



ZQ MERINO NATURAL HEALTHY SHEEP

The Five Freedoms

ZQ Merino growers must provide the five key freedoms for all animals. Why? Because these freedoms ensure a healthy, low stress quality of life, which in turn enables the production of healthy, high quality ZQ Merino fibre.



FREEDOM FROM HUNGER OR THIRST

ZQ Merino sheep are farmed on a free-range basis which allows them to forage as they please. Well fed sheep with good nutrition are better able to cope with natural stress, such as extreme weather. Growers must manage their farms to ensure sheep always have access to clean water and adequate nutrition.



FREEDOM TO DISPLAY NORMAL PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR

ZQ Merino sheep are free range and roam in open pastures, with typically more than one acre each. This allows them to display their natural patterns of behaviours with minimal human intervention or interference.



FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT OR INADEQUATE SHELTER

Merino sheep have evolved in environments with extremes of heat and cold, largely on account of their fleece, which means they are able to survive and thrive in these conditions. However, to further protect sheep from distress and to help ensure they produce the best fibre possible, ZQ Merino growers must ensure that their sheep have adequate shade and shelter available at all times.



FREEDOM FROM UNNECESSARY PAIN OR DISTRESS

ZQ Merino growers must handle and manage sheep to avoid unnecessary stress and pain. Mulesing is not permitted on ZQ Merino farms, and farm facilities also need to be maintained to ensure they do not pose a risk of injury.



FREEDOM FROM SIGNIFICANT INJURY OR DISEASE

ZQ Merino growers are required to regularly monitor stock, prevent disease and illness and rapidly diagnose animal health issues. This is essential to ensuring stress and discomfort is minimised. Stockmanship knowledge is developed over generations of farming Merino sheep.

Fibre structure



WHILE SOME WOOL CAN LOOK LIKE THIS...

Poor health and stress experienced by sheep is transferred into the fibre they produce. It creates uneven fibre diameter and 'weak points' which leads to poor quality and poor garment performance. Not to mention the suffering that the sheep will have been under during this time.



...ZQ MERINO WOOL LOOKS LIKE THIS.

ZQ Merino tends to be more uniform in diameter, and wool with weak points simply does not meet the ZQ Merino grade. This means that ZQ Merino provides consistent high quality high performing fibre year on year, season after season.

These natural ZQ Merino advantages are passed onto you in the form of products that keep you extremely comfortable, while allowing you to perform at the highest standard for longer.

No mulesing



Mulesing is a surgical procedure that removes a section of skin from the sheep. It is carried out to reduce the risk of attack by flies (often described as flystrike). Mulesing is **not** permitted on properties that supply ZQ Merino. ZQ Merino growers have adopted integrated strategies to manage the risk of flystrike, without mulesing. ZQ Merino led the world to be the first accredited Merino fibre that guarantees mulesing does not occur. It is still the world's main source of accredited non-mulesed wool.

Proving it



ZQ Merino growers are regularly audited to confirm that they comply with the requirements of the ZQ Accreditation Manual. The manual provides guidelines to achieve fibre quality, animal welfare and health, care for the environment and social responsibility.

ZQ Merino is audited by AsureQuality, an internationally recognised assurance organisation, compliant with ISO guide 65 and ISO 9001, and accredited with the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand.

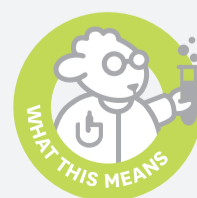
The research



ZQ Merino recently completed a review to better understand the potential causes of stress to sheep. We found that:

- Merino sheep farmed in free range systems have a high quality of life, based on both physiological information and their ability to express natural behaviour.
- Merinos are very adaptable as their fleece is able to thermoregulate, which means they have the ability to acclimatise to extreme weather.

ZQ Merino is currently investing in projects that focus on nutrition and feed management, animal health and disease prevention, parasite management, sustainability and biodiversity. This will support growers, providing them with the tools they need to ensure the welfare of their ZQ Merino sheep.



By choosing ZQ Merino products, you can be confident that the sheep producing the wool are humanely treated, well fed, live natural and healthy lives, and are not subjected to mulesing, which in turn means you are also buying Merino fibre of the very highest quality and performance.