should be ensured through the stocking density in the shelter/stable and in the yard. There must be space to stand naturally, lie down comfortably, turn around, groom, adopt all natural postures, and move in a natural way. In order to ensure this, the following minimum space requirements apply. It is important to note that the *indoor* space requirement includes not only closed stables but also open stables and solutions such as sheds or pasture tents.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
2.2.1	B	Indoor requirements per goat
		Adults and kids older than six months: 1.5 square metres
		Kids up to six months 0.5 square metres
		Uncastrated bucks older than six months: 2.5 square metres
2.2.2	B	Outdoor requirements per goat (cf. indicator 2.1.2)
		Adults and kids older than six months: 2.5 square metres
		Kids up to 6 months: 0.5 square metres
		Uncastrated bucks older than six months: 3 square metres

GUIDANCE

The indoor space can be extended very easily and inexpensively without the need for new construction. On the one hand, the existing space in the stable can be extended using resting platforms. Climbing devices can also be designed in such a way that there is shelter underneath them. There are also many temporary or mobile solutions that are useful in the pasture: tents, igloos, huts, or mobile shelters, which can be self-built or purchased.

Cashmere producers can support herders by sharing best-practice solutions and advising on practical implementation options for individual farms.



ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS CONTROL

CRITERION 2.3:

Goats are protected from controllable stressors in their environment.

INTENT

Physical environmental factors can have a direct or indirect impact on animal welfare. For example, loud, unexpected noises, flickering lights, or toxic substances in the environment can affect mental and physical health. Therefore, both physical equipment and work processes need to be designed to provide a sense of safety, ensure that the environment is not hostile, and that animals have alternatives, for example by moving away from noise sources.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
2.3.1	M	Goats are protected from severe weather. They have the opportunity to seek shelter from draughts and wind, rain, and sun.
2.3.2	B	Sufficient air quality in housing/shelter is maintained. There are no acrid odours to be detected.
2.3.3	B	Work routines are planned in such a way that there is little stress for the goats.
2.3.4	B	Light management is based on the daylight cycle. When using artificial light, rest phases are respected and a night's rest of eight hours is ensured.
2.3.5	B	The lighting in animal-handling areas is designed in such a way that the animals can see well everywhere.
2.3.6	B	Goats have no access to any potentially toxic chemicals, e.g. paints, wood preservatives, or disinfectants.
2.3.7	B	Goats have no access to any potentially toxic or poisonous plants, shrubs, or trees.
2.3.8	B	Electrical cables are out of reach for goats.

GUIDANCE

The two ways to check whether the environmental stressors can have a negative effect are, on the one hand, intensive observation of the animal and, on the other, empathising with the goat. Do the goats show defence reactions such as rolling their eyes, bleating, or fleeing? Are there places in the barn or yard that are avoided? Are there places where there is a risk of injury? How is the lighting at the goats' eye level? How is the quality of the air near the ground, where harmful gases usually accumulate? Remember that goats are generally much closer to the ground than a human being, especially when lying down.



ENVIRONMENT

TRANSPORT

CRITERION 2.4:

When goats are transported, environmental conditions, hygiene, health, and interaction with humans and other animals are taken into account.

INTENT

For most animals, transport is associated with stress, as they are unfamiliar with being crammed into a small space and travelling involves unfamiliar movements and speed. Therefore, transport must be as short, gentle, and stress-free as possible, taking into account the needs of the animals. Means of transport and loading and unloading equipment must be designed, constructed, maintained, and used in such a way as to avoid injury and suffering to the animals and to ensure their safety.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
2.4.1	M	Transport duration is always less than eight hours.
2.4.2	M	Goats have access to water up to the point of being loaded.
2.4.3	B	Goats have enough space during transport to stand naturally without their head touching the roof (if there is one).
2.4.4	B	Stocking density in transport: For goats weighing 55 kilograms or more, 0.5 square metres For goats weighing less than 55 kilograms, 0.4 square metres
2.4.5	B	Goats are only transported in moderate outside temperatures to avoid heat or cold stress (ideally, between 5 and 20 degrees Celsius).
2.4.6	B	Air supply, light, and stability are provided during transport.
2.4.7	B	When loading the goats, the lead goat has a clear view of the loading area and there is enough space for loading the entire group of goats.
2.4.8	B	Transport vehicles are cleaned between uses.
2.4.9	B	Transport vehicle ramps and flooring are non-slip.



2.4.10 B	Ramps are designed to enable the easy and safe loading and unloading of goats.
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2.4.11 B	<p>Goats must be fit for transport. Any goat that falls into one of the following categories must not be transported unless the purpose of transport is to receive veterinary treatment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unable to walk onto the transport vehicle unaided • Has open wounds • Has a prolapse • Has undergone surgery in the previous two weeks • Is in the last month of pregnancy • Has given birth in the previous 48 hours • Is extremely debilitated • Is a kid in the first two weeks of life
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2.4.12 B	There are sturdy partitions to group the goats in the transport vehicle if more than 50 adult goats are being transported at once.
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2.4.13 B	Goats are penned within the transport vehicle in groups of similar size or age.
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2.4.14 B	Goats are not mixed with animals from other goat groups during transport.
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GUIDANCE

Regardless of whether herders transport their own animals or the animals are transported for sale, the herders bear at least partial responsibility. They must check the animals in question for fitness for transport because only fit, healthy animals may be transported. Transport vehicles that require the goats to lie down are to be avoided. Herders must also ensure safe loading, i.e. the stability and fastening of the loading equipment, and (if applicable) work with the driver to make preparations such as spreading sawdust on an otherwise slippery loading ramp or calmly and patiently steering the goats.

Cashmere producers are recommended to offer education and training to livestock traders and transporters to ensure their co-operation.



ENVIRONMENT

ISOLATION AND CONFINEMENT

CRITERION 2.5:

Goats are only kept in (solitary) confinement in exceptional cases for their own protection or that of others. They are adequately cared for.

INTENT

Goats are herd animals and as such form strong social groups. Separation from the group can cause stress, anxiety, and discomfort to the individual. Therefore, separation should only be used in exceptional circumstances, such as contagious diseases or as a quarantine measure. Visual and auditory contact with the herd should still be maintained. Food, water, and shelter must be provided for separated animals in the same way as for the rest of the herd.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
2.5.1	B	Isolation facilities are available.
2.5.2	I	There is one isolation pen per 50 goats.
2.5.3	B	Isolation facilities meet the minimum dimensions as required in indicator 2.2.1.
2.5.4	B	Goats are never kept in isolation or confinement unless health reasons require it. This includes breeding bucks.
2.5.5	B	If health reasons require isolation or confinement, animals are provided with food and water and have visual and auditory contact with the herd. The possibility to rest without being disturbed or bothered by other animals is provided.
2.5.6	I	Unless there is a risk of infection or the reason for isolation or confinement is quarantine to protect other animals, a companion is provided for the isolated/confined animal.

GUIDANCE

Animals are only isolated if illness or injury makes this necessary for the animal itself or if other animals need to be protected from infection. If possible, isolated animals are given companion animals who are at least within earshot and sight. The herder should also provide space, bedding, shelter, food, and water for isolated animals, following the same guidelines as for groups.



HEALTH

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL FITNESS

CRITERION 3.1:

Goat husbandry conditions ensure good fitness and animal health. Management processes are designed to prevent health risks and enable effective intervention when necessary.

INTENT

Health is more than just the absence of disease. Because physical, mental, and social aspects contribute to well-being, other areas—such as nutrition, environment, and behaviour—can all affect health as well. For this reason, herders have the means to positively influence the health and fitness of their animals by acting preventively or reactively through management measures.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
3.1.1	M	The general conditions for physical fitness and health are provided by a species-appropriate environment and stable, homogeneous animal groups.
3.1.2	M	Goats are checked at least once daily.
3.1.3	B	Routine foot care, including trimming, is carried out.
3.1.4	B	Lameness levels do not exceed 5 percent of the herd.
3.1.5	I	Foot bathing is carried out on a regular basis and whenever necessary or on veterinary instructions.

GUIDANCE

The challenge for herders is to move from a reactive to a preventive approach. This means carefully planning and establishing controls and routines to manage animal health, minimise risk, and prevent problems. This is done through daily visual herd inspections, herd management measures (e.g. breeding control, group composition, rearing planning), documentation (see criterion 3.7), body condition checks, and hoof care.



HEALTH

MEDICATION AND TREATMENT

CRITERION 3.2:

Medication and treatments are only administered to the goats as required, taking into account responsible practices.

INTENT

Medicines are used to cure or prevent diseases. Vaccinations serve to protect against the outbreak of diseases or to reduce their severity. Antibiotics are used as a defence against bacterial infections. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs have analgaesic, anti-inflammatory, and antipyretic effects and can support well-being and fast recovery.

Vaccinations, antiparasitics, antibiotics, and steroidal and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are among the conventional medicines. Alternative medical practices, e.g. as part of traditional Chinese medicine, are also included in this criterion.

INDICATOR

No.	Level	Indicator
3.2.1	M	Any goat that is sick or injured or has parasites is treated as soon as the health issue is discovered.
3.2.2	B	A designated person is always present to initiate the treatment of the animal or the involvement of a veterinarian.
3.2.3	B	Medical material and medicines are stored hygienically and safely. All materials for the administration of medicines must be clean and well maintained. Medicines are only used according to the package insert and if sensory inconspicuous.
3.2.4	M	Sub-therapeutic use of veterinary medicines is prohibited.
3.2.5	M	The use of any product (e.g. antibiotics, beta-agonists, or hormones) as growth promoters is prohibited.
3.2.6	B	If the goats are dipped as part of a parasite treatment, this process is carried out in the least stressful way possible.
3.2.7	B	Safety equipment (e.g. masks, aprons, gloves, and rubber boots) is available for the workers who carry out the dipping of the goats.
3.2.8	B	Expired medicines and used medical material are disposed of safely and without risk to the health of humans, animals, or the environment.
3.2.9	B	Wastewater containing active substances such as disinfectants or antiparasitics is disposed of in a manner that is harmless to the environment, humans, or animals.



GUIDANCE

Herders prevent disease through vaccinations. If an animal or herd is showing signs of illness, a veterinary professional will be called in if necessary. Diseases are treated with authorised medication; this means that the medicine is intended for the animal species and the disease. **Cashmere producers** sensitise herders and co-operating veterinarians to the importance of administering painkillers and anti-inflammatories in the case of infectious diseases (e.g. pneumonia or uterine inflammation) or lameness and that they should not be treated exclusively with antibiotics. In general, the use of antibiotics should be minimised while safeguarding animal welfare. The prophylactic or metaphylactic administration of antibiotics is not acceptable.



HEALTH

PHYSICAL ALTERATIONS

CRITERION 3.3:

Goats have a right to physical integrity. For permitted procedures, the best available practice shall be chosen while minimising pain.

INTENT

Animals are sentient beings who can feel emotions such as pleasure, pain, and fear and take appropriate action, for example by avoiding adverse stimuli or seeking out pleasant stimuli. Inflicting pain, suffering, or harm on an animal for no reason must be avoided. Therefore, physical alterations are generally not permitted. The castration of male animals is permitted if this is necessary for farm management to prevent inbreeding and for breeding control. The application of ear tags (in contrast to ear notching) does not count as physical alteration; on the contrary, this is recommended for animal identification, provided that suitable ear tags are used.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
3.3.1	M	The castration of male goat kids is carried out after a risk-benefit assessment, not as a routine procedure.
3.3.2	I	Male goats sold before puberty (at up to approximately six months of age) are not castrated.
3.3.3	I	Male goats are not castrated but kept in a group among themselves.
3.3.4	B	Only experienced, competent herders or stockpersons perform castration or personally supervise the process.
3.3.5	B	People, equipment, and premises are subject to good hygienic practices during castration.
3.3.6	B	If buck kids are to be castrated, the permitted methods are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalpel • Emasculator (Burdizzo)
3.3.7	M	Castration of male kids may only be carried out once a stable mother-kid bond has been established (no younger than 24 hours), but no later than at three months of age.
3.3.8	B	Kids are given painkillers during castration.
3.3.9	I	Kids are castrated by a veterinarian and given a local anaesthetic before castration.



