



# Questions and Answers

## Responsible Wool Standard:

from NSF International

NSF's Sustainability division is a certification body for the Responsible Wool Standard.

### Q: What is the cost of RWS certification for farms?

A: Certification costs will vary based on country, travel required by the auditor, time spent auditing, and the size and scope of the farm. There is also a different pricing structure for individual as compared to farm group certification.

Farms may shorten the time to certification by being well prepared for the audit so that it is completed quickly and without issue the first time.

### Q: Do retailers need to be certified to sell RWS products?

A: No. The RWS requires all sites to be certified from farm to finished goods manufacture. The retailer does not need to be certified under the RWS rules.

### Q: Explain the types of audits and certificates required for farms.

A: **1. Farm Audits.** Farms (or Farm Groups) are audited to the requirements from the Animal Welfare and Land Management sections of the standard. Farm audits are annual and occur during times where stockmanship can be demonstrated clearly, such as drafting and shearing and may include confirmation visits or unannounced audits.

Confirmation Visits: Less than one hour notification; visual check for animal welfare compliance only. Confirmation visits are to be done in addition to full audits.

Unannounced Audit: The auditor gives a maximum of 2 months window within which the on-site audit may take place. Farmers must be onsite for all audits.

**2. Farm Scope Certificate.** These are valid for 3 years with one site audit per calendar year. The certificate applies to all wool produced during the calendar year. Additional provisions apply that must be met to issue the certificate.

**3. Transaction Certificate (TC).** The first time wool from a certified farm is to be sold, the seller can apply for a TC with the certification body. NSF is responsible to ensure the farm has met all the certification requirements prior to that first sale.

### Q: What activities will have to be observed on the farms to verify animal welfare requirements?

A: The auditor will want to observe sheep in their normal surroundings to discuss management and husbandry practices. But be prepared to bring a mob of sheep into the yard for closer observation by the auditor.

### Q: Will I have to develop new systems for land management to become certified?

A: RWS has requirements for documented plans and records to demonstrate compliance with both Animal Welfare and Land Management requirements. If you don't yet have these systems in place, templates and recording forms can be found in the RWS Farmers Guidebook and Tools and Support section of the RWS website: <http://responsiblewool.org/tools-and-support/for-farmers/>

### Q: The standard mentions the Content Claims Standard. What is it and why is it important to the RWS?

A: The Textile Exchange Content Claim Standard (CCS) is a chain of custody standard for tracking and verifying the content of one or more specific raw materials in a final product. Steps to maintain full traceability of materials through a supply chain are outlined and requirements defined in the standard.

The CCS is owned and managed by the non-profit organization, Textile Exchange (TE). TE pursues the responsible expansion of sustainability across the global textile value chain.

### Q: Is individual farm certification the only option?

A: No. Farmers may be certified to RWS as part of a group rather than individually. A farm group is defined as farmers having similar farming practices and that are located within the same geographic region. These farm groups can be cooperatives, associations or similar organizations. They also must be managed by an internal control system, and this system must be fully operational prior to the first audit.



**Q: What is the status of the individual farm in a farm group certificate?**

A: The farm group is considered as a single certified organization and will receive a single Scope Certificate. Farms in the group may not use the certificate individually. For instance, they cannot independently sell wool as RWS certified. A transaction certificate can be issued with the farm group named as the seller on behalf of that individual farm.

**Q: What is an advantage of group certification?**

A: In general, farms within a group certification will be sampled at a lower rate than farms within an individual certification. Farms will be sampled at least at a minimum rate of the square root (rounded up) of the number of group farms. Risk factors of the group will also be evaluated which could add the requirement for additional sampling of farms.



More questions? We have answers. Call us at +1.734.913.5798 or email us at [sustainability@nsf.org](mailto:sustainability@nsf.org)