



Sheep

Farm Audit Checklist



Farm Audit Checklist for Sheep

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Introduction

This Farm Audit Checklist for sheep provides a summary of the relevant SPCA Certified standards and is intended to help members assess their farm and prepare for an audit.

It is not exhaustive and not intended as a replacement for the standards, which should be read and understood before this checklist is used.

In addition, while completing this checklist and addressing any problems it raises, will increase the likelihood of a successful audit, it is not a guarantee of success.

You do not have to send this document to SPCA Certified, it is provided purely for your own reference.

IMPORTANT: If you are a dairy sheep farmer, please use the separate 'Farm Audit Checklist for Dairy Sheep'.

Date of assessment:		Animal/flock ages:
Overall comments:		

Working dogs		Check (Y/N)	Comments
Feed/Water/ Exercise	Water available in kennels Body condition meets legal requirements Dogs look healthy and fit		
Accommodation	Clean, habitable, appropriate size, provides effective shade and shelter.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Nutrition		
	Feed		
N1 – N4	Sheep have unrestricted and non-competitive access to good quality feed of sufficient quantity. A written plan is provided for emergency situations (e.g. drought). Supplementary feeds are safe for the sheep.		
N5	A mineral supplementation programme is in place and monitoring is undertaken.		
N6 & N7	Body condition score is regularly recorded at least three times a year and sheep are maintained between BCS 3-4. Remedial action where adult animals drop below 3.		
	Water		
N8 – N11	Clean and palatable drinking water is freely available and accessible for sheep of all ages.		
N12 & N13	Troughs and areas around them are clean.		
N14 & N15	Water quality is tested and recorded.		
N16	An alternative water supply is in place for emergencies.		

	Fostering and hand-rearing lambs		
N17	A fostering management plan is in place and implemented where relevant.		
N18	A hand-rearing management plan is in place and implemented for all unweaned lambs younger than 6 weeks that require hand-rearing.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Physical Environment		
	Site plans		
E1	A detailed site plan is in place.		
	Fencing		
E2	All fencing is safe, secure, and regularly inspected and maintained.		
E3	Barbed wire is only used for boundary fences, electrified barbed wire is not used.		
	Shade and shelter		
E4, E5 & E8	Suitable shelter and shade is provided and accessible for all sheep, especially those close to lambing or with newborn lambs, animals are checked daily during weather warnings.		

E6 & E7	Where signs of heat stress are observed remedial action is taken. Yarding and moving sheep is minimised in hot weather.		
	Preparation for transport		
E9 - E13	Sheep are assessed for fitness before transport and any unfit sheep are not presented for transport and are treated/euthanised as necessary.		
E14 – E20	Sheep are kept in comfortable facilities with free access to hay and water and shade and shelter, without mixing unfamiliar animals. They are not kept off green feed for more than eight hours.		
E21 & E22	All equipment and facilities are safe, fit for purpose, and well maintained.		
E23 & E24	Stress at loading is minimised, sheep are loaded at normal walking speed, and the person in charge is present at loading.		
E25 – E28	Stockpersons request animals to be sent to the closest slaughterhouse. Transport is no longer than eight hours. Transport during hot humid weather employs risk mitigation strategies where it cannot be avoided.		
E29	Detailed records of all animal transport are kept.		
E30	A copy of transport contingency plans has been requested and is available for viewing.		

	Emergency preparedness		
E31 & E32	A detailed emergency preparedness plan is in place and reviewed annually or more often as necessary.		
E34	Keeping sheep off paddock during emergencies is documented and reported to SPCA Certified.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Good Health		
	Animal health plan		
H1 – H3	An animal health plan is in place and reviewed at least annually with a veterinarian. All records related to animal health and welfare are available for inspection.		
H4	Sick and injured animals are appropriately treated and monitored.		
H5	All unexpected deaths are investigated and recorded.		
	Inspection of animals		
H6	Animals are regularly inspected and any problems identified are recorded and animals treated in a timely manner.		

H7 & H9	Inspections are made more frequently (at least daily) during times of high risk (e.g. around lambing, after weaning, during bad weather). Lambing happens close to farmyards and if required, assistance is provided if birth complications are observed.		
	Animal identification		
H10 - H12	Identification procedures are done appropriately and with the right equipment. Ear marking only permitted with pain relief. Branding is not permitted.		
H13 – H15	Maximum of two tags are placed in each ear, staff insert tags appropriately.		
	Ram management		
H17 – H20	Rams are in good condition, checked no more than eight weeks before mating and monitored during mating. Any problems, including with harnesses, are addressed.		
	Breeding		
H21 – H25	A welfare orientated breeding programme is in place that avoids the use of high pedigree sheep, hoggets that are too young/small, or horned sheep.		
H26 – H28	Only natural breeding or laparoscopic AI under sedation and pain relief are used for mating. Use of equine chorionic gonadotropin and electroejaculation are not permitted.		

H29 & H30	Ewes with vaginal prolapses treated appropriately and not bred from again.		
H31	Use obstetric lubricant and NSAIDs for ewes requiring lambing assistance.		
	Pharmaceutical use		
H32 – H34	Pharmaceuticals are secured, used only on veterinary advice, are within date, and off-label use is accompanied by a veterinary declaration.		
H35	Up-to-date records are kept.		
	Painful husbandry procedures		
H36 – H38	All sheep are given pain relief, regardless of their age. No procedures on animals less than 24 hrs old.		
H39 – H43	Sheep are humanely restrained, using suitable equipment, and monitored after the procedure. Records are kept.		
	Horn removal		
H44 & H45	Horn tipping only if cutting into sensitive tissue can be prevented. Dehorning is only conducted by a veterinarian and only as a last resort, if there is a welfare risk to the animal, using pre/post-operative pain relief and sedation.		

	Castration		
H46 – H48	Castration is done using rubber rings or short-scrutum between two and six weeks of age using pre/post-operative pain relief and only on lambs staying on the farm past sexual maturity.		
H49	Surgical castration only by vet, using sedation and pre/post-operative pain relief.		
	Tail docking		
H50 – H52	Docking only done with SPCA Certified approval and appropriate pain relief, on lambs between two and six weeks old.		
H53	Tail stumps are long enough to cover the vulva (same length in males).		
	Shearing (including dagging and crutching)		
H54 & H55	Sheep are shorn at least annually with appropriate equipment.		
H56 - H58	Shearing cuts and wounds are treated immediately, including pain relief. Vet consult on moderate and major wounds. Records kept.		
H59 & H60	Sheep are off feed for no more than 24 hours (12 hours for pregnant ewes and lambs), and off water for no more than 12 hours.		
H62	Sheep shorn in cold or wet weather are given food, water, and shelter immediately after shearing for four weeks. Cover combs are used in these conditions.		

H63 & H64	Winter shearing is only done with SPCA Certified approval, and no shearing is done within the last six weeks of pregnancy.		
	Hoof care plan		
H65	Hoof care management plan in place. Lameness managed under 5 % .		
H66	Treatment of lame sheep as soon as possible.		
H67 & H68	Routine hoof trimming to prevent, or as a sole method to treat, footrot not permitted. If trimming occurs it is done appropriately.		
	Euthanasia/planned on-farm killing		
H69 – H77	Animals are euthanised where required, killing methods are appropriate and correct equipment is used, and killing/euthanasia done in a way that renders animals insensible immediately. Staff stay with the animal until death is confirmed. Blunt force trauma is not used.		
H78	All cases of on-farm killing and euthanasia are documented.		
	Biosecurity		
H79	All sheep coming onto the farm are quarantined for at least 14 days.		
H80	A biosecurity plan is in place and implemented.		
H81	A pest management plan is in place. Traps and poisons are only used as a last resort and use reviewed yearly.		

Reference Standard	Summarised standard	Check (Y/N)	Comments
	Appropriate Behavioural Interactions		
	Low-stress handling of sheep		
B1 – B7	Facilities for handling/moving sheep are safe and sheep are handled gently with care.		
B8 & B9	Dogs are well-trained and under control at all times. They are not used with vulnerable animals.		
	Social environment		
B10	Saleyards are not used to source or sell sheep.		
B11 & B12	Sheep are kept in stable social groups. If movement is necessary, it is done in pairs or small groups.		
B13	Isolated sheep have at least one companion or are within sight of other sheep.		
	Weaning		
B14 & B15	Lambs are not weaned before 3 months, weaned into familiar area, with shade and shelter and familiar feed.		
	Physical environment		
B16 & B17	Sheep have enough space to perform normal behaviours and a comfortable lying surface.		

	Behavioural enrichment		
B18	Environmental enrichment (e.g. trees, tree stumps, hedges, elevated areas) in all pastures.		
	Managers, stock-keepers and other staff		
B19	All staff comply with the law and SPCA standards.		
B20	Staff understand low-stress handling methods and sheep behaviour, health, and husbandry.		
B21 - B23	Staff and external workers do not carry out tasks they are not trained or competent in. Formal training offered where available and relevant to position. All staff are supervised until competent.		
B24	Training records are kept and available for inspection.		
B25 & B26	Written animal welfare complaints policy is in place or staff contracts contain relevant info. Complaints are investigated.		
B27	Those working with animals do not have a conviction for animal welfare offences.		

END OF DOCUMENT



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