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- 3.3.10 M** All physical alterations aside from castration and ear tagging are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, a prohibition on the following:
- Ear notching
 - Disbudding and dehorning
 - De-scenting bucks
 - Removal of goats' wattles
-

- 3.3.11 I** Ear tags are used.
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GUIDANCE

Castration: It is up to herders' discretion whether castration is necessary in general or can be avoided for individual groups or for all bucks. It is often possible to avoid castration through good management, sales, and group structure. If animals are castrated, this should be done as young as possible and under the administration of painkillers. Painkillers relieve both the pain and the inflammatory reaction that follows due to the tissue damage caused by the scalpel or Burdizzo tongs. The application of local anaesthetics and painkillers is recommended, but, in China, local anaesthetics must be administered by a veterinarian.

Ear tags: Ear tags must be placed in the centre of the ear, protecting the vessels.



HEALTH

KID MANAGEMENT

CRITERION 3.4:

Kid goats are provided with a species-appropriate and social environment, and adequate nutrition is ensured.

INTENT

Ruminants are born with an incomplete immune system. It is only through the colostrum, meaning the first mother’s milk, that they receive the antibodies that serve as a defence against pathogens. For this reason, it is extremely important that kids are given colostrum to drink as soon as possible after birth; if a kid’s own mother is unable to feed it, herders must provide an alternative such as a nurse goat or colostrum from a bottle. Kids are also still very sensitive and need protection from the cold and draughts. In the wild, goats show similar behaviour to deer, so kids are hidden away while their mothers are out foraging. Clever stable design supports this behaviour and can lead to increased animal welfare.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
3.4.1	M	It is ensured that kids ingest colostrum during the first six hours of life.
3.4.2	B	Goats and their kids are together in a quiet environment after birth and can bond. A mother’s care of her kid is supervised by the herders.
3.4.3	B	Provisions for managing orphan or excess kids are in place.
3.4.4	I	Frozen colostrum or commercial colostrum powder are available on the farm during the kidding period.
3.4.5	B	The equipment for bottle rearing kids is well maintained and hygienically clean.
3.4.6	B	Artificially reared kids always have access to water.
3.4.7	I	Artificially reared kids get milk at least three times a day for the first two weeks of life and at least twice a day thereafter.
3.4.8	M	Kids must not be weaned until they reach at least 40 percent of their adult weight or a minimum of eight weeks of age.
3.4.9	B	During the first two weeks of life, kids are either kept together with their mothers at all times or, for times when they are separated from their mothers, have access to an indoor zone that is exclusively for kids.
3.4.10	I	Kids have all-day access to an indoor kids’ zone where they can seek shelter and rest.
3.4.11	I	The kids’ zone is equipped with food, bedding, and water.
3.4.12	B	Kids are weaned step by step over the course of at least one week.
3.4.13	B	Newly weaned kids are kept with other kids they are familiar with.



GUIDANCE

Herders can prepare for the kidding period by preparing the shelter so that it is ready for the kids and mothers to move into. This means that cleaning and disinfection have been completed and that bedding, water, and feed troughs are available. Protected areas, just for kids, can be prepared. Herders can milk colostrum from goats that produce enough milk and freeze it in portions to bottle-feed kids when needed. The colostrum should be thawed gently in a water bath at between 40 and 45 degrees Celsius or in the microwave on the lowest setting with frequent stirring until the milk has reached 37 degrees Celsius.

Herders also provide kids with access to water and food so that they can either imitate their mothers or gain their first experience of them through exploratory behaviour; this will help with weaning later on.



HEALTH

BREEDING MANAGEMENT

CRITERION 3.5:

The breeding of the goats is based on the natural reproductive cycle. The long-term health and welfare of the breeding animals and their offspring serve as the guiding principle.

INTENT

Goats are seasonal animals, which means that they are only naturally reproductive at a certain time of year when the days are shorter, often from around September to November. They have a gestation period of 150 days and therefore give birth from winter to spring. Giving birth is always a risky process for both mother and kid; both are vulnerable and susceptible to infections. The birthing area must therefore be clean, hygienic, comfortable, and accessible so that birth assistance can be provided if necessary.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
3.5.1	M	In breeding, a balance is sought between animal health and performance traits, e.g. fibre quality.
3.5.2	B	Cloned, genetically engineered or gene-edited goats are prohibited.
3.5.3	B	The techniques of embryo transfer and/or ovum pick-up are not used.
3.5.4	B	Incest is avoided through appropriate breeding planning and the regular replacement of breeding bucks.
3.5.5	I	Due to the planned breeding of the goats, the births take place in a defined period of time, which is oriented towards optimal climatic conditions and increases the probability of high animal health or low neonatal mortality.
3.5.6	B	Young does must be at least twelve months old before being bred for the first time.
3.5.7	I	There is at least one breeding buck for every 40 breeding females.
3.5.8	B	If artificial insemination is performed, the person performing it is trained and focusses on swift, hygienic, and low-stress implementation. Note: Only transvaginal cervical insemination is permitted. Surgical artificial insemination and electroejaculation are not allowed.
3.5.9	B	Goats are not confined, tethered, or otherwise restrained for mating.
3.5.10	B	During the kidding season, the goats are observed several times a day (at least four times) so that help can be provided quickly in the event of problems or difficult births.



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| 3.5.11 | B | The area for kidding is sheltered, bedded, well lit, and clean, and materials for birth assistance are easily accessible. |
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| 3.5.12 | I | There is a separate area where the goats can give birth, e.g. a kidding pen. |
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| 3.5.13 | B | If birth assistance has to be provided for more than 15 percent of births, a problem analysis is carried out and a solution strategy is derived with the help of an expert or veterinarian. |
|---------------|----------|---|
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GUIDANCE

Herders can plan the breeding to suit the farm. Herders should consciously decide which animals are to be used for the production of offspring, avoiding the use of animals with undesirable characteristics such as malpositioned legs or teeth as well as animals that cannot withstand the burden of pregnancy. Bucks or semen should be carefully chosen to prevent inbreeding. The planning of kidding should be considered when choosing the breeding time. The weather when the animals are born or the planning of castration can be the deciding factors, depending on how each farm is structured. Structured planning can also help to control the feeding of the pregnant animals, the group composition, and stable occupancy.



HEALTH

EUTHANASIA

CRITERION 3.6:

If a goat is in danger of suffering with no prospect of recovery, it is professionally euthanised.

INTENT

At some point, every herder is likely to be confronted with the question of whether and for how long it is justifiable to prolong the life of a suffering animal and under what circumstances its quality of life is so severely impaired that euthanasia is the method of choice. Euthanasia is always a case-by-case decision and must be carefully considered. If prolonged and severe suffering leading to death is foreseeable and if there is no prospect of treatment, it is the ethical duty of the animal owner to ensure that the animal is euthanised.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
3.6.1	M	If a goat is in pain or is suffering from a disease or injury that is either very severe or not responding to treatment, it is euthanised without delay.
3.6.2	M	Animals to be euthanised are handled, restrained, and killed in such a manner as to minimise unnecessary pain and distress prior to death.
3.6.3	B	The person carrying out euthanasia is able to recognise the signs of death.
3.6.4	B	The person carrying out euthanasia stays with the animal until they have confirmed death.
3.6.5	M	Goats are only euthanised using one of the following methods: Veterinarian-administered overdose of barbiturates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric stunning of only the head • Electric stunning of the head and heart If the method used is not necessarily fatal, such as electric stunning of only the head, a secondary method, such as exsanguination, is used within 15 seconds of stunning.
3.6.6	B	The spinal cord is never severed or broken in any living animal.
3.6.7	I	The person carrying out euthanasia has attended training on the correct way to euthanise a goat according to this standard.

GUIDANCE

Herders must use their training and experience to assess whether a suffering animal has a chance of recovery. If this is not the case, they must arrange for the animal to be euthanised by a veterinarian or carry out the euthanasia themselves using the listed methods. **Cashmere producers** have the task of sensitising the animal owners to this issue, explaining the options and methods, and offering training. Producers can also work with local veterinarians to jointly raise awareness on the subject of euthanasia.



HEALTH

SLAUGHTER

CRITERION 3.7:

A goat intended for meat production is slaughtered professionally while stunned.

INTENT

The production of meat is a regular part of agricultural livestock farming for self-sufficiency and for economic gain. If goats are slaughtered on the farm, they must be slaughtered in a professionally impeccable and humane manner, which includes stunning the goat immediately before slaughter. Stunning is mandatory in order to minimise pain, stress, and fear of death in the animal. It is also important that pregnant animals in the last trimester are not slaughtered, as their kids would otherwise suffocate miserably in utero.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
3.7.1	M	All animals are effectively stunned pre-slaughter using a method that causes instantaneous unconsciousness that lasts until death.
3.7.2	M	Goats are stunned using one of the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric stunning of only the head • Electric stunning of the head and heart Note: Stunning with a captive bolt stunner is permitted from an animal welfare perspective but is currently not legal for herders in China.
3.7.3	B	Goats are slaughtered by a secondary method, such as exsanguination, within 15 seconds of stunning.
3.7.4	I	Goats are slaughtered out of sight of other animals.
3.7.5	B	The place of slaughter is cleaned after each use.
3.7.6	B	Goats intended for slaughter are not mated.
3.7.7	B	Goats in the last trimester of pregnancy are not slaughtered.

GUIDANCE

The method of choice in China is electrical stunning. As stunning equipment is expensive, it is advisable for **Cashmere Producers** to find solutions for their farming communities, such as rental equipment or shared devices. The proper and safe handling of the electrical stunning device must be ensured in order to avoid causing the goat pain due to improper stunning and to avoid endangering people, including the person operating the device.

This can be done by designing the place where stunning is carried out accordingly (e.g. with an escape-proof pen, appropriate lighting, and a non-slip floor) and by providing sufficient training and safety clothing.

To avoid slaughtering pregnant animals, **herders** can palpate the right abdominal wall of the animal. In most cases, parts of the foetus can be felt during the last trimester of pregnancy.



BEHAVIOUR

BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS

CRITERION 4.1:

Goats can, whenever a management measure does not speak against it, pursue their species-specific behaviour and are stimulated to do so by their welfare status and environment.

INTENT

Species-appropriate husbandry is based on the needs, natural behaviour, and welfare of animals. The aim is for the animal to be able to do everything under near-natural conditions that satisfy its needs and prevent it from being harmed. It is not only the range of external influences that is important here but also the animal's freedom of choice, so that it can actively decide what it wants to do. This includes social behaviour in the herd. Restrictions on this freedom of choice by humans should be planned as well as possible and for as short a duration as possible.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
4.1.1	B	The animals are kept in stable groups according to age and production stage. Changes in the group structure take place as rarely as possible.
4.1.2	B	Goats can exercise their position within the group according to the rank order without suffering any harm.
4.1.3	B	When changes are necessary in a goat group, animal observation is increased in order to quickly detect injuries resulting from rank fights and to initiate treatments if necessary.
4.1.4	I	The integration of goats into a group is only carried out in the pasture with a large amount of space and possibilities for escape.
4.1.5	B	If individual animals show themselves to be incompatible in a group (through massive aggression, suppression, or constant disturbance), they are removed from the group and either kept with animals that are equal to them or sold/slaughtered.
4.1.6	B	Goats can (except during concrete, animal-specific management measures) move in a self-determined way and decide which conspecifics they want to interact with and where they want to stay.

GUIDANCE

This indicator does not mean that the goats should be left to themselves all the time; on the contrary, interaction with humans can be a positive experience for goats as well as for humans. Herders can contribute to the goats' interactions with each other through a good, well-planned composition of animal groups. It can be useful to plan groups according to age, sex, strength, and ranking as well as according to production stage. For example, it is advantageous to keep pregnant goats among themselves, and young bucks are also best grouped together. It is the herders' duty to make group changes carefully and to minimise risks.



