



RESPONSIBLE WOOL SOURCING POLICY

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BACKGROUND

Marks and Spencer are committed to using responsibly sourced raw materials, including the responsible sourcing of wool. With over one million metric tonnes of wool being produced each year¹, wool is the most used animal derived fibre. M&S recognises three principles in the responsible sourcing wool: animal welfare, land management and traceability.

ANIMAL WELFARE: FLYSTRIKE & MULESING

Since first being introduced to Australia in the 1790's, flystrike has become common in Australian Merino sheep due to the combination of breeding practices and climate². Flystrike occurs when blowflies lay eggs on sheep, which hatch into maggots and begin to eat the flesh of the host³. This usually happens around the hindquarters or 'breach' and is extremely painful - sometimes fatal - making it a serious animal welfare concern. The practice of surgical-mulesing removes the skin on the breach of a lamb. Although this makes them less susceptible to flystrike, it is often performed on lambs with no pain relief. This policy defines M&S' position in opposition to the use of mulesing as a method for controlling blow fly strike.

It is important that the sourcing of wool is underpinned by the Five Freedoms of Animal welfare, more information regarding this can be found in the M&S C&H Animal Welfare Policy.

LAND MANAGEMENT

In common with other forms of agriculture, the rearing of sheep for wool is resource intensive and overgrazing can lead to soil erosion and biodiversity loss. Progressive approaches to land management aim to conserve and restore land, focussing on soil health, improving biodiversity and minimising use of fertilisers and pesticides.

SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all products sold in M&S Clothing, Home and Beauty areas that contain any wool, including blends. The scope includes all main materials, linings, fillings and trims.

This policy is intended to complement the M&S C&H Animal Welfare Policy, and the additional specific M&S sourcing policies for Recycled and Organic materials.

¹ Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2019, Textile Exchange

² Transitioning away from mulesed sheep wool: A guide for brands and retailers on why and how, Four Paws, January 2021

³ Flystrike in pets, RSPCA, available at: <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/general/flystrike>

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RATONALE AND OBJECTIVES

- To ensure M&S meets its long-standing commitment to improve animal welfare in its supply chains and ensure all wool is sourced from farms with the highest animal welfare practices to protect sheep from blowfly strike. M&S is committed to only source wool from sheep that have not been mulesed
- To ensure M&S improves the environmental impact of its main raw materials
- To lay out a set of uniform principles around the sourcing of wool into product that must be adhered to by all business units consistently
- To ensure due diligence is undertaken with regards to the provenance of wool, animal welfare practices on farms and land management
- To ensure M&S can substantiate any marketing claims for wool product with sustainability claims in accordance with existing standards

M&S MANDATORY PRINCIPLES FOR SOURCING

1. M&S requires that wool must not be sourced from farms that practice mulesing

The M&S policy for responsible sourcing of wool is based on a risk assessment of the source and reflects the developments of alternatives to mulesing over time. M&S advocates for the wool industry to invest in long term sustainable solutions to both flystrike and mulesing.

LOW RISK SOURCES

Wool from South Africa, New Zealand, China, and South America is considered lower risk as these sources suffer much lower incidents of blowfly-strike and mulesing is not commonly used. When claiming wool is from these sources import/export documentation is required to prove the Country of Origin (COO) and the country of destination.

AUSTRALIAN WOOL

Wool from Australia is the highest risk as the use of surgical mulesing is legal and widespread. When sourcing wool from Australia, an AWTA (Australian Wool Testing Authority) certificate can be used to indicate the mulesing status.

The mulesing status of wool from Australia is categorised using the following **AWEX** (Austalian Wool Exchange) terminology:

- *Non Mulesed ('NM')*: none of the sheep in the flock have been mulesed
- *Ceased Mulesed ('CM')*: the practice of mulesing is no longer carried out, but some sheep in the flock were mulesed previously
- *Pain Relief ('PR')*: pain relief applied to the sheep after mulesing has been carried out by an accredited practitioner.

M&S only accepts '*NM Non Mulesed*' and '*CM Ceased Mulesed*' status.

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2. M&S is committed to sourcing 50% of wool from more sustainable sources by 2025

Within wool sourcing, M&S defines more sustainable sources as meeting any of the following standards. Sustainable wool must be verified through the standard's own verification system, with relevant documentation.

RESPONSIBLE WOOL STANDARD (RWS)

The Responsible Wool Standard ensures both the protection of animal welfare and progressive land management at farm level. The RWS requires all sites along the value chain to be certified, from farm to garment manufacturer. The Responsible Wool Standard covers five important elements:

- Animal welfare verification at farms
- Land management
- Social welfare
- Chain of custody of wool from the source to the final product
- Product labelling – logo use is optional

The Standard applies to products that contain at least 5% RWS wool, calculated as a percentage of the material. Final products containing non-certified virgin wool are not permitted to be labelled with the RWS name or logo. Find out more:

<https://textileexchange.org/standards/responsible-wool/>

RECYCLED WOOL

For more information and verification guidance, see the M&S Recycled Materials Sourcing Policy

ORGANIC WOOL

For more information and verification guidance, see the M&S Organic Materials Sourcing Policy

DEFINITIONS

Animal Derived Materials: Materials including ingredients that have an animal origin, regardless of whether they have been harvested from live or dead animals.

Surgical Mulesing: Widely practiced in Australia, the cutting of a flap of skin from around a lamb's breech or hindquarters to reduce the susceptibility of Merino sheep to blowfly strike.

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