

EUROPEAN WOOL COLLECTION AND PROMOTION CENTERS - GUIDELINES

Introduction

In almost all European countries, the sheep and goats breeding system is widely represented by extensive and semi extensive methods of management.

Europe, together to the Middle East, is the region of the world with the longest history and tradition on sheep breeding. In Europe sheep breeding systems contributed strongly to shape the landscape and culture, as well as to the basis of the richness of each nation.

The different European environmental conditions together with the local historical cultures have addressed oneself the breeding system in a different way, producing differences between the breeding systems and the relative sheep population. A great variability of sheep breeds and populations have been selected throughout Europe together with a great genetic variability, which represents an important resource for the European biodiversity. For this reason, we find more dairy sheep breeds in southern Europe and more meat sheep breeds in the central and northern European countries.

With regards to wool production in Europe, there were bred sheep selected for wool production until the beginning of the 20th Century, in all Europe. With the advent of the Australian and New Zealand merino selection together with the arrival of the new artificial fibres, the European wool productions have gradually decreased as well as their qualities. So, in the last 50 years, wool does not create revenue for the European breeders.

Now the interest on European wool is come back for several reasons: the decreasing in quantity of the wool production in Australian and New Zealand because their major attention to the highest quality and the attention of the new market for local produce. Therefore, although the quality of European wool continues to be relatively low, Europe is now the third largest origin in the world for the quantity of wool produced.

At the same time, the European textile sector has started paying attention to the local wool productions. Small processing chains have been started again, firstly at breeders and then at textile companies' levels. Particularly the Italian textile system has been the first one to provide the expertise and infrastructures at the European wool production systems, at the same time to give them the opportunity of international markets.

The interest to valorise the European wool and their respective sheep breeding systems, the need to define an offer towards new market demands and the interdiction to abandon the wool in the environment, created the need to identify new strategies for managing European wools.

The aims of the present document are the definition of an integrated system to deal the European Wool production through 3 different sectors of interest:

1. The territories of production

2. The farming system: from the breeding to the Collection Centre
3. The Collection and Promotion Centre

In Point 1 the follows parameters will be considering:

- a. Sheep Numbers present in the territory
- b. territory and landscape vocation
- c. territory and pasture dimension (biomass availability)

In Point 2 the follows parameters will be considering:

- a. Collection method (shearing)
- b. Grading, selection and packaging
- c. Shipment

The present document will take into consideration especially Point 3 regarding the definition of guidelines for the Wool Collection and Promotion Centres. The sectors of interest are:

- a. materials (Wool) receival sector
- b. checking material management sector (grading)
- c. administrative management and shipping

WOOL COLLECTION AND PROMOTION CENTERS (WCPC)

Wool Collection Centres are the bottleneck between the raw materials production systems - farms and the users - textile factories. An inappropriate technical and administrative management of wool lots, from the farms to the Collection Centre, compromise the value of the raw material and therefore the wool processing chain.

Wool collection Centres are the sites where the work of the farmers related to the flock and fleece management, will have to be evaluated critically in respect to the quality of wool for the textile sectors.

The location of the Collection Centre will have to be planned carefully in consideration to:

- the number of sheep in the territory and respective pasture production potentiality,
- the infrastructure availability: logistic and transport, working, office and storage areas,
- ability of local workers in wool classification and grading.

STEP 1 MATERIALS (WOOL) RECEPTION SECTOR

The wool has to arrive in WOOL COLLECTION AND PROMOTION CENTERS (WCPC) at the Area: "Wool Warehouse". The wool should be arrived classified according to the standard method carried out at farm level by expert Shearing Contractors and Wool Classer, in the following main categories for each breed:

- Fleece (the bulk of the wool from the body of the sheep – divided in Adult, Weaner and Lambs)

- Pieces (marginal part of the fleece generally contaminated and dirty)
- Bellies (wool from the belly region of the sheep)
- Crutchings (wool from the tail area, with urine and/or dung)
- Locks (short wool collected on the floor during shearing)
- Stain (wool containing urine stain)

Classed Wool has to be supplied:

1. carefully packed, in Australian type bags (nylon made) supplied to the farmers by the WCPC (Each bale of wool should not exceed regional health on farm regulations – 80Kgs)
2. well closed by typical metal hooks or by stitching
3. absolutely dry
4. accompanied by a Self-Declaration of the Producer / Collector / Deposit that certify the indemnity of the reportable diseases, in accordance with the local laws for sheep and small ruminant.
5. Compiled “loading/unloading register”: for the incoming product (incoming batch no; DDT no. ... of the .../.... /....) and going out product (see following point for the definitive package composition). Present point allows to verify the real stock of the warehouse.

Present action is necessary according to the different origin of providers: sheep farmers, collectors/intermediaries/traders, and other warehouses. This method guarantees a sufficient traceability of the batch, as well as providing the conditions for the sanitary certifications, necessary for any exports of the products.

STEP 2 - MATERIALS (WOOL) MANAGEMENT SECTOR

A warehouse management has been organized for the traceability purpose of the different wool lots which have been stored in different storage areas organized according to:

- type of wool delivered,
- period of delivery
- territories of production, when possible

Present organization of the Management Sector allows a flow of information necessary for the next actions of selection, grading and definitive packaging for the dispatch.

Flow of action:

- A) The incoming bales of wool are opened, the greasy wool is pulled out from the bales and deposited on the table. An expert operator/grader, (health protected with suitable devices), classes the wool for quality and places them in specific boxes for each class.
- B) The different wool quality lots are packed by oleo-dynamics press and packaged with suitable metal bands and polythene sheets.
- C) The packaged and classify greasy wool are:
 - storage in Wool warehouse
 - tested (core-test) for fineness, washing yield, vegetable content and colour,
 - proposed on international market.

STEP 3 - MATERIALS (WOOL) TRADE SECTOR

Administrative activities are carried out to spread the return between the farmers provider of greasy wool, according to the quantity, the quality and the correct management of the wool collection (shearing and classification at farm level).

SCHEME