BEHAVIOUR

HANDLING

CRITERION 4.2:

Interactions between humans and goats are non-violent and restrict the animal only as far as is necessary for safe handling in the context of husbandry or health measures.

INTENT

The behaviour and attributes of humans can strongly influence the reactions of animals, both positively and negatively. Impatient, dominant, or insecure behaviour, loud or angry voices, and unpredictable or violent handling can contribute to negative perceptions in animals. This can lead to emotions such as fear, panic, pain, or insecurity, which can result in flight, attack, or refusal behaviour in the animals. On the other hand, if people behave predictably and patiently and speak confidently and clearly to the animals and supplement this with experienced, controlled, and animal-friendly handling, there is a greater likelihood of positive experiences such as calmness, making contact, and socialising as well as emotions such as a sense of well-being and a feeling of being in control. It also needs to be taken into account that the general long-term frequency of contact with people and familiarity with handling play a major role in animal welfare.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
4.2.1	C	All goats are handled calmly and humanely from a young age onwards.
4.2.2	B	Goats are handled as a group.
4.2.3	B	Goats have the same caregivers in their daily lives. Different people performing the same tasks do so according to a common routine in order to provide consistency and reliability for the goats.
4.2.4	B	All interactions with the goats (e.g. treatments, feeding, and animal checks) are carried out as routinely as possible, at similar times of the day, and in the same places in order to achieve reliability and minimise stress.
4.2.5	M	The handling of pregnant goats, kid goats, and sick or injured animals is carried out with particular care and foresight.
4.2.6	M	Goats are only tethered for single-animal management procedures, such as hoof trimming, combing, shearing, or medical treatment. Tethering periods are kept as short as possible without sacrificing care.
4.2.7	M	Goats are not subjected to painful physical contact, for example by people hitting the goats or using sticks or goads.
4.2.8	M	The use of electric prods is prohibited.
4.2.9	M	Goats are never lifted solely by their hair, horns, tails, limbs, or heads.
4.2.10	M	Goats are never dragged.
4.2.11	B	When moving goats on foot, the time of day and the speed are chosen so that they are neither exhausted nor subjected to heat stress.



4.2.12 | To encourage animals to move, audible or visual measures (e.g. flags or rattles) are used in preference to physical contact.

4.2.13 | When handling individual goats, they are restrained by a second person rather than tethered.

GUIDANCE

Herders and staff should always reflect on how their body language and actions affect the animals. It is good to know how animals perceive their environment and to utilise this knowledge. Good herders can walk through the group of animals without the animals running away as far as they can. They use subtle motions to control the direction of movement and consciously control their voices and body language to provide an impression of predictability and security. Herders use observation, cleaning, and feeding times as an opportunity to cultivate their relationship with the animals. This helps to ensure that the interaction is regularly neutral or positive so that the animals already have a basis of trust in their humans before coming into situations where they are handled restrictively, for example when being sheared or examined.



BEHAVIOUR

COMBING AND SHEARING

CRITERION 4.3:

The welfare of the goats during and after cashmere extraction is a top priority.

INTENT

One of the main reasons for keeping cashmere goats is the production and extraction of the fibre for the textile industry. It is crucial to ensure that the extraction of the coveted product is carried out with the utmost consideration for animal welfare, especially since shearing or combing occur once a year; this makes it a regular occurrence but not one that is frequent enough to become a learned routine for the animals. As no studies are currently known to have determined which method of fibre extraction is the most animal-friendly, we allow combing, shearing by hand, and shearing with an electric clipper. Regardless of which method is chosen, the aim is to achieve a swift and injury-free extraction of fibre in a professionally responsible manner. Fibre extraction must be designed in such a way that it does not pose any health risks or health consequences for the animal. Handling before and after clipping should also be organised in such a way that the animal is restricted as little as possible. During preparation, the animal must not be isolated for long periods of time, tied up for preparation, or kept without access to water; this naturally also applies to the time after shearing.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
4.3.1	M	Goats are only combed when they are naturally starting to shed their coats.
4.3.2	M	Goats that are cut or otherwise injured during combing/shearing are immediately given treatment appropriate to the injury.
4.3.3	B	Goats that are cut or injured during combing/shearing are monitored for any sign of infection or other complications for at least three days post-shearing.
4.3.4	M	If goats are restrained with ropes, these are soft and are applied professionally so as not to cause any injury and not to reduce blood flow.
4.3.5	M	If a goat is tethered, its legs are tied together but not to any external structure. The head is not tied in a stretched position.
4.3.6	B	Goats are always supervised while under restraint.
4.3.7	B	Goats are released from restraint if they are at risk of injury.
4.3.8	I	Goats are combed/sheared standing up. This can take place either with a halter or on a goat stand with a feeding fence.
4.3.9	I	The goats are not combed but sheared.
4.3.10	I	The goats are sheared with electric clippers.



4.3.11 M	Goats experience thermal comfort post-shearing/combing. This is achieved by one of the following measures: only combing/shearing in warm weather, leaving sufficient fibre on the goat to keep it warm, providing coats, or offering them shelter/housing.
4.3.12 M	Goats do not get sunburn post-shearing/combing. This is achieved by leaving sufficient fibre on the goats to protect their skin or by ensuring that goats always have access to shade while their hair regrows.
4.3.13 B	The equipment for shearing is regularly maintained. It is cleaned and disinfected between different groups of animals and after an animal has been injured.
4.3.14 M	If contract combers/shearers are used, one person from the shearing team is nominated to oversee goat welfare and to report any shearing injuries to a responsible farm member.
4.3.15 B	Combers/shearers that cut or injure multiple goats during a single combing/shearing session must stop and be retrained before resuming combing/shearing.

GUIDANCE

On most farms, there are many traditions associated with fibre production. This does not exempt herders from the obligation to take a critical look at the overall shearing system. Every herder should therefore go through this checklist every year:

- Is the entire process—including catching the animal, shearing it, and returning it to the herd—as low-stress and short as possible?
- Am I using the best way of shearing, or can I improve or change something?
- Is the equipment being properly maintained?
- If an animal is injured, do I have the ability and means to provide it with adequate care?
- Is shearing possible in the current weather and weather forecast?
- Is there sufficient shelter available?
- What measures (e.g. hoof care) would I like to combine with shearing?



Pillar 2: Planet



LAND MANAGEMENT

CRITERION 5.1:

Activities of goat herders protect the land and do not cause pollution.

INTENT

Through sustainable land management, herders can not only contribute to securing their farm’s long-term resilience but also benefit the surrounding environment. By maintaining and conserving the grassland, they can help to improve soil health, restore degraded land, and increase organic-matter content in the soil. Sustainably managed land also sequesters carbon in the soil in the long term, for example by fertilising with manure or through targeted rotational grazing systems. The preservation or planting of bushes or trees serves as natural protection for wild and domestic animals while protecting the soil against wind-induced erosion.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
5.1.1	M	Goat herders must not cause pollution. Manure and other animal wastes must be disposed of to minimise the risk of disease to other animals and to protect the environment.
5.1.2	B	Goat herders must ensure that no hazardous materials are disposed of on land used by goats unless specifically allowed by law.
5.1.3	M	It is prohibited to cut down primary forest or to destroy other forms of national resources that are designated and protected by national law or by currently valid international legislation to convert land for grazing or cropping. <i>Note: Relevant international legislation can be found through the following websites:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important Bird Areas (IBA): www.birdlife.org/datazone/site • World Heritage Sites / IUCN Categories I-IV: www.protectedplanet.net • Ramsar Convention on Wetlands: https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/sitelist.pdf
5.1.4	B	Grazing land must be managed so as to maintain vegetative cover and avoid erosion.
5.1.5	I	Rotational grazing management should be used. <i>Note: Rotational management involves some pasture areas being rested while others are in use.</i>

GUIDANCE

In Inner Mongolia, there are strict rules on how many animal units may be kept within a defined area. Herders are strongly discouraged from exhausting this permitted maximum; instead, they should assess the actual condition of the pasture and, if applicable, arable land. The long-term conservation of the land is very important, as overgrazing and desertification can threaten herders’ livelihoods. Rotational grazing can promote soil health and should be carried out on the recommendation of local experts, who can be consulted by herders or by cashmere producers.



CROP MANAGEMENT

CRITERION 5.2:

Where crops are grown on the farm, they are grown responsibly, taking into account specific local soil conditions. Fertilisers and pesticides are only applied where needed and not broadly.

This section covers crops that are grown by GCS herders. It does not include crops that are grown elsewhere and then brought in by herders.

INTENT

Cultivating crops while maintaining or building up soil fertility and biomass is challenging and requires herders to plan their crop rotation in such a way that the quality of the soil does not suffer as a result of cultivation. Careful handling of arable land, plants, and input products such as fertilisers and pesticides is therefore of great importance for sustainable animal husbandry.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
5.2.1	B	Plastic sheeting/film used for crop growing must either be degradable or be collected and disposed of properly after the crop is harvested.
5.2.2	I	Soil tests to monitor soil health or grazing and cropping land—including with regard to major nutrients, pH levels, and soil organic matter—should be carried out at least every three years.
5.2.3	B	Fertilisers must only be used when there is demonstrable crop need.
5.2.4	B	Fertilisers must only be applied when soil conditions allow uptake of the nutrients. Applying fertiliser to frozen or waterlogged soil is prohibited.
5.2.5	B	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.
5.2.6	B	Pesticides must only be applied to target areas. They must not be used when there is a risk of drift to non-target areas.
5.2.7	B	Pesticides must be mixed and applied according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
5.2.8	B	Biological, cultural, and physical pest control methods must be used in place of chemical pesticides if the non-chemical methods are effective.



- 5.2.9 C** It is prohibited to use 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) with active ingredients categorised as WHO Class Ia (extremely hazardous) or Class Ib (highly hazardous)—with reference to the latest published version of each of these documents.

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

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

- b. Rotterdam Convention: Annex III

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

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

- c. Montreal Protocol: Annexes

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

- d. The WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard and Guidelines to Classification, 2019 edition

English version (from page 21): <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332193/9789240005662-eng.pdf?ua=1>

GUIDANCE

Herders can analyse their soil quality themselves or with the help of consultants and ensure that the quality remains at least the same or, in the best case, improves through careful management of their fields and pastures. If fertilisation is necessary, the application of manure or compost is recommended to help increase the proportion of organic matter in the soil. Pesticides may only be used in cases of proven pest infestation. Non-chemical methods are preferred. These can be plant-based, mechanical (e.g. pheromone traps), or based on the targeted feeding and protection of beneficial insects.



WILDLIFE AND BIODIVERSITY

CRITERION 5.3:

Herders co-exist with wildlife and do not negatively impact biodiversity on and around the areas they manage.

INTENT

The peaceful coexistence of humans, farm animals, and wild animals should be possible, with farm animals protected from predators and wild animals protected from unjustified or excessive hunting or inappropriate killing. Biodiversity is declining globally due to climate change, agriculture, and human intervention in nature. Biodiversity should be preserved and promoted at the farm level in the interests of sustainable agriculture and ecosystem conservation.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
5.3.1	M	Goats must be protected from predators.
5.3.2	M	Snares, leg-hold traps, and any other traps aside from live traps must not be used to catch or control wildlife.
5.3.3	B	Lethal control of wildlife must only take place when non-lethal control methods have failed.
5.3.4	B	Lethal control must only target the problem animal.
5.3.5	B	Lethal control must immediately cause unconsciousness and death.
5.3.6	M	Wildlife must not be poisoned. Note: This does not apply to rats or mice.
5.3.7	B	When poison is used to control rodents, it must not be accessible to anything other than the target animals.
5.3.8	B	Harvesting/gathering rare, threatened, or endangered plant species is prohibited.

GUIDANCE

Grazing animals can be protected from predators by fences and shelter (e.g. trees or pasture sheds). Good, secure storage of feed supports the defence against rodent infestation.



