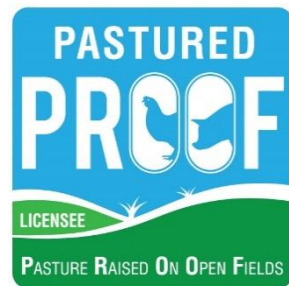


The focus of PROOF certification is the on farm management of livestock in a farming system that provides unrestricted access to actively managed, pastured range areas in an environment that encourages purposeful use of those areas.



SHEEP STANDARD 2017

Version: 1.4

Introduction

The PROOF – Pasture Raised On Open Fields certification program was developed to certify farms that adhere to these standards. The focus of PROOF certification is the on farm management of livestock in a farming system that provides unrestricted access to actively managed, pastured range areas in an environment that encourages purposeful use of those areas.

This Standard covers the on farm management of **sheep**.

Onus is on the operator and their employees/contractors to ensure at all times that they are fully aware of all relevant aspects of the PROOF Standard relating to their operation. It is also the responsibility of the operator to be aware of extra regulatory or market requirements that are in addition to the PROOF standard. These may include but are not limited to:

- Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—Sheep or equivalent Australian Standard or State code where one exists.
- Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Land Transport of Livestock.
- Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments (or equivalent Australian Standard or State code where one exists).

Compliance with all such regulatory and code of practice requirements is outside the scope of these standards.

Pastured Definition

All sheep are born and raised outdoors with continuous and unrestricted access to paddocks that are suitable for grazing and are provided with shade and shelter. All sheep must use the paddocks each day unless; they choose to shelter because of inclement weather, short term confinement for veterinary treatment or giving birth. Feed supplements are available to ensure all their nutritional needs are met. Sheep are kept at a stocking intensity that will ensure forage is always available in an actively managed rotational grazing system.

Core Values

1. **All sheep are able to range in open fields or paddocks**
2. **All sheep are kept at stocking densities that will ensure access to forage and grazing**
3. **All sheep are able to interact with the flock and to carry out natural behaviours**
4. **Densely confined production systems and feed lotting are not permitted**
5. **All sheep will be protected from predation**
6. **All sheep will be fed to meet their nutritional needs as well as production requirements**

Guide to using the PROOF Sheep Standard

- The broad objectives of the standard are described at the beginning of each section.
- Each requirement of the standard is numbered and must be complied with.
- A guide to records that must be kept to demonstrate compliance with the standard will be indicated at the end of each section.

1. All sheep are able to range freely in open fields or paddocks

Range Management

Objective: This standard requires that all sheep have continuous and unrestricted access to paddocks and that stocking intensity is monitored to ensure that forage is always available for the animals in an actively managed rotational grazing system. Stocking densities need to be monitored and adjusted as necessary to achieve compliance with these standards.

- 1.1. A farm map will be provided to PROOF. The map may be hand drawn or a satellite image.
The map must include the following:
 - 1.1.1. The Lot number and Deposited Plan number for the property being certified;
 - 1.1.2. The Property Identification Code (PIC);
 - 1.1.3. Paddock layout and size of each paddock;
 - 1.1.4. Location of shade and shelter within the paddocks; and
 - 1.1.5. The location of buildings on the land.
- 1.2. Paddocks must be actively managed to:
 - 1.2.1. Prevent heavily degraded, muddy and excessively barren ground;
 - 1.2.2. Minimize the build-up of manure;
 - 1.2.3. Encourage the sheep to make use of the range area with:
 - 1.2.3.1. Well drained, shaded areas that are distributed around the range area for sheep to rest outdoors without having to crowd together;
 - 1.2.3.2. Easy access to feed and water.
 - 1.2.4. Maintain groundcover in the range area so that it does not fall below 40%.
- 1.3. Sheep will have access to edible forage at all times except in circumstances of extreme weather conditions and extended dry periods that are beyond the control of the operator. At such times, good Lucerne hay or other suitable fodder shall be provided. Any occasion or

time period that forage is unavailable, and it is necessary to supply supplemental fodder, will be recorded in the Farm Diary.

- 1.4. The paddocks must be rotated periodically to allow the range area to recover from use.
- 1.5. A written Paddock Management Plan must be in place that identifies how paddocks will be rotated and what remedial action will be taken to correct bare areas of ground, recovery of vegetation and manure build-up. This plan will include:
 - 1.5.1. Paddock rotations;
 - 1.5.2. Pasture restoration;
 - 1.5.3. Manure management;
 - 1.5.4. Management of muddy and overused areas.
- 1.6. Paddock rotations are defined as the relocation of sheep to fresh ground and the resting, or renovation, of the area previously grazed to ensure recovery of forage to the area.

Records to be kept

- Paddock Management Plan
- Farm Map
- Farm Diary

2. All sheep are kept at stocking densities that will ensure access to forage and grazing

Objective: That sheep always have access to pasture and/or forage in an environment that encourages them to make purposeful use of the range area. Stocking densities will play an important role in managing and maintaining pasture availability.

Stocking Rates

- 2.1 Stocking rates must be determined by the carrying capacity of the land. Long-term carrying capacity is the average number of animals that a grazing area can be expected to support over a set period.
- 2.2 The Licensee will provide their assessment of the carrying capacity of the land sheep will graze to the PROOF auditor.
- 2.3 To assess long-term carrying capacity, the following must be taken into consideration:
 - 2.3.1 areas of land types on the property;
 - 2.3.2 climate;
 - 2.3.3 evenness of grazing (including preference of land type, plant species, and distance to water);
 - 2.3.4 tree densities;
 - 2.3.5 goals for animal production;
 - 2.3.6 and land condition.

