

AWA

AMERICAN WOOL ASSURANCE

PROGRAM UPDATE

American Sheep
Industry Association

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WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

AWA allows us to...

- Share what a great job we're doing
- Reputation and pride
- Gives traceability
- Access into (high-end) markets
 - Expands number of buyers
 - Negotiate a higher price

AWA By The Numbers

As of 1/15/2022

102 AWA Members

19% Large commercial operations

32% Commercial farm flock operations

49% Niche market operations

28 Level I – AWA Educated



AWA is...

- Voluntary
- Developed by the industry
 - American Sheep Industry Association (ASI)
 - CSU & UNL
 - All segments of the industry
- Year-round standards
- Multiple levels- growers & buyers can find the level that works best for them
- Traceable
 - Certificates and verification on the AWA website
- Working on USDA certification



About

How It Works



Sign In

Menu

www.AmericanWoolAssurance.org



**Proud to care for our sheep
and the wool you wear.**

American wool producers

international standards (e.g.

place a high priority on sheep

Five Freedoms of Animal

AWA LEVELS

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND
TO BECOME A MEMBER, VISIT
WWW.AMERICANWOOLASSURANCE.ORG

Benefits

Recertification

Requirements

"Educated" certificate

None

Online education
courses

**Level I
Educated**

"Process Verified"
certificate to share with
buyers

Processor further
promotion

Stencil for marking wool
bags

Evaluation every 2 years

2nd party evaluations
Level I accreditation

**Level II
Process Verified**

"Certified" certificate to
share with buyers

AWA logo use

Processor further
promotion

Stencil for marking wool
bags

Listed on AWA website
(optional)

Evaluation every 2 years
with an audit at least
every 4 years

Audit & evaluations
Level I accreditation

**Level III
Certified**

"Ranch Group Certified"
certificate to share with
buyers

AWA logo use

Processor further
promotion

Stencil for marking wool
bags

Listed on AWA website
(optional)

Evaluation every 2 years.
Portion of members
complete audit every 4
years

Audit & evaluations
Level I accreditation

**Ranch Group
Certified**



AWA

AMERICAN WOOL ASSURANCE

AWA Guide

Auditing Items

Written Plans should guide the operation on the best operating procedures. Plans should be developed for most AWA standards.

Contingency Plans provide a written plan for complications or alternate circumstances that are reasonably likely to occur. Contingency plans should be developed for most AWA standards. For example, you have a written plan for supplying hay to your sheep, but your regular source is not able to supply that hay. What is your contingency plan?

Records should be kept for several AWA standards and should include the date, sheep ID or flock, action taken and other relevant information. Records may be in any written format.

Direct observations will be used in an evaluation or audit.

Interviews may be conducted with the operation owner, manager and staff/herders/handlers.

Evaluations & Audits

Evaluations and audits provide outside verification that an operation is in compliance with the AWA standards. Both are arranged and conducted directly through an approved evaluator or auditor. Using direct observations and interviews, review of documents and records, audits and evaluations will address the relevance of the operating plan to the standards, implementation of the operating plan, adherence to the plan and AWA standards and will provide feedback on conformance and on areas needing attention. Individual animals or flocks may be assessed. Producers and/or managers should be present during on-site audits and evaluations.

The producer and/or manager should review the audit or evaluation results, focusing on the results of the audit/evaluation, new knowledge available and updates by AWA and other legislation. Audit and evaluation results should identify non-conformances; non-conformances should be prioritized and based on frequency of occurrence, severity to the animal and ease of remedy. Animal abuse or neglect must be addressed immediately. The operating plan should then be adjusted to account for non-conformances by addressing the root cause and a timeline set for when improvements will take place. Upon completion of updated plans and corrected action, another review may take place. Following an audit or evaluation, producers should keep data and results for future reference.

STEPS TO AN AUDIT OR EVALUATION

FOR MORE DETAILS ON EACH STEP, VISIT THE AWA MEMBER HOME, RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTS

01 02 03 04 05

Arrange an audit or evaluation with an approved auditor or evaluator
Prepare for an audit or evaluation ensuring documents and records are in order
Evaluation or Audit performed through observations, interviews, plan and record reviews
Corrective Actions completed when non-conformances are found
Certification



AWA Standards & Guidance

Producers should develop an operating plan and hold records consistent with AWA standards and OIE TAHC guidelines by assessing current management practices, drafting a plan, implementing the plan and, finally, evaluating, reviewing, and updating the plan. Operating plans and practices should account for local conditions and should be attainable. Complete operating plans should include contingency or emergency response plans for extreme weather events, or other risks reasonably likely to occur. Plans and records should be kept for at least 4 years. Individual animals and/or flocks can be assessed. Non-conformances (gaps) between usual practices and AWA standards shall be identified and reported. Auditors and Evaluators will submit findings to the producer and to the American Sheep Industry Association. The "Helpful Resources" below are intended to assist and are not intended to be sole sources of information.

	STANDARD	INFORMATION	HELPFUL RESOURCES	ITEMS FOR AUDITING
MANAGEMENT				
1.1	PRODUCERS SHOULD BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF, AND SHALL COMPLY WITH, APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING LABOR AND ANIMAL WELFARE	Laws and regulations that all should be following. Learn about and keep training records on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Labor<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wages, hours and overtime payOSHA standards- a workplace free from recognized, serious hazards.Workers compensation insuranceH-2A laws (if applicable)Animal welfare<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any state specific laws	Labor laws and regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none">https://www.doi.gov/general/about/majorlaws Animal welfare laws and regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none">https://www.nal.usda.gov/awic	Provide reference materials, training records and operation records. Assessor will also use observations.
1.2	HERDERS AND WORKERS SHOULD BE TRAINED AND SKILLED IN PERFORMING PRACTICES TO PROVIDE PROPER CARE AND REDUCE ANIMAL STRESS AND BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE OPERATING PLAN	Those working with sheep should be trained and provide proper care. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Have a written plan with specific steps for providing proper care and reducing animal stress.Train and keep records for shepherds/handlers on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">The written planProper careReducing stress to sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sheep Care Guide- https://www.sheepusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Sheep-Care-Guide-2021-web.pdfSheep Handling Videos- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7LByfB_LYo&list=PLvm-dHSmZBuFs4-NtiGWVvWqS_zBaKOjiSheep Production Handbook pg. 303-310 and 406-420	Provide written plan and training records. Assessor will also use interviews and observations.

A photograph of two sheep standing in a green field under a blue sky with wispy clouds. The sheep are white with thick wool. One sheep is slightly behind the other, both looking towards the camera. A wire fence is visible in the background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

Audits & Evaluations

Assessments



EVALUATIONS...

- By a 2nd party individual
- Focus on education & continual improvement
- Preparation for audit



AUDITS...

- By a 3rd party audit company
- Looking for conformance
- Strictly objective

Auditors and Evaluators receive the same

- Foundational training
 - Resources
- Audit instrument
- Recertify every year

ROLES ILLUSTRATED

A photograph of a high jumper in mid-air, silhouetted against a bright sun and a blue sky with white clouds. The jumper is positioned below a horizontal bar supported by two vertical poles. Three blue arrows point from the right towards the scene: the top arrow points to the bar, the middle arrow points to the jumper, and the bottom arrow points to the base of the poles. Each arrow is labeled with a role: 'Program', 'Participant (owner/operator)', and 'Auditor' respectively.

Program

Participant (owner/operator)