Pillar 3: People

HERDER

CRITERION 6.1:

The herder respects the rights of children and ensures that there is no child labour in accordance with ILO Conventions 138 and 182.

INTENT

Health, learning, and behaviour during children’s early years are foundational not only for school success but also for their capacity to contribute meaningfully to society. Children’s growth and development are profoundly shaped by the educational, social, and economic opportunities afforded to them by adults.

GCS’s approach to child labour is guided by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138, concerning minimum age for admission to employment, and ILO Convention No. 182, concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Together with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, they frame the concept of child labour and form the basis for child labour legislation.

The provisions of ILO Convention No. 138 exclude “family and small-scale holdings producing for local consumption and regularly employing hired workers”. On family farms, children can provide support if they do not perform tasks that could endanger their health or development. Thus, parents should protect their children from everything that can be harmful to their health and their well-being, and they are expected to send all their children to school. More details are provided in the Guidance for Implementation section below.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
6.1.1	C	<p>The herder’s household members below 16 years may help on their family’s farm after school or during holidays only under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	✓	✓	✓
6.1.2	C	The herder does not employ children below the age of 16.		✓	✓

6.1.3 M	Robust age-verification mechanisms are part of the recruitment process to ensure compliance to the minimum age.		✓	✓
6.1.4 C	Hazardous work is not performed by anyone under the age of 18.	✓	✓	✓

GUIDANCE

Not all work done by children is classified by the ILO as child labour that should be eliminated. Work that does not affect children’s health and personal development or schooling can be positive. Whether a job is classified as child labour depends on the child’s age and the type and hours of work performed. In reality, there is no clear line separating “good” children’s work from “bad” child labour. It is more practical to refer to two approaches to defining child labour, as the ILO does in its conventions on child labour (C138 on minimum age and C182 on the worst forms of child labour). These approaches focus on age and activity, respectively.

- **Age:** According to the first approach, children under a certain age should not work. ILO Convention 138 sets this age at 15 (14 in certain developing countries) or at the statutory school-leaving age, whichever is higher. The two main exceptions are: a lower minimum age of 13 (twelve years in certain developing countries) for “light work”—which neither harms a young person’s development nor prejudices school attendance—and a higher minimum age of 18 for hazardous work, defined below.
- **Activity:** According to the second approach, child labour is defined according to its negative effect on children. While “light work” may be undertaken by younger workers, starting at the age of 13, “hazardous work” should not be performed by anyone under age 18. Hazardous work is work that jeopardises children’s physical or psychological well-being due to the nature of the working conditions. In goat husbandry, activities that may be deemed hazardous include the following: carrying heavy weights, using sharp tools, applying medicine, dealing with goats that are acting defensively or dangerously (e.g. when restraining goats or when isolating a goat from its flock). Convention 182 calls on ILO member countries to determine, through national legislation, the list of activities that would give rise to hazardous child labour if performed by a worker under the age of 18.

In line with the Minimum Age Convention (ILO Convention 182), full-time attendance at school should be effectively ensured up to an age at least equal to that specified for admission to employment.

Hazardous work includes but is not limited to handling pesticides, hazardous chemicals, or residues; operating or helping operate dangerous machinery or tools; and activities that require high physical exertion. No child or young worker shall carry heavy loads or work on steep slopes, on any high surface, or in high places. Night work for children or young workers is also prohibited. Children or young workers shall always be under the supervision of a responsible adult to ensure that the children or young adults understand how to do their tasks safely and practise safe work habits.

Children of herders shall not work during school hours. Children’s school and work time, including the commute between home and school, shall not exceed a combined total of ten hours per day. They may only perform light work duties that do not threaten their health or safety. If under the age of twelve years, they may not work at all, although they may participate in agricultural tasks that are traditional for children of that age and in that area and that are undertaken for the purpose of transmitting the family’s or the local culture.

Herders employing workers (temporary or permanent): A robust age-verification mechanism needs to be part of the recruitment process. This can involve requesting to see a national identity card during recruitment and including a copy of the card in the contract documents. This must be done in a manner that is not in any way degrading or disrespectful to the worker.

HERDER

CRITERION 6.2:

The herder guarantees free choice of employment and ensures that there is no forced or compulsory labour, which includes bonded or trafficked labour.

INTENT

ILO Convention No. 29 defines forced labour as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily”.

All forms of forced labour, whether direct or indirect, are prohibited. GCS herders shall not engage in any form of servitude or forced, bonded, indentured, trafficked, or non-voluntary labour.

Slavery, misuse of prison labour, forced recruitment, debt bondage, human trafficking for labour, and sexual exploitation are some examples of forced labour. It is considered forced labour if any part of the workers’ salary, benefits, property, or documents is retained in order to force them to remain in their employment or if workers are required or forced to remain in employment against their will using any physical or psychological means.

Additionally, forced or compulsory labour performed by persons under 18 years of age is considered to be one of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in ILO Convention 182. Forced labour is usually considered unlawful under national legislation.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
6.2.1	C	The herder 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.		✓	✓
6.2.2	C	Labour by prisoners or those working under the regiment of imprisonment are not used, even when this is permitted by national or local labour or other laws.		✓	✓
6.2.3	M	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.		✓	✓
6.2.4	M	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.		✓	✓
6.2.5	M	Workers’ rights to leave employment after giving reasonable notice is respected.		✓	✓

GUIDANCE

Workers' salaries, documents, benefits, property, or any rights acquired in the course or due to the status of work or stipulated by law shall not be withheld in order to force them to work or remain in the workplace. The use of extortion, debt, threats, sexual abuse, torture, or harassment to force workers to work or to stay in the workplace is prohibited.

HERDER

CRITERION 6.3:

The herder does not tolerate any form of discrimination.

INTENT

GCS herders are committed to non-discrimination and equal opportunity. GCS herders have established the principle that all decisions are based on the ability of the individual to do the job or fulfil the contract without regard to personal characteristics that are unrelated to the inherent requirements of the work. Herders do not discriminate, exclude, or display a preference for persons on the basis of gender, age, religion, race, colour, birth, social background, disability, ethnic or national origin, nationality, membership in unions or any other legitimate organisations, political affiliation or opinions, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, marital status, disease, or any other condition that could give rise to discrimination.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
6.3.1	B	The herder 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.		✓	✓
6.3.2	B	There is a written code of conduct or non-discrimination policy that is communicated to workers. This applies to herders that employ 10 or more workers permanently.			✓
6.3.3	B	Tests for pregnancy or genetic problems are not conducted during recruitment of workers.		✓	✓

GUIDANCE

The herder bases contracts and employment relationships on the principle of equal opportunity and fair treatment and does not discriminate with respect to aspects of the contractual or employment relationship, including recruitment and hiring, compensation (including wages and benefits), working conditions, terms of employment or contracts, access to training, promotion, termination of employment, retirement, or disciplinary measures.

HERDER

CRITERION 6.4:

The herder guarantees all workers the right to establish and join workers’ organisations and bargain collectively.

INTENT

The right of workers to freedom of association is, together with the right to collective bargaining, recognised through international human rights conventions. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies the ability to organise trade unions as a fundamental human right, and the International Labour Organization’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work considers these rights to be an essential right of workers to further and defend the interests of workers.

Collective bargaining is a constructive forum for addressing working conditions and terms of employment as well as relations between employers and workers or between their respective organisations. Sound collective bargaining benefits both management and workers. The process of collective bargaining allows the interests of both workers and employers to be voiced, common interests to be identified, different interests to be balanced against one another, and trade-offs to be negotiated.

The herder respects the right of workers to organise themselves in a free and democratic way. The herder shall respect the right of workers to form unions as well as the workers’ right to collective bargaining. There is no discrimination against workers because of trade union membership.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
6.4.1	B	The right of all workers to establish and join workers’ organisations and bargain collectively is guaranteed.		✓	✓

GUIDANCE

Direct or indirect interference or retaliation against any form of workers’ representation is prohibited. Herders shall not subject workers to workplace dismissals, discrimination, or prejudice of any kind in connection with workers’ participation in forming a trade union or their membership therein.

Workers’ representatives shall be able to act and make decisions on their behalf, fully independently of management. The establishment, functioning, and administration of workers’ representation shall not be dominated by employers through financial or other means. Free access to the workers’ workplace by trade unions and their representatives shall be granted by management. Lawful activities of workers’ organisations shall not be restricted or prevented. Upon request, facilities convenient to workers shall be provided for the activities of workers’ organisations.

The right of workers to freely organise, form workers’ organisations, and bargain collectively shall be communicated to current staff and each time a new staff member is hired.

HERDER

CRITERION 6.5:

The herder ensures that all workers enjoy fair conditions of employment.

INTENT

The ILO Equal Remuneration Convention (C100) applies the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value, meaning that rates of remuneration must be determined without reference to gender. However, unequal pay might not only be based on gender but can affect other groups of workers too, e.g. workers of different nationalities or ethnicities. GCS therefore requires herders to ensure equal pay for equal work for all groups of people.

Any work on the farm is performed on the basis of a recognised and documented employment relationship established in compliance with national legislation, custom, or practice and with international labour standards, whichever provides greater protection.

Wages are to be paid in a timely manner, regularly, and fully in legal tender. Partial payment in the form of allowance in kind is accepted in line with ILO specifications.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
6.5.1	B	<p>There is a system in place to maintain adequate records of employment.</p> <p>This includes at least the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A personnel file for each worker • Pay records • Records of hours worked (regular and overtime) • Workforce statistics • Policies • Health & safety 			✓
6.5.2	M	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		✓	✓
6.5.3	B	<p>Equal pay for equal work is offered to all workers - permanent, seasonal, or casual - without discrimination based on gender or otherwise. This includes equivalent benefits and employment conditions for equal work.</p>		✓	✓

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
6.5.4	M	Workers are paid regularly and on time through an appropriate method of payment.		✓	✓
6.5.5	B	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 of and reason for any deductions).		✓	✓
6.5.6	B	Workers sign for payments received in cash.		✓	✓
6.5.7	M	Payroll records are kept two years.		✓	✓
6.5.8	M	All workers, including permanent, seasonal, casual and migrant workers, 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.		✓	✓
6.5.9	B	The rights and health of workers are protected through appropriate working hours.		✓	✓
6.5.10	B	The herder complies with applicable national and local legislation and industry standards and respects collective bargaining agreements regarding working hours and overtime regulations.		✓	✓
6.5.11	B	The herder grants and respects meal and work-breaks in accordance with national legislation.		✓	✓
6.5.12	M	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 workers equally, including seasonal workers, casual workers, and workers who are paid per unit or result.		✓	✓
6.5.13	B	Workers can file a complaint.		✓	✓
6.5.14	B	Workers have access to a grievance mechanism.			✓

GUIDANCE

Wages

The level of wages should reflect the years of employment, skills, and education of workers and be consistent with regular working hours. Regarding social benefits, global payments into social funds can be acceptable for seasonal and casual workers, depending on national legislation.

Working time

ILO Convention No. 1 states that workers' regular working time cannot exceed eight hours per day and 48 hours per week. Overtime is allowable under exceptional circumstances, e.g. in production peaks, if it is voluntary and if this does not occur on a regular basis, and it must not exceed twelve hours per week.

HERDER

CRITERION 6.6:

The herder ensures that measures are in place to manage health and safety.

INTENT

Herders respect the right of workers, including family labourers, to healthy working conditions and must comply with occupational health and safety regulations.

Staff need to be provided with the information and training they need to perform their work safely and without risk to their health. This way, staff can gain their own understanding of the extent of the hazards and associated risks and will more easily adopt the measures necessary to manage and reduce these risks.

It is the herder’s responsibility to prevent accidents and injuries by minimising, as far as reasonably practicable, risks inherent in the working environment through appropriate measures and adequate control. The buildings, workplaces, machinery, equipment, and processes under the herder’s control shall be safe and pose no risk to staff health. Where necessary, the herder shall provide adequate clothing and protective equipment. Workers and workers’ representatives shall be given appropriate training in occupational safety and health.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
6.6.1	B	Measures are in place to deal with accidents and emergencies including first aid.	✓	✓	✓
6.6.2	B	First aid boxes are placed at central locations and are accessible to everyone. The first aid boxes are complete and up to date.	✓	✓	✓
6.6.3	B	Transport to medical facilities is provided if necessary.	✓	✓	✓
6.6.4	B	Workplace hazards are managed effectively.	✓	✓	✓
6.6.5	B	Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided free of charge. Users know how to handle PPE.	✓	✓	✓
6.6.6	M	If machine shearing is used, electric and mechanical operational safety shall be ensured.	✓	✓	✓

GUIDANCE

Herders and farmworkers are exposed to numerous safety, health, environmental, and biological hazards such as zoonotic diseases, parasites, risks in goat facilities (e.g. broken fences with sharp edges), hazardous machinery, tools and equipment, weather such as heat and cold, musculoskeletal injuries, applying and handling chemicals (e.g. pesticides, medication), and respiratory hazards such as exposure to dust or bad air quality in goat housing when removing manure.

Jobs in goat husbandry can potentially cause injuries through repetitive, forceful, or prolonged exertions, through frequent or heavy lifting, and through the pushing, pulling, or carrying of heavy objects. Due to the goats' size and strength, herders or workers may be required to hold awkward postures for prolonged periods, e.g. during shearing/combing.

Handling goats can cause injuries. Goats tend to be very docile, and they are usually not aggressive. However, goats may cause injury, especially when struggling during handling. Most of the time, goats' natural form of defence is to run away. Even when backed into a corner, they still try to escape and run. If they feel that flight is not an option, they might also use additional defensive mechanisms such as charging with their horns, headbutting, ramming, or kicking. Potential injuries to people include impact injuries caused by goats running into them or knocking them over as well as cuts, wounds, muscular lesions, bites, back strain, and bone and knee injuries. The best way to avoid injuries is to understand goat behaviour. Many animal reactions are predictable, and a skilled herder or worker can anticipate them. Also, well-designed and well-maintained goat facilities make handling goats safer and easier, thus reducing risk. It is essential that the people handling the goats are trained in proper handling techniques. In addition to avoiding injury to people and animals, this lessens the likelihood of the animals having a bad experience and thereby lowers the stress they will exhibit during future handling.

Herders who invite people for shearing/combing or who contract shearers/combers must ensure that they are provided with a safe workplace, e.g. with adequate ventilation, lighting, non-slip surfaces, relevant information about potential risks, and emergency response including first aid boxes. Shearing equipment must be well maintained and adjusted, e.g. scissors/blades are replaced or sharpened once cutting poorly. Special attention is given to electric shearing equipment, e.g. it is prevented from heating up (e.g. by properly adjusting the blades) and electrical cables are in good condition and are positioned in a way that neither people nor animals are entangled or cables are cut during shearing.

Shearers/combers should be trained to ensure that goats are handled safely and that stress is prevented, thereby minimising the risk of injury for animals and people throughout the process. The goats must be handled appropriately and placed in the most comfortable position possible during shearing/combing to prevent them from struggling. The shearers/combers should apply a shearing/combing technique that guarantees the fastest possible procedure that does not rush through the shearing/combing operation, since rushing would risk causing injury to the goat or themselves.

The collaboration between herders and shearers/combers should be based on clear, respectful communication and a responsible attitude towards their own as well as other peoples' and animals' health and safety. Shearers/combers facilitate a safe shearing/combing process by following instructions. The herder ensures that work and rest periods are such that they prevent worker fatigue.

Zoonotic disease controls are in place, e.g. vaccinations.

Many mishaps can be avoided through safe work practices including well-prepared goats, good training, animal-friendly handling, and well-designed yards and shearing workplaces.

CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 7.1:

The Cashmere Producer respects the rights of children and ensures that there is no child labour in accordance with ILO Conventions 138 and 182.

INTENT

Health, learning, and behaviour during children’s early years are foundational not only for school success but also for their capacity to contribute meaningfully to society. Children’s growth and development are profoundly shaped by the educational, social, and economic opportunities afforded to them by adults.

GCS’s approach to child labour is explained in this document under criterion 6.1.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
7.1.1	C	The Cashmere Producer does not employ children below the age of 16.
7.1.2	M	Robust age-verification mechanisms are part of the recruitment process to ensure compliance to the minimum age.
7.1.3	C	Hazardous work is not performed by anyone under the age of 18.

GUIDANCE

Please refer to the text under criterion 6.1, which is applicable to the cashmere producer in the same manner.

CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 7.2:

The Cashmere Producer guarantees free choice of employment and ensures that there is no forced or compulsory labour, which includes bonded or trafficked labour.

INTENT

ILO Convention No. 29 defines forced labour as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily”.

All forms of forced labour, whether direct or indirect, are prohibited. Cashmere Producers shall not engage in any form of servitude or forced, bonded, indentured, trafficked, or non-voluntary labour. Cashmere Producers act with special diligence when engaging and recruiting migrant workers.

Slavery, misuse of prison labour, forced recruitment, debt bondage, human trafficking for labour, and sexual exploitation are some examples of forced labour. It is considered forced labour if any part of the workers’ salary, benefits, property, or documents is retained in order to force them to remain in their employment or if workers are required or forced to remain in employment against their will through any physical or psychological means.

Additionally, forced or compulsory labour performed by individuals under 18 years of age is considered to be one of the worst forms of child labour, per ILO Convention 182. Forced labour is usually considered unlawful under national legislation.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
7.2.1	C	The Cashmere Producer 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.
7.2.2	C	Labour by prisoners or those working under the regiment of imprisonment are not used, even when this is permitted by national or local labour or other laws.
7.2.3	M	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.
7.2.4	M	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.
7.2.5	M	Workers’ rights to leave employment after giving reasonable notice is respected.

GUIDANCE

Workers’ salaries, documents, benefits, property, or any rights acquired in the course or due to the status of work or stipulated by law shall not be withheld in order to force them to work or remain in the workplace. The use of extortion, debt, threats, sexual abuse, or harassment to force workers to work or to stay in the workplace is prohibited.

CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 7.3:

The Cashmere Producer does not tolerate any form of discrimination and has implemented a policy of non-discrimination.

INTENT

Cashmere Producers are committed to non-discrimination and equal opportunity. The organisation has established the principle that all decisions are based on the ability of the individual to do the job or fulfil the contract without regard to personal characteristics that are unrelated to the inherent requirements of the work. Cashmere Producers do not discriminate, exclude, or display a preference for persons on the basis of gender, age, religion, race, colour, birth, social background, disability, ethnic or national origin, nationality, membership in unions or any other legitimate organisations, political affiliation or opinions, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, marital status, disease, or any other condition that could give rise to discrimination.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
7.3.1	B	The Cashmere Producer 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.
7.3.2	B	There is a written code of conduct or non-discrimination policy that is communicated to workers.
7.3.3	B	Tests for pregnancy or genetic problems are not conducted during recruitment of workers.

GUIDANCE

The Cashmere Producer bases herders' contracts as well as employment relationships on the principle of equal opportunity and fair treatment and does not discriminate with respect to aspects of the contractual or employment relationship, including recruitment and hiring, compensation (including wages and benefits), working conditions, terms of employment or contracts, access to training, promotion, termination of employment, retirement, or disciplinary measures.

CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 7.4:

The Cashmere Producer guarantees all workers the right to establish and join workers’ organisations and bargain collectively.

INTENT

The right of workers to freedom of association is, together with the right to collective bargaining, recognised through international human rights conventions. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies the ability to organise trade unions as a fundamental human right, and the International Labour Organization’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work considers these rights to be an essential right of workers to further and defend the interests of workers.

Collective bargaining is a constructive forum for addressing working conditions and terms of employment as well as relations between employers and workers or between their respective organisations. Sound collective bargaining benefits both management and workers. The process of collective bargaining allows the interests of both workers and employers to be voiced, common interests to be identified, different interests to be balanced against one another, and trade-offs to be negotiated.

Cashmere Producers respect the right of workers to organise themselves in a free and democratic way. The Cashmere Producer shall respect the right of workers to form unions as well as the workers’ right to collective bargaining. There is no discrimination against workers because of trade union membership.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
7.4.1	B	The right of all workers to establish and join workers’ organisations and bargain collectively is guaranteed.

GUIDANCE

Direct or indirect interference or retaliation against any form of workers’ representation is prohibited. Cashmere Producers shall not subject workers to workplace dismissals, discrimination, or prejudice of any kind in connection with workers’ participation in forming a trade union or their membership therein.

Workers’ representatives shall be able to act and make decisions on their behalf, fully independently of management. The establishment, functioning, and administration of workers’ representation shall not be dominated by employers through financial or other means. Free access to the workers’ workplace by trade unions and their representatives shall be granted by management. Lawful activities of workers’ organisations shall not be restricted or prevented. Upon request, facilities convenient to workers shall be provided for the activities of workers’ organisations.

The right of workers to freely organise, form workers’ organisations, and bargain collectively shall be communicated to current staff and each time a new staff member is hired.

CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 7.5:

The Cashmere Producer ensures that all workers enjoy fair conditions of employment.

INTENT

The ILO Equal Remuneration Convention (C100) applies the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value, meaning that rates of remuneration must be determined without reference to gender. However, unequal pay might not only be based on gender but can affect other groups of workers too, e.g. workers of different nationalities or ethnicities. GCS therefore requires Managing Entities to ensure equal pay for equal work for all groups of people.

Any work at a Cashmere Producer is performed on the basis of a recognised and documented employment relationship established in compliance with national legislation, custom, or practice and with international labour standards, whichever provides greater protection.

Wages are to be paid in a timely manner, regularly, and fully in legal tender. Partial payment in the form of allowance in kind is accepted in line with ILO specifications.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
7.5.1	B	There is a system in place to maintain adequate records of employment. This includes at least the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A personnel file for each worker • Pay records • Records of hours worked (regular and overtime) • Workforce statistics • Policies • Health & safety
7.5.2	M	Wages are set at least up to the local minimum wages for all types of workers. 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.
7.5.3	B	Equal pay for equal work is offered to all workers - permanent, seasonal, or casual - without discrimination based on gender or otherwise. This includes equivalent benefits and employment conditions for equal work.
7.5.4	M	Workers are paid regularly and on time through an appropriate method of payment.
7.5.5	B	Payments are documented with a clear and understandable payslip containing all necessary information. This includes the time, the gross and net wage and benefits, wage calculations for piece rates, and the among of and reason for any deductions.

7.5.6	B	Workers must sign for payments received in cash.
7.5.7	M	Payroll records are kept two years.
7.5.8	M	All workers, including permanent, seasonal, casual and migrant workers, 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.
7.5.9	B	The rights and health of workers are protected through appropriate working hours.
7.5.10	B	The Cashmere Producer complies with applicable national and local legislation and industry standards and respects collective bargaining agreements regarding working hours and overtime regulations.
7.5.11	B	The Cashmere Producer grants and respects meal and work-breaks in accordance with national legislation.
7.5.12	M	The Cashmere Producer provides legal benefits to all workers.
7.5.13	M	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 workers equally, including seasonal workers, casual workers, and workers who are paid per unit or result.
7.5.14	B	Workers have access to a grievance mechanism.

GUIDANCE

Wages

Cashmere Producers pay wages to all types of workers according to applicable regulations, local minimum wage standards, or sectoral collective bargaining agreements, adopting whichever wage is the highest. The level of wages should reflect the years of employment, skills, and education of workers and be consistent with regular working hours. Regarding social benefits, global payments into social funds can be acceptable for seasonal and casual workers, depending on national legislation. A good source on minimum wages can be found [here](#).

Working time

ILO Convention No. 1 states that workers' regular working time cannot exceed eight hours per day and 48 hours per week. Overtime is allowable under exceptional circumstances, e.g. in production peaks, if it is voluntary and if this does not occur on a regular basis, and it must not exceed twelve hours per week.

CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 7.6:

The Cashmere Producer ensures that measures are in place to manage health and safety.

INTENT

Cashmere Producers respect the right of workers to healthy working conditions and must comply with occupational health and safety regulations.

Staff need to be provided with the information and training they need to perform their work safely and without risk to their health. This way, staff can gain their own understanding of the extent of the hazards and associated risks and will more easily adopt the measures necessary to manage and reduce these risks.

It is the Cashmere Producer’s responsibility to prevent accidents and injuries by minimising, as far as reasonably practicable, risks inherent in the working environment through appropriate measures and adequate control. The buildings, workplaces, machinery, equipment, and processes under the Cashmere Producer’s control shall be safe and pose no risk to staff health. Where necessary, the Cashmere Producer shall provide adequate clothing and protective equipment. Workers and workers’ representatives shall be given appropriate training in occupational safety and health.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
7.6.1	B	Measures are in place to deal with accidents and emergencies including first aid.
7.6.2	B	Workplace hazards are managed effectively.
7.6.3	B	Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided for all workers free of charge. Workers know how to use PPE.

GUIDANCE

The cashmere processing procedure in the CP’s factories may vary between factories. For instance, one factory may have established a vertical process that encompasses every step from collecting the raw cashmere to sorting and scouring to the completion of the ready-made garment, while another factory may have fewer comprehensive procedures set up under their business.

During cashmere processing, workers might be exposed to several hazards. Depending on each worker’s duties, specific hazards can include:

- Dirt and dust: Raw materials might cause irritation to the airways and eyes or might even lead to chronic health issues such as cough, phlegm, or bronchitis. Workers might also develop inflammatory and allergic diseases of the skin.

- Zoonoses from handling raw material: This hazard is likely to be the most relevant during the initial handling of contaminated material, e.g. transportation for storage, opening bales, and sorting.
- Chemicals: Workers might be exposed to chemicals, e.g. during degreasing, disinfection, bleaching, and dyeing. Workers might suffer from gassing, poisoning, skin conditions, or irritation of the eyes, mucous membranes, and lungs.
- Large machines with rapidly moving parts: These pose both noise and mechanical injury hazards.
- Heavy loads: There is a risk of injury from the lifting of heavy loads.
 - Fire and explosions: These may be caused by heating plants used for vapour generation.
 - Headaches, back pain, or neck pain due to tasks performed while sitting.

Measures preventing accidents at work and work-related illnesses should be of central importance and should be implemented, maintained, and improved constantly. Such measures could include the provision of PPE, the substitution of a less dangerous chemical, local exhaust ventilation, labelling, first aid, mechanisation for heavy loads, fire prevention, and proper worker training, including instructions in occupational health and safety.



Pillar 4: Management



HERDER

CRITERION 8.1:

Required plans and documentation are available as a means of evidence and an instrument for problem prevention and analysis in goat husbandry and management.

INTENT

Documentation is understood to be the utilisation of information. The aim of documentation is to make information retrievable in a targeted manner. Firstly, this serves the purpose of self-organisation and can play a significant role in analysing problems or operating processes and in tracing profitability. Secondly, external experts can analyse weak points or make recommendations based on this documentation. Thirdly, documentation serves as evidence for monitoring processes that result from obligations to third parties, such as authorities or standards.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
8.1.1	M	All relevant local and national laws and regulations, as they apply to goat management, are met.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.2	B	Herders have instituted a written health plan that covers 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal parasite prevention and treatment • External parasite prevention and treatment • Infectious disease prevention and treatment • Prevention and treatment for lameness and foot problems • Biosecurity and quarantine • Vaccinations 	✓	✓	✓
8.1.3	I	The health plan is developed with the advice of a veterinarian or another expert in goat production.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.4	B	A goat expert or veterinarian reviews the plan annually to ensure that it is up to date and relevant to the health of animals on the specific farm.	✓	✓	✓



No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
8.1.5	B	Herders have written medicine records covering which goats were treated, the date of each treatment, which products were used, and the reason for treatment.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.6	B	Records of mortality and culls are kept, including the reason for death/culling (where known).	✓	✓	✓
8.1.7	B	Herders have a written transport plan addressing actions that drivers must take in case of emergency.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.8	B	Records of any deaths during transport are kept.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.9	B	Herders have a written emergency plan covering actions to protect goats in case of fire, flood, drought, or other potential extreme weather/environmental conditions.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.10	B	Records of the total number of does that kid each year and the number that need assistance to give birth are kept.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.11	B	Records of initial and ongoing staff training are kept.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.12	B	Records of the volume of cashmere produced each year are kept.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.13	B	Records of combing and shearing are kept, including the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of shearers • Number of goats sheared per day • Number of goats that were cut or otherwise injured 	✓	✓	✓
8.1.14	M	Each farm makes a reference copy of this standard available and accessible to everyone looking after the goats.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.15	B	All relevant documents and documentation are available in languages spoken and read by the farm staff.	✓	✓	✓
8.1.16	B	Tags or ingredient lists for the feed and supplements used are kept.	✓	✓	✓

GUIDANCE

Herders can organise their documentation in a way that is easy and useful for them. For the audits, it is important that the documentation is available and can be fully explained.

Cashmere Producers can support herders with forms, documentation booklets, and completion aids and provide assistance in drawing up the plans.



HERDER

CRITERION 8.2:

The people caring for the goats are competent and trained and have access to required sources of knowledge.

INTENT

The species-appropriate handling of the animals, occupational health and safety, and the specific implementation of the standard can only be performed if the necessary knowledge is imparted. Training is therefore mandatory for everyone working with the goats and must be offered regularly.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
8.2.1	B	A person has been designated to be responsible for goat welfare.	✓	✓	✓
8.2.2	M	All people who take care of the goats are competent and trained in the relevant activities. This includes family workers, permanent or temporary workers, and contractors.	✓	✓	✓
8.2.3	B	All people who take care of the goats are aware of this standard and of their part in ensuring that the criteria are met. This includes family workers, permanent or temporary workers, and contractors.	✓	✓	✓
8.2.4	M	All combers/shearers are trained and competent. This applies to contract shearers/combers as well as those employed on the farm.	✓	✓	✓
8.2.5	I	Training and development opportunities are offered annually to the farm's family and permanent workers.	✓	✓	✓

GUIDANCE

Herders are responsible for continually developing their own skills through training courses, exchanges of experience, or visits to farms that provide examples of best practices. They are also responsible for taking the appropriate measures to train their workers.



HERDER

CRITERION 8.3:

The herder operates effective management systems to deliver the requirements of this standard.

INTENT

Management systems encompass tools such as management, planning, organisation, administration, and the implementation of measures. The herder uses a variety of these tools daily to operate the farm, including for the health management, feeding, and breeding of the goats. Reaching targets relevant to goat welfare or environmental and social aspects does not automatically establish a new norm; to have a lasting impact, processes must be continuously improved. The herder uses information and resources to implement and control processes and operations relevant under the standard and also to improve them.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
8.3.1	M	Cashmere marketed by the herder as Good Cashmere is produced against the GCS requirements.	✓	✓	✓
8.3.2	B	The herder reports complete and accurate data in the GCS self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ).	✓	✓	✓
8.3.3	B	<p>The herder ensures that service providers (for example those contracted to shear the goats) comply with all relevant indicators in the GCS, particularly the goat welfare indicators in Pillar 1.</p> <p>The minimum actions the herder has to undertake to fulfil this requirement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	✓	✓	✓
8.3.4	B	Receipts of sold cashmere to Cashmere Producers and/or local buyers are kept for at least two years and are available to AbTF or the auditor upon request. The receipts should include the buyer’s name, date, and volume.	✓	✓	✓



No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
8.3.5	B	The herder records how the actions relating to employment and subcontracting are fulfilled.			✓
8.3.6	M	If the herder has multiple sites all these sites are part of the audit programme for GCS.	✓	✓	✓

GUIDANCE

In an audit, the herder needs to prove that processes are under control and that GCS requirements have been implemented on the farm. A herder who has multiple cashmere goat sites enrolls all of them, ensuring that all comply with the GCS indicators. The herder collects and provides reliable information in the GCS self-assessment questionnaire and keeps relevant records. If subcontractors are used for GCS-relevant areas, they understand and respect the GCS requirements.



HERDER

CRITERION 8.4:

The herder assesses risks of non-compliance with GCS and implements corrective actions.

INTENT

Herders have the capacity and have made the commitment to act diligently in assessing the actual and potential adverse impact their business may have with respect to the values and principles of the GCS standard, identifying for themselves where the most significant risks for these adverse effects may occur and acting upon them with the aim of preventing and/or addressing them in line with the GCS standard.

Herders take all reasonable and appropriate measures within their purview to implement the GCS standard. They gather and assess reliable information regarding the fulfilment of their responsibilities and keep the necessary documentary evidence to prove that they have acted diligently. They seek further detail on the root cause of any discrepancy with the principles and criteria of the GCS standard and take the necessary corrective actions.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
8.4.1	B	The herder implements and documents corrective actions. Their effectiveness is monitored and adjusted where necessary.	✓	✓	✓
8.4.2	B	The herder develops a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and its actions are implemented, documented, and monitored. The CIP is reviewed and updated annually.			✓

GUIDANCE

The primary objective of a risk assessment is to identify potential risks to goat welfare and to environmental and social aspects so that the herder can develop appropriate strategies for addressing the risks and potential negative implications. Herders need to have effective mechanisms in place to plan and implement appropriate corrective actions.

Key considerations for a robust risk assessment include:

- The assessment is done in regular intervals of no longer than one year (e.g. checking first aid kits).
- The assessment is conducted any time there is significant change to operations.
- The assessment is conducted any time there are external changes, such as new laws or regulations.
- The assessment covers risks to goat welfare, labour, occupational health and safety (OHS), and the environment.



- The assessment evaluates and prioritises risks according to both their probability and the severity of their potential negative impact.
- The assessment links monitoring plans to prioritised risks.
- The assessment includes input from all levels of the farm, including the herder's family and any relevant workers and contractors.



HERDER

CRITERION 8.5:

There is adequate staff capacity to implement GCS requirements.

INTENT

A well-trained, well-qualified workforce is critical for implementing the GCS standard. The herder plays an integral role by hiring an adequate number of staff, building up workers' capacities, and creating an efficient work environment. The herder needs to ensure that the person or team that takes responsibility for GCS and related issues complies with reporting duties and receives sufficient time and authority to carry out the work involved.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
8.5.1	M	The herder appoints a person responsible for GCS matters, who has the relevant knowledge and experience to carry out this post.			✓
8.5.2	B	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 Questionnaire (SAQ) and annual Continuous Improvement Plans Overseeing compliance, implementation, monitoring of and enhancing the farm(s)'s performance regarding the GCS requirements			✓

GUIDANCE

With regard to the implementation of the GCS standard, it is essential to have at least one person appointed to be responsible for GCS matters. Where there are no or only temporary employees, the herder is automatically the person responsible for GCS matters. This ensures a direct, targeted, and efficient line of communication between the farm and the Cashmere Producer. The person responsible for GCS must directly report to the herder and have the relevant knowledge and experience to fulfil this task. However, it is not mandatory for responsibility for GCS matters to be the only task assigned to that person.



HERDER

CRITERION 8.6:

The herder ensures an effective GCS audit.

INTENT

To assess compliance and the state of progress regarding the GCS criteria and indicators, the GCS assurance scheme¹ is based on regular, independent third-party verification. Herders who participate in GCS agree that their facilities and production sites, including pasture and fields for fodder production, are subject to investigation measures undertaken or commissioned by AbTF.

¹ Rules and procedures of conducting the verifications are described in the GCS Verification Governance document.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator	Herders without workers	Herders with temporary workers	Herders with permanent workers
8.6.1	B	The herder commits to provide the Cashmere Producer with required information listed in 9.1.1.	✓	✓	✓
8.6.2	B	The herder cooperates appropriately with the auditor to ensure an efficient and effective audit on site. If the herder has multiple sites this includes the provision of staff with local geographical knowledge as well as transportation and logistical support if applicable.	✓	✓	✓
8.6.3	B	The farm's responsible for GCS matters is available to participate in the audits.	✓	✓	✓
8.6.4	M	Confidential interviews with workers, randomly chosen by the auditor are conducted without any influence from the herder.			✓
8.6.5	B	On farms that employ 10 or more workers at least one worker representative participates in the audit to increase worker involvement and understanding of the process of compliance.			✓
8.6.6	B	Worker representative participation in audits takes place during working time and workers do not lose income.			✓
8.6.7	M	The herder grants auditors unlimited access to all facilities on the farm.	✓	✓	✓



GUIDANCE

Farm practices are monitored and verified through a systematic process of inspecting and observing goats and operations as well as through document checks and interviews with herders and workers. During the audit, the auditor checks the indicators listed in this standard by assessing and observing the herd and individual goats with reference to factors including their body condition score, any lameness, the presence of injuries, the presence of abnormal behaviours, and the herder's handling of the goats. Another important component is observing the goats' environment, such as the level of access goats have to facilities; the condition of buildings, walls, and fences; goats' access to feed and water troughs; air quality in goat housing; and issues like stocking density and hygiene. These assessments are also relevant for the safety of people on the farms and will take occupational and safety into consideration as well. Documents and records will give insights about specific procedures being implemented on the farm, e.g. vaccination records, health protocols, cashmere shearing/combing records, and cashmere sales receipts. If the herder employs workers, working conditions will also be covered by the audit.

The auditor will document any instances of noncompliance in the audit report. Noncompliance results in developing a plan to fix or address the issue within a defined period of time (i.e. a corrective action plan); evidence of progress under this plan must be provided.



CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 9.1:

The Cashmere Producer operates an effective management system to deliver the requirements of this Standard.

INTENT

An effective management system specifies repeatable steps that a Cashmere Producer implements to achieve its goals and objectives, with regard to GCS and beyond, and to create a culture that engages in a continuous cycle of monitoring, (self-) evaluation, and the correction and improvement of operations and processes. The management system’s level of complexity will depend on the particular circumstances of each Cashmere Producer. For some, especially smaller ones, it may simply mean having strong leadership from the owner, providing a clear definition of what is expected from each individual staff member, and explaining how it contributes to the Cashmere Producer’s overall objectives. However, in order to comply with GCS requirements and its assurance mechanism, it is essential to collect, compile, maintain, and report relevant data to AbTF.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
9.1.1	B	The Cashmere Producer has a system in place to accurately collect, maintain and update annually at least the following herder/herder group information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Location • Gender • Age • Number of goats • The herder’s grazing permit number or farm ID • Cashmere price at market • Phone number • Training participation
9.1.2	M	The Cashmere Producer possesses all required legal permits, such as business license, fire safety approval, pollutants discharge permit, etc., when applicable.

GUIDANCE

To assess and monitor the impact of GCS, AbTF needs a reliable set of data. The Cashmere Producer submits relevant data as part of the annual self-assessment (SAQ).



CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 9.2:

The Cashmere Producer has adequate staff capacity to implement the GCS.

INTENT

A functional organisational structure is the basic requirement for the Cashmere Producer to prove that policies and procedures are effective and that, for example, training is provided to all GCS herders.

Workers are a key determinant of a Cashmere Producer’s success and are often the Cashmere Producer’s “face” to herders and other stakeholders. A well-trained, well-qualified workforce is critical for implementing the GCS standard. Top management plays an integral role by hiring an adequate number of staff, building up workers’ capacities, and creating an efficient work environment. Senior management needs to ensure that the person or team that takes responsibility for GCS and related issues complies with reporting duties and receives sufficient time and authority to carry out the work involved.

The Cashmere Producer ensures that relevant workers handling GCS cashmere during cashmere processing are trained concerning the separation of GCS cashmere from non-GCS cashmere.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
9.2.1	B	The Cashmere Producer has appointed a person responsible for GCS matters, called the GCS Officer, who has the relevant knowledge and experience to carry out this post.
9.2.2	B	The GCS Officer is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall coordination of GCS matters at herder and Cashmere Producer level • Handling all necessary GCS related communication • Acting as a liaison between AbTF, the verification body, the auditor, and herder regarding GCS matters • The submission of annual Self-Assessments, annual Continuous Improvement Plans and Corrective Action Plans • Overseeing compliance, implementation, monitoring and enhancing of the herders’ and the Cashmere Producer’s performance regarding the GCS requirements
9.2.3	B	All workers that are involved in the processes relevant for the GCS are trained against the GCS requirements and the procedures that are established for this purpose. The training takes place once a year. New workers are trained before taking up their duties. The trainings are documented.

GUIDANCE

Organisational structure provides guidance to all workers by laying out the official reporting relationships that govern the workflow of the Cashmere Producer. Structure will give workers more clarity, help manage expectations, enable



better decision making and provide consistency. Organisational charts assign responsibility, organise workflow, and ensure that important tasks are completed on time.

With regard to the implementation of the GCS standard, it is essential to have at least one person appointed to be responsible for GCS matters, called the GCS officer. This ensures a direct, targeted, and efficient line of communication between AbTF, the verification body, and the Cashmere Producer. The GCS officer must either directly report to or be part of the senior management team and have the relevant knowledge and experience to fulfil this task. However, it is not mandatory for responsibility for GCS matters to be the only task assigned to the GCS officer.



CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 9.3:

The Cashmere Producer ensures the separation of GCS cashmere from non-GCS cashmere and follows the AbTF rules regarding the chain of custody, especially with respect to the preservation of traceability of the cashmere produced against the indicators of the GCS.

INTENT

Only cashmere produced by GCS herders is considered to be GCS cashmere and may be sold as such by the Cashmere Producer. If the Cashmere Producer works with both GCS and non-GCS herders, or if the Cashmere Producer processes different types of cashmere, it is essential for GCS cashmere to be separated from non-GCS cashmere at all stages to ensure that there is no mixing of products. Traceability from the farm level up to the Cashmere Producer is essential for ensuring the credibility of the GCS sustainability claim and for confirming the impact of the implemented practices.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
9.3.1	M	Cashmere marketed by the Cashmere Producer as Good Cashmere is produced by and purchased from GCS herders.
9.3.2	M	If not all the herders selling to the Cashmere Producer are taking part in the audit programme for GCS, the Cashmere Producer ensures the separation of GCS cashmere from non-GCS cashmere. If necessary, a separation system is in place, applied, and documented at all stages.
9.3.3	B	All herders are given receipts of sales of their cashmere, including the buyer’s name, date, and volume. The Cashmere Producer maintains copies of these receipts for at least two years and is able to submit these sale records to AbTF or the auditor upon request.
9.3.4	B	Sales records of cashmere to international traders and/or local producers, including the buyer name, date, and volume, are kept for at least two years and be available to AbTF or the auditor upon request.

GUIDANCE

Which herders are GCS herders? The Cashmere Producer makes the ultimate decision about who becomes a GCS herder. The term “GCS herder” can refer either to all herders or to herder groups that are producing cashmere in accordance with GCS requirements. In cases where the Cashmere Producer is handling both GCS and non-GCS cashmere, GCS cashmere must be segregated from non-GCS cashmere at all stages. Segregation may be physical (e.g. through separate production lines) or temporal (e.g. through separate production runs). When subcontractors are used, e.g. for transport, the Cashmere Producer must demonstrate that the segregation procedures described are being implemented. Subcontractors may be included in the audit at the discretion of the auditor, particularly in the case of reasonable doubt regarding compliance.



CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 9.4:

The Cashmere Producer has clear and equitable contracts with GCS herders.

INTENT

Through written contracts made between Cashmere Producers and herders, the conditions for participation in GCS are put on a transparent and fair basis. Contracts are explained by the Cashmere Producer’s staff so that herders have a good understanding of their own roles and the Cashmere Producer’s commitment.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
9.4.1	B	All GCS herders or GCS herder groups (in case of group contracts) receive contracts in language(s) understandable to them.
9.4.2	B	Contracts clearly indicate as a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grading and pricing • Delivery and payment terms and conditions • An arbitration system to resolve conflicts separate from jurisdiction
9.4.3	B	The Cashmere Producer ensures that GCS herders have a good understanding of the contract and the associated rights and obligations.
9.4.4	B	There is a transparent grading and payment system for cashmere in place that pays different prices for different cashmere quality levels.
9.4.5	B	GCS herders are paid for their cashmere in a timely manner, and not later than 30 days after delivery of fibre to the Cashmere Producer.
9.4.6	B	GCS herders have easy access to the Cashmere Producer’s arbitration system or grievance mechanism if they consider that they are not receiving a fair price for their cashmere.

GUIDANCE

For verifications at the herder level, the focus of observation should be on contracts and herder recruitment procedures as well as on buying procedures during the marketing season.

Regarding verifications, it is important to make sure, firstly, that the Cashmere Producer and the herders respect and follow the regulations applicable in their country and, secondly, that herders are enabled to make informed choices.



Group contracts. If herders are organised in groups or co-operatives, the Cashmere Producer can establish written contracts with those groups. However, the existence of individual herder contracts should be proven at the group/co-operative level. Group contracts should name and identify the individual herders, and individual herders must have access to and know the terms of the group contracts.



CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 9.5:

The Cashmere Producer regularly assesses risks of non-compliance with the GCS and implements corrective actions.

INTENT

Cashmere Producers have the capacity and have made the commitment to act diligently in assessing the actual and potential adverse impact their business may have with respect to the values and principles of the GCS standard, identifying for themselves where the most significant risks for these adverse effects may occur and acting upon them with the aim of preventing or addressing them in line with the GCS standard. Cashmere Producers take all reasonable and appropriate measures within their purview to implement the GCS standard. Cashmere Producers gather and assess reliable information regarding the fulfilment of their responsibilities and keep the necessary documentary evidence to prove that they have acted diligently. They seek further detail on the root cause of any discrepancy with the principles and criteria of the GCS standard and take the necessary corrective actions.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
9.5.1	B	The Cashmere Producer annually carries out a risk assessment to identify possible risks of non-conformity with GCS at herder level.
9.5.2	B	The Cashmere Producer buying annually carries out a risk assessment to identify possible risks of non-conformity with GCS at Cashmere Producer level.
9.5.3	B	In case risks of non-conformity, the Cashmere Producer plans and implements corrective actions to address the risks – at herder as well as Cashmere Producer level.
9.5.4	B	The Cashmere Producer develops a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and its actions are implemented, documented, and monitored. The CIP is reviewed and updated annually.

GUIDANCE

The primary objective of a risk assessment is to identify potential risks to goat welfare and to social and environmental aspects so that the Cashmere Producer can develop appropriate strategies for addressing the risks and their potential negative implications. Cashmere Producers need to have effective mechanisms in place to plan and implement appropriate corrective actions.

Key considerations for a robust risk assessment include:

- The assessment is done in regular intervals of no longer than one year.
- The assessment is conducted any time there is significant change to operations.
- The assessment is conducted any time there are external changes, such as new laws or regulations.
- The assessment covers risks to goat welfare, labour, occupational health and safety (OHS), and the environment.
- The assessment evaluates and prioritises risks according to both their probability and the severity of their potential negative impact.



- The assessment links monitoring plans to prioritised risks.
- The assessment includes input from all levels of managers, workers, herders, affected communities, and—as far as possible—other external stakeholders.

Where necessary, Cashmere Producers are required to support herders in correcting nonconformities, e.g. by providing resources or by offering training courses, and are encouraged to spread knowledge and information by supporting the establishment of networks, organising farm tours, and providing digital solutions.



CASHMERE PRODUCER

CRITERION 9.6:

An effective GCS audit process regularly assesses the risks of non-compliance with the standard and implemented corrective actions.

INTENT

An audit process involves an independent evaluation of the Cashmere Producer’s system, procedures, processes, and records to ensure compliance with GCS requirements and additional regulations as well as with internal policies. An audit provides credibility and gives the shareholders confidence that the accounts are true and fair. By identifying potential risks and areas for improvement, it also helps advance the Cashmere Producer’s internal controls and systems. An effective audit requires commitment, good planning, and consistent, clear communication throughout the audit process.

INDICATORS

No.	Level	Indicator
9.6.1	B	The Cashmere Producer provides 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.
9.6.2	B	The Cashmere Producer’s GCS Officer participates in the audits at herder and Cashmere producer level.
9.6.3	M	Confidential interviews with workers’ representatives, workers, and herders, all randomly chosen by the auditor is conducted without any influence from the Cashmere Producer.
9.6.4	B	During audits at Cashmere Producer level at least one worker representative participates in the audit as well as opening and closing meetings to increase worker involvement and understanding of the process of compliance.
9.6.5	B	Worker participation in audits takes place during working time and workers do not lose income.
9.6.6	M	The Cashmere Producer grants auditors unlimited access to all their facilities.

GUIDANCE

Regular audits take place on an annual basis, with audit visits being conducted at the herder level and at the Cashmere Producer level. To be granted a GCS certificate permitting sales under the GCS label, audits at both the herder level and the Cashmere Producer level must have been completed successfully. The GCS certificate is awarded to the Cashmere Producer by AbTF, which administers the standard. This can only occur if the third-party audits at the herder and CP levels are successful.



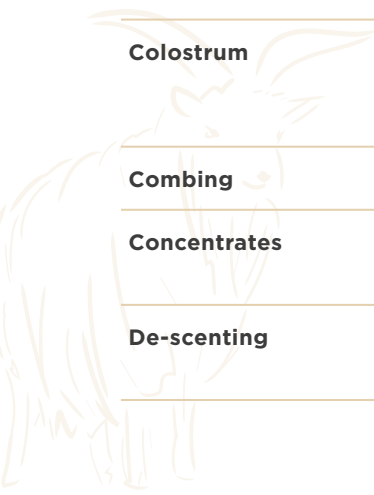
An efficient audit relies on the commitment and support of the management in ensuring that the Cashmere Producer provides adequate time, means, and relevant participants for the audit and potential follow-up actions. Both the auditor and the auditee should carefully prepare for the audit. All documents relevant to GCS—such as records related to herders (e.g. herder contracts, herder lists, herder training records, and receipts of bought and sold cashmere)—as well as additional documentation relevant to social and management requirements are up to date and readily available on the day of the audit. Information and answers given to the auditor are accurate and truthful. The auditor is given access to all areas of the facility that are relevant to GCS. Follow-ups are done in a reliable, prompt manner, and any necessary steps are taken to continue improving the Cashmere Producer’s performance of GCS processes and procedures.

During herder audits, the Cashmere Producer’s support and commitment are key. For instance, the Cashmere Producer should ensure that relevant resources are available and that the necessary people are participating in the audit, such as the GCS officer and other relevant staff, like the herder’s main contact person. The GCS officer is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the Cashmere Producer’s herder audits. Transportation for auditors during the audits must be provided by the Cashmere Producer. If necessary, a translator needs to take part in the audit under the Cashmere Producer’s expenses.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acidosis	Hyperacidity of the rumen or entire metabolism; often triggered by a relative or absolute lack of crude fibre.
Ad libitum	Freely available; without limit: usually refers to roughage or water
Adult	A person who is 18 years of age or older.
Animal Unit	The grassland-livestock balance system in China regulates the livestock numbers based on the animal unit 1 sheep/goat equivalent (SE). The stocking rate differs geographically. In some areas, 1 sheep/goat equivalent of livestock is allowed on grassland size of 20 Mu (1.3 ha) and the exchange rate is for example: 1 camel= 7 SE; 1 horse= 6 SE; 1 cattle= 5 SE.
Body Condition Score	Classification to systematically record nutritional physical condition
Bonded labour	A specific type of forced labour that extracts work or service from a person through the imposition of a bond, often in the form of a debt (e.g. through large pay advances for food, equipment, or transportation fees) that cannot be repaid by the worker on the basis of his or her low wages (cf. ILO Conventions 29 and 135).
Breeding	Mating, rearing and caring of goats
Browse	A type of herbivory in which an animal feeds on the leaves or soft shoots of high-growing, woody plants.
Bucks	Male goats
Cashmere	Cashmere refers to a fiber obtained from goats.
Cashmere Producer	The term cashmere producer summarizes the organisational units Buying Station and Dehairing Station.
Cloned (Clone)	Cloning refers to the creation of one or more genetically identical individuals.
Collective bargaining	Collective bargaining means carrying on negotiations through an appropriate bargaining unit for the purpose of concluding a collective agreement (cf. ILO Conventions 87 and 98).
Collective bargaining agreement	A collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is an agreement that is negotiated by an appropriate bargaining unit and that lays down the terms and conditions affecting the employment and remuneration of employees.
Colostrum	In mammals, including goats, colostrum is the first substance produced by the mammary glands after pregnancy and excreted via the teats. It contains proteins, sugar, fat, minerals, growth factors and antibodies that are vital for the immune defence of kids.
Combing	The extraction of the goat's undercoat (cashmere) with a special comb
Concentrates	Concentrates describes an energy-rich, possibly also protein-rich, but low crude fibre feed made from grain or industrially produced compound feed
De-scenting	Scent glands are close to the base of the horns in male goats. If these are removed (forbidden against the GCS criteria), this is de-scenting.

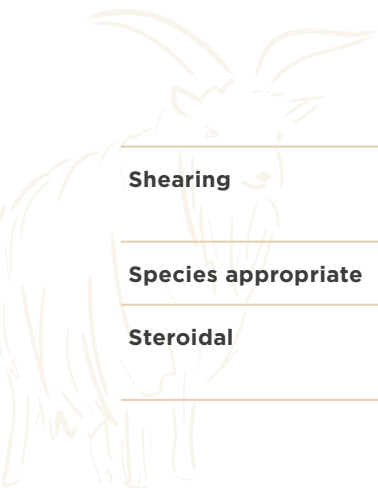




Discrimination	Discrimination is defined as any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation (cf. ILO Convention 111).
Does	Female Goats
Ear notching	Animal marking performed by cutting or notching the ear (forbidden against the GCS).
Euthanasia	Euthanasia is the deliberate, humane termination of life. The purpose of euthanasia is to spare an animal that has no prospect of relief or recovery from avoidable suffering and pain.
Five domains of animal welfare	Current scientific model by Mellor and Reid considering the domains Nutrition, Environment, Health, Behaviour and Mental with a focus on subjective experiences and well-being
Forage	Forage includes both the activity of grazing and all feed produced by grazing or harvesting grassland.
Forced labour	The ILO Forced Labour Convention (No. 29) defines forced or compulsory labour as “all work or services which is exacted from any person under the threat of penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily”. See also: bonded labour
Forestomach(s)	The goat is a ruminant and the part of the digestive system that comes before the actual glandular stomach comprises the forestomachs. These include the rumen, the reticulum and the omasum.
Goat	A goat is a medium-sized, horned and fleeced animal. Goats are cloven-hoofed and ruminants. Compared to sheep, which are sometimes visually similar, goats have 60 chromosomes, whereas sheep only have 54.
Goat length	Depending on the breed a goat has a length between 120 and 160 cm from nose to tail. If measurements are given in goat lengths, the goats of the respective farm are to be seen as a reference.
Grievance mechanism	A grievance mechanism is a formal, judicial or non-judicial, complaints process that can be used by individuals, workers, communities or civil society organisations that are being negatively affected by certain business activities and operations. Operational level grievance mechanisms meet the core criteria of legitimacy, accessibility, predictability, equitability, compatibility with the OECD Guidelines for MNEs, transparency and being dialogue-based (cf. OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector).
Hazard	Hazard refers to the inherent potential of a substance, agent, or situation to cause undesirable consequences, e.g. properties that can cause adverse effects or damage to health, property, or the environment.
Herder	Herder refers specifically to the goat keeper or owner.
Herder with permanent workers	Permanent workers do not have a set end date to employment. The permanent position may be on a part-time or full-time basis.
Herder with temporary workers	Temporary workers refers to an employment relationship in which the working arrangement is limited to a certain period of time.
Kids	Kids are the offspring of goats. Kids are the offspring of goats. The term includes both suckling kids and weaned kids up to the age of 12 months.



Lethal Control	When controlling wild animals (such as rodents), a distinction is made between non-lethal and lethal measures.
Malnutrition	Malnutrition includes both inadequate nutrition and an incorrectly composed diet.
Pesticide	<p>FAO defines a pesticide as any substance or mixture of substances intended to repel, destroy, or control any pest. The term includes substances intended for use as a plant growth regulator, defoliant, desiccant, or agent for thinning fruit or preventing fruit from falling prematurely. It is also used for substances applied to crops either before or after harvest to protect the commodity from deterioration during storage and transport.</p> <p>In general, a pesticide is a chemical or biological agent that deters, incapacitates, kills, or otherwise discourages pests. Sub-categories of the term pesticide include herbicide, insecticide, nematocide, molluscicide, piscicide, avicide, rodenticide, bactericide, insect repellent, animal repellent, antimicrobials, and fungicide. Most pesticides are intended to serve as plant protection products, protecting plants from weeds, fungi, or insects. In general, targets are organisms that destroy property, cause a nuisance, spread disease, or are disease vectors. In addition to their benefits, pesticides have drawbacks like potential toxicity to humans and other species.</p>
Primary Forest	<p>The EU defines it as a relatively intact natural forest which has remained essentially unmodified by human activity for the past 60-80 years.</p> <p>The FCS describes it as a forest ecosystem with the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems such as complexity, structure, and diversity and an abundance of mature trees, relatively undisturbed by human activity. Human impacts in such forest areas have normally been limited to low levels of hunting, fishing and harvesting of forest products. Such ecosystems are also referred to as “mature”, “old-growth” or “virgin” forests.</p>
Prophylactic	Prophylaxis involves preventive action. It can mean, for example, that a herder sells animals in autumn in order to avoid a shortage of feed in winter. It can be the prevention of pain by administering painkillers. It can be the hoof care of goats to prevent lameness. Important: The prophylactic administration of antibiotics to prevent infection is not permitted.
Risk	The chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives. It is measured in terms of a combination of the probability of an event and its consequences.
Roughage	Roughage is a fibre-rich feed that forms the basis of ruminant nutrition and is necessary for healthy digestion. For example, the stems of grasses, maize and straw are rich in fibre, as are parts of bushes and trees.
Ruminant	Ruminants are a suborder of cloven-hoofed animals and have a multi-part stomach (see also forestomach), which enables them to digest carbohydrates from plants through microbial processes that are not digestible for other mammals. Regurgitation and repeated chewing are necessary for these processes. Goats belong to the group of ruminants, as do sheep and cattle.
Shearing	The extraction of the goat’s undercoat (cashmere) with either hand scissors or electric shearing devices.
Species appropriate	to suit the natural living conditions, behaviour and needs of a species
Steroidal	In connection with anti-inflammatory drugs: A distinction is made between non-steroidal and steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Steroidal refers to the specific chemical structure.





Sub-therapeutic	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.
Trace Elements	A distinction is made between bulk and trace elements. A deficiency of essential trace elements can lead to illness. Trace elements include iron, copper, selenium, zinc, cobalt and manganese.
Trimming	Trimming refers to the care of the goats' cloven hooves. If these do not wear down sufficiently, they must be trimmed regularly to prevent misalignment or lameness.





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 herders, 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.

**For comments or questions
please contact:**

gcs@abt-foundation.org

Aid by Trade Foundation

Gurlittstraße 14 · 20099 Hamburg

Telefon: +49 40 25 76 75 50

E-Mail: info@abt-foundation.org

www.thegoodcashmerestandard.org