2.4 Stocking rates must be calculated according to the size of the paddock or area designated for occupation and class of sheep. The calculation must take into consideration only the designated enclosure or paddocks and not to the total land area of the property. The producer must be able to demonstrate that sheep do graze the allocated areas.

The Flock

Replacement Stock

- 2.1. Sheep that have been purchased from a non-licensed (PROOF) supplier must reside on the licensed operator's property and be raised in compliance with the PROOF standards for sheep for a period of not less than 60 days before they can be sold under the PROOF Trademark License.
- 2.2. Purchased stock must be accompanied by a vendor declaration that states:
 - 2.2.1. the source of the animals;
 - 2.2.2. age of the animals; and
 - 2.2.3. A statement of compliance with section 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 of this standard (Surgical Procedures).
- 2.3. Stock may be purchased from another PROOF licensed producer and sold under the PROOF Trademark.

Surgical Procedures

- 2.4. Mulesing is not permitted.
- 2.5. Castration using the rubber ring method may be performed before the age of 12 weeks and must ensure the correct positioning to block arterial blood flow.
- 2.6. When horned sheep are part of the flock, only horn trimming may be performed instead of dehorning.
- 2.7. Short tail docking is not permitted. If tail docking is necessary to reduce the incidence of blowfly strike, the tail must be docked at the third palpable joint before the age of 12 weeks.
- 2.8. A program must be in place to prevent or control external and internal parasite infestations and blowfly strike.

Shelter

- 2.9. Windbreaks to reduce the effect of cold must be provided.
- 2.10. Lambing ewes must have access to sheltered paddocks.
- 2.11. Shade must be available to all sheep.

Records to be kept

- Sales and purchases of sheep
- Vendor declarations
- Animal treatment records
- Farm Diary
- Farm Map

3. All sheep are able to interact with their flock and to carry out natural behaviours

3.1 No animal shall be kept or confined on its own unless necessary for short term medical treatment.

4. Densely confined production systems and feed lotting is not permitted

Objective: That all sheep have continuous and unrestricted access to paddocks and that stocking intensity is managed to ensure that forage is always available for the sheep.

4.1. Keeping of sheep in yards or pens, that enclose the animals preventing free access to paddocks, is not permitted.

5. All sheep will be protected from predation

Objective: To offer as much protection from predators as practicable specially to lambing ewes and their newborn.

Predators may be managed using the following:

- 5.1. Exclusion fencing;
- 5.2. Guard dogs;
- 5.3. Mechanical deterrents;
- 5.4. Trapping of individual animals using live traps with relocation or, where there is no alternative, humane destruction;
- 5.5. Poisons for control of rodents or feral animals in the field.
- 5.6. Extra protection from predators for lambing ewes and new born lambs must be provided.
 - 5.6.1. The use of mechanical deterrents and guard animals is encouraged.
 - 5.6.2. Baiting programs must be considered when wild dogs or other predators are known to be a problem.

6. Sheep will be fed to meet their nutritional needs as well as production requirements

Objective: That sheep receive a balanced diet to meet their nutritional needs.

- 6.1. Clean, fresh drinking water shall be available at all times and be:
 - 6.1.1. from an uncontaminated source; and
 - 6.1.2. from a source that is managed to prevent contamination.
- 6.2. Sheep shall be provided with continuous access to pasture as their primary source of feed. Where conditions mandate, fodder and good quality hay may be provided. Grain supplementation in the paddock is permitted when pasture availability is poor but must not be a primary source of feed and may only be provided to make up nutritional deficits when pasture is inadequate. Available feed must satisfy sheep nutritional requirements and shall be:
 - 6.2.1. supplied in sufficient quantity to maintain the sheep in good body condition and health;
 - 6.2.2. free from banned substances or contaminants.
- 6.3. Feeders and waterers must be sufficient in number to avoid bullying and competition for feed and water.
- 6.4. Feeders and waterers, as well as any equipment used to transport feed and water, must be kept clean and in good repair.
- 6.5. Controls must be in place to minimize access to poisonous plants.
- 6.6. Feed storage must be covered and sealed sufficiently to reduce risk of contamination by vermin and wild birds.
- 6.7. An emergency or backup water supply must be available.

Records to be kept

- Farm Diary
- Feed records
- Animal treatment records

7. Understanding the Standards | Record Keeping

- 9.1. All staff, contractors or any person involved with the handling and management of the sheep will;
 - 9.1.1. receive a copy of this standard;
 - 9.1.2. demonstrate understanding of this standard; and

9.1.3. comply with this standard.

9.2. A suitable training program will be in place for all staff and anyone involved in the handling and management of the sheep to ensure compliance to this standard.

9.2.1. In house training programs must be documented.

9.2.2. Producers and staff have the option to undertake training modules available through PROOF. Records of completion will be provided.

Record Keeping

9.3. The Licensee must maintain and make available to PROOF or an inspector, production and management records. These records must be dated and include:

9.3.1. A Farm Diary or equivalent record keeping system. The diary can include the following if separate records are not kept:

9.3.1.1. Routine activities;

9.3.1.2. Maintenance;

9.3.1.3. Paddock rotations;

9.3.1.4. Harvest of crops or hay.

9.3.2. Feed records (including feed purchase invoices, feed analysis, feed bag tags/feed formulas)

9.3.3. Animal treatments

9.3.4. Sales and purchases

9.3.5. Mortalities

9.3.6. Paddock Management Plan

PROOF – Pasture Raised On Open Fields

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