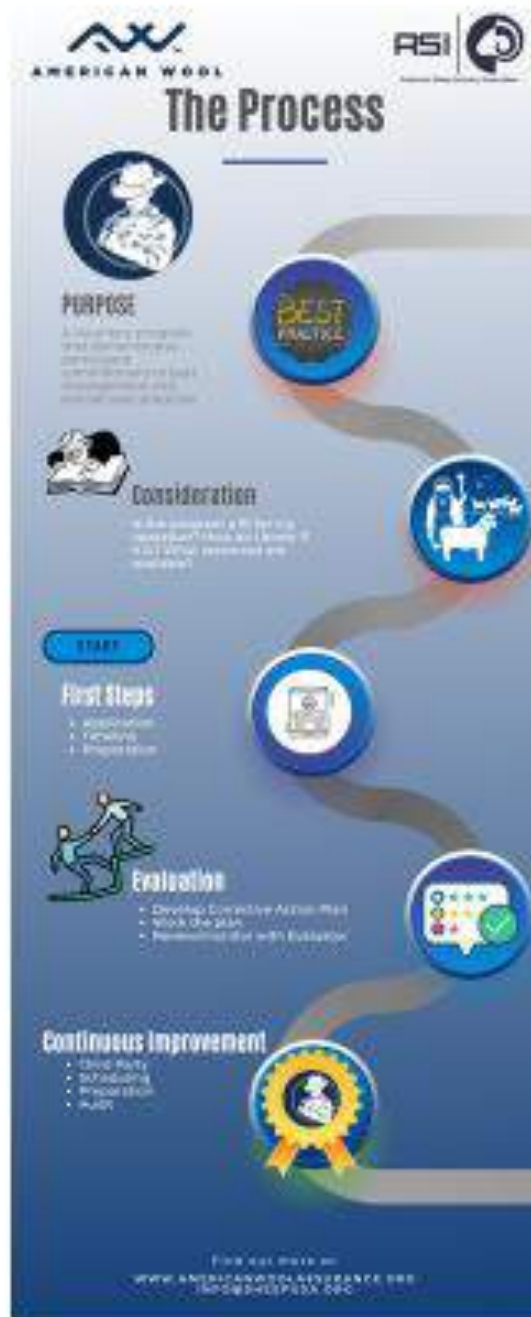
Auditor

ROLES ILLUSTRATED

Evaluator

Participant

Resources



PROCESS ILLUSTRATED

- Program Fit
- Early Steps
 - Application
 - Timeline
 - Preparation
- Evaluation
 - Development of Corrective Action Plan
 - Working the plan
 - Review/monitoring with Evaluator
- Next Steps
 - Third Party
 - Scheduling
 - Preparation
 - Audit

Auditor & Evaluator Expectations

1. Uphold the AWA program to the highest degree
2. Demonstrate objectivity and integrity as an evaluator/auditor
3. Follow safety and biosecurity protocols
4. Maintain confidentiality and safeguard grower information
5. Clearly communicate pre-assessment expectations and post-assessment findings to producers
6. Communicate results to AWA/ASI
7. Abide by AWA guidelines and principals and inspire ranchers to do the same

American Wool Assurance AUDIT



Facility Name						
Address	Street	City	State	Zip	Phone	Email
Facility Owner/Manager						

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS						
FINDINGS	CRITICAL		MAJOR		MINOR	
	<i>Response required within 2 weeks</i>		<i>Resolution required within 2 year</i>		<i>Resolution required within 4 years</i>	

STANDARDS		
MANAGEMENT		
1.1	PRODUCERS SHOULD BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF, AND SHALL COMPLY WITH, APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING LABOR AND ANIMAL WELFARE	
QUESTION		RESPONSE
		YES/NO COMMENTS/FINDINGS
Is the producer aware of and familiar with applicable laws and regulations concerning labor?		
Is there evidence of compliance with applicable laws and regulations concerning labor?		
Is the producer aware of and familiar with applicable laws and regulations concerning animal welfare?		
Is there evidence of compliance with applicable laws and regulations concerning animal welfare?		



Levels of Corrective Actions

Minor

- See audit for list
- Timeline: resolution within 4 years

Major

- See audit for list
- Timeline: resolution within 2 year

Critical

- See audit for list
- Timeline: response within 2 weeks

Definitions

Certification

- Successfully completed an evaluation or audit
- Does not have any overdue corrective actions
- Accredited as Certified or Process Verified

Conditional Certification

- Successful completion of an evaluation or audit
- Active corrective action plan
- Accredited as Certified or Process Verified

Conditional Decertification

- Successful completion of evaluation or audit
- Unresolved corrective actions by date set
- Cannot be accredited as Certified or Process Verified



Evaluators & Auditors

2nd Party Evaluators

- Applied in Nov 2021
- Trained in Dec 2021 – Jan 2022
- 17 Certified Evaluators

3rd Party Auditors

- Submitted proposals in Dec 2021
- 1 company chosen
- Training in early 2022





Visit...

www.AmericanWoolAssurance.org

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