



# Sustainable, ethical and responsible.

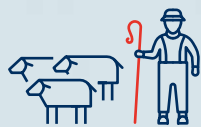
Our six pillars

Setting the standard in wool production.





There are over **60 different breeds** of sheep in the UK.



The average flock size in the UK is relatively small with between **250 and 300 sheep**.



All UK wool comes from **non-mulesed sheep**.



British wool is used in a **diverse range of applications**.



## In the UK we have the most diverse range of sheep in the world with over 60 different breeds.

At British Wool we grade all of the wool we receive into approximately 100 different grades, these unique grades allow buyers to ensure the wool they are purchasing and using in their products is fit for the end application.

Sheep farms in the UK are on average much smaller than those in other major wool growing nations with an average flock size of between 250 and 300 sheep with an average greasy fleece weight of 2 kgs per sheep. Within an average flock the farmer could have 10-20 different grades of wool, this is unique to the UK as many other major wool growing nations would only have a handful of different grades.

It is crucial to understand how different farming in the UK is to other major wool growing nations when looking at the

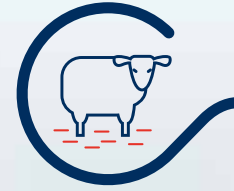
different frameworks that are available on things such as traceability as many are simply not feasible or indeed practical in the UK due to these differences.

British wool is an amazingly natural and renewable resource that can be used in many applications from the catwalks of Milan to home interior products such as bedding and carpets, the diverse wool types on offer in the UK mean that British wool really can provide a truly sustainable solution for every application.



## Our six pillars

There are six key principles to British Wool that not only make it unique, they offer buyers peace of mind that the product they are purchasing is truly the right choice.



KIND TO  
ANIMALS



ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY



QUALITY  
ASSURED



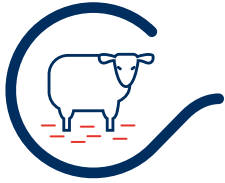
TRACEABILITY



SOCIALLY  
RESPONSIBLE



NON-MULESED  
WOOL










## Kind to animals

Leading the way on Animal Welfare for 200 years.

### Legislation

Animal Welfare has been an integral part of British farming for centuries and the UK has led this area globally for many years and today have the strictest animal welfare laws

in the world. UK legislation includes all of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)'s animal welfare standards.

- 1822  First law in the world protecting against animal cruelty was introduced in the UK.
- 1824  Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals established (now known as the RSPCA).
- 1911  Protection of Animals Act introduced into law in the UK.
- 1964  The "Five Freedoms" framework was established in the UK.
- 1998  The EU passed the Council Directive 98/58/EC (Protection of Animals) based on the "Five Freedoms" framework.
- 2006  Animal Welfare Act introduced in the UK introducing a maximum sentence of up to 6 months and/or unlimited fines and a possible lifetime ban.
- 2020  The UK passed legislation formally recognising animals as sentient beings.

## Five Freedoms

The Five Freedoms is a framework that was originally developed in the UK in the 1960s and has since been adopted globally and forms an integral part of the **2006 Animal Welfare Act**.

### Freedom from hunger, malnutrition and thirst

British sheep always have access to clean water and adequate nutrition.

### Freedom from fear and distress

British farmers care for their sheep and will always avoid causing unnecessary stress and pain. All wool in the UK is non-mulesed.

### Freedom from physical and thermal discomfort

British sheep are shorn at least once a year, this is for the comfort and health of the sheep. They also have adequate shelter at relevant times of the year.

### Freedom from pain, injury and disease

This is a crucial element for any British farmer who will continually monitor and manage their flock checking for disease and injury.

### Freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour

British sheep roam naturally in our beautiful countryside.



All UK wool comes from **non-mulesed sheep**.

### Auditing

In the UK the vast majority of farmers receive a subsidy, as part of this subsidy payment farmers must comply with and adhere to Cross Compliance rules (amongst other things this covers Animal Welfare under clause SMR13).

Every year up to 5% of UK farms are audited to ensure they are adhering to the rules, this is carried out by Trading Standards and this information is then fed into the relevant local Governments.

This audit process is very in-depth and is a 3-4 day audit covering a whole raft of things such as animal movements, farm records, relevant licensees and crucially animal welfare.

Farms who are found to break any rules receive a penalty on the subsidy and where it involves animal welfare issues they are also reported for prosecution to the relevant authorities in line with local laws.

### Shearing

British Wool train between 800-1,000 shearers every year. An integral part of the course is animal welfare ensuring sheep are shorn in a way that causes the animal no stress or pain. The vast majority of shearers in the UK will have attended a British Wool course during their career. We are the envy of the world with regards to our shearing training programme and regularly train shearers from around the world.



## Environmental sustainability

“Wool is not only one of the oldest fibres known to mankind, it is also one of the most beneficial.”

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales

### Wool in general

Wool is 100% natural and renewable as sheep in the UK grow between 1 and 3 kgs of raw wool annually that must be sheared for the health of the animal.

Wool is also 100% biodegradable and therefore does not contribute to micro-pollution in the ocean or on land. It is estimated that one polyester fleece garment produces over 1,900 fibres per wash.<sup>1</sup> This is crucial in the fashion industry as it is estimated that 20-35% of the microplastics in the ocean are from clothing.<sup>2/3</sup> Wool also requires less washing, merely hanging a wool garment up after you wear it allows the moisture to evaporate and bring the odour with it.

Wool uses less energy and water than other fibres. As an example wool uses 18% less energy than polyester and nearly 70% less water than cotton to produce 100 jumpers.<sup>4</sup>

Wool products have a long lifespan, meaning they are used or worn longer than other textile fibre products.

### The carbon cycle

All life on earth is based on carbon. Sheep and their wool are part of the natural carbon cycle that underpins all life on our planet.

Grass and natural vegetation act like straws, absorbing carbon from the air. Sheep turn that carbon into wool, when they eat the grass.

Sheep return CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere through respiration, and also methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) which breaks down to CO<sub>2</sub>.

Farmers around the world contribute to the natural carbon cycle by influencing the amount of carbon stored in plants and soils and by managing agricultural animals. Good management practices can increase the carbon stored in pastures and agricultural soils and thus make a positive contribution to mitigating climate change.

### British wool

The UK climate is ideal for growing grass for animals to eat. Around 65% of farmland in the UK is best-suited to growing grass rather than other crops.<sup>5</sup>

Actively managed pastures that are grazed by livestock are a good carbon sink, capturing CO<sub>2</sub> in the vegetation and storing carbon in the soil which could otherwise be released into the atmosphere, as are hedgerows that separate fields. If this land was put to other uses, and the soil was disturbed, there is a risk that much of that carbon stored within it would be lost to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide.

Due to the efficient production systems in the UK emissions from UK livestock are estimated to be around 5% of the country's total GHG emissions,<sup>6</sup> significantly lower than the estimated EU wide figure for livestock of around 9.1% of all emissions.<sup>7</sup>

British farming is ambitious and has set itself the target of reaching net zero GHG emissions by 2040.

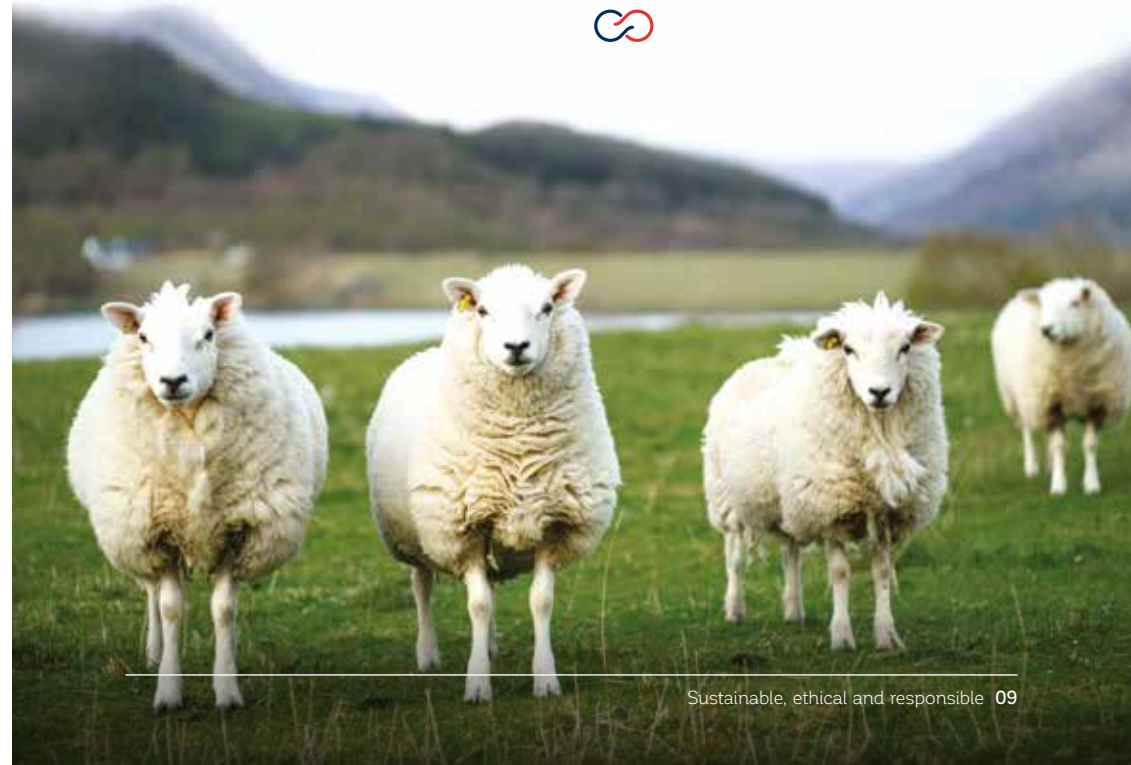
Around **65% of farmland** in the UK is best-suited to growing grass rather than other crops.<sup>5</sup>



Wool is **100% biodegradable.**



Wool uses nearly **70% less water** than cotton to produce 100 jumpers.





## Quality assured

Every fleece handled by British Wool is graded by hand.

British Wool's grading system ensures that our wool meets the highest standards of quality assurance. Every fleece is hand graded by our team to determine both the style and quality of the wool. This process takes into account the handle, micron, colour, staple length and strength to ensure that our premium types are free from grey fibre, kemp, and vegetable matter contamination.

Each of our fully qualified graders has trained for a minimum of three years and been through a rigorous assessment process to ensure we deliver our customers a consistent, quality product year after year.

In addition each lot is fully independently tested to IWTO standards by the Wool Testing Authority Europe to certify yield, micron, colour and vegetable matter.

This ensures the supply chain can trust the quality of the wool they are using which in turn helps create durable and stunning products.



Each of our fully qualified graders has trained for a minimum of **three years**.



## Traceability

British Wool offers different levels of traceability to suit clients demands.

All British Wool licensees have been through a thorough third party verified supply chain audit process to ensure that the wool they are using in their products is sourced through the British Wool scheme and also that the correct levels of British wool are being used.

This also helps to ensure the wool being used is to the brands exacting requirements. This scheme underpins all of our traceability.

**At British Wool we offer a number of different options on traceability:**



### All from British farms

All wool handled by British Wool comes from British farms, we do not grade and sell wool from anywhere else so all wool can be traced to British farms.



### Individual farms

We can offer farm traceability to any of the 35,000 farms we receive wool from. Helping connect our wool producers to brands and consumers and giving an additional layer of transparency.



### Regional traceability

British Wool have eight Grading Depots across the UK, all of the wool sold can be traced back to a specific Depot and give regional traceability.





## Socially responsible

Working under co-operative principals to support our rural communities.

British Wool is a member led organisation that works on behalf of its members under co-operative principles, handling wool from all UK wool producers regardless of type, location and quantity. The Board consists of nine farmers who oversee activities and ensure members best interests are served at all times. As well as marketing and selling the wool on behalf of its 35,000 members

British Wool also provides a powerful voice for its members and supplies value added services such as shearing training.

British Wool's mission is to drive sustainable demand for British wool in order to maximise returns for our members. This is our reason for being and drives all of our actions.



As a co-operative we believe that the collaborative marketing of the UK wool clip is the best way to deliver value for wool producers. We work on behalf of our members to maximise the value of their wool with all of our profits being returned to our members.

**Jim Robertson**  
Chairman



It is great to know that the wool I produce is being sold under the internationally recognised shepherds crook mark. Wool is such an amazingly versatile fibre and it's encouraging to see British Wool's proactive approach getting it into so many different products and brands.

**Richard Wilson**  
Sheep Farmer, Harrogate



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Photograph: Kewin Connin Jackson





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