

Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber

A joint Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network and WCS-Argentina program



Master Standards 2023

The Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber standards have been designed for landscapes where wild guanacos roam freely and include recommendations for the live-shearing of wild guanacos. Adherence to these recommendations and respect for the welfare of wild guanacos during round-up, shearing, and release, will lead to certification of live-sheared guanaco fiber under the Certified Guanaco Friendly™ ecolabel

Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber standards have been developed as a joint program between Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN) and Wildlife Conservation Society – Argentina (WCS-Argentina).



WFEN

Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN) conserves threatened wildlife while contributing to the economic vitality of rural communities. WFEN's mission is to protect wildlife in wild places, and on agricultural lands in-between, by certifying enterprises that assure people and nature coexist and thrive. WFEN uses the power of the marketplace to create on-the-ground change by providing incentives for the protection of biodiversity around the world. People in often rural and disadvantaged communities are offered the opportunity to enable the conservation of intact landscapes critical to the provision of ecosystem services.

WFEN's work in partnership with herders and ranchers around the world helps to ensure wildlife corridors through working lands. These lands enable resilience for wildlife in the face of climate change. WFEN includes field biologists, businesses, artisans, farmers, ranchers and herders, harvesters, and indigenous peoples from around the world.

WCS Argentina

WCS saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature. In Argentina, WCS aims to preserve the diversity of wildlife that makes this country unique and to restore its landscapes in the face of growing threats. With a focus on Patagonia, WCS's long-term goal is to have a complete suite of Patagonian carnivores, herbivores, and scavengers co-existing with livestock producers in restored, climate-resilient, private lands that connect a network of large protected areas throughout Patagonia.

WFEN and WCS Argentina have collaborated since 2011 to promote sustainable fiber production in Patagonia, including merino wool, mohair, cashmere, and guanaco fibers. These efforts have resulted in recognition and endorsement by provincial and national Argentine government agencies as well as sourcing from several Argentine designers who have garnered consistent media attention from the fashion industry. These designers have become 'ambassadors' for Wildlife Friendly® fibers to the Argentina government, showcasing how sustainable homegrown fibers can help revive the local fiber processing industry and contribute to the Argentine economy – all elements of a successful 'fiber shed.'

Introduction

The Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber standards are voluntary and do not supersede national or state legislation.

This document highlights the fundamental recommendations for Certified Guanaco Friendly herding, shearing, holding, and release of **wild guanacos**, and serves as the basis for an agreement between the enterprise, individual, community, or cooperative carrying out the herding and shearing, and WFEN and WCS. All of the following recommendations are aimed at safeguarding the well-being of the wild guanacos that will be handled, to ensure their health, safety, behavioral expression, and comfort, whilst also minimizing any fear, pain, or stress.

Compliance with the criteria and guidelines in these Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber standards, as well as with any other existing animal welfare standards for the herding, shearing, and release of guanacos, is essential for approval and certification. The following recommendations comply with the regulations established both by the National Government of Argentina and the Santa Cruz Provincial Plan for the Management of Guanacos.

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Standards

Understanding the Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber standards

These standards operate as a stand-alone species-specific guideline for the live-shearing of guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) in Patagonia.

Each recommendation should be read carefully.

Required standards say that something must or must not be done, or that something is prohibited. The requirements of these standards must be met before certification under the *Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber* standards can be granted.

Recommended standards say that something ‘should’ be done. These standards are highlighted as **Recommended** alongside the heading and reflect the aims and principles of the *Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber* program, but are not mandatory in order for certification to be granted under the *Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber* standards.

Critical Standards - If an operation fails to meet any required standard, it will be considered to be non-compliant. There are two categories of non-compliance: minor and critical.

If this symbol **C** is shown next to a particular standard it indicates that the standard is deemed critical to delivering the outcomes of the *Certified Guanaco Friendly™* program. Failure to meet such standard would be considered a critical non-compliance.

If an operation receives a critical non-compliance at the initial audit, it cannot be certified. If an operation receives a critical non-compliance at re-audit, it may be suspended from the *Certified Guanaco Friendly Fiber* Program until corrective action is taken.

If there is no symbol designating that a required standard is critical, it is categorized as a minor standard. Non-compliances raised against minor required standards must still be resolved, but an operation may gain or continue certification on the basis of an agreed action plan and timeline to come into compliance.

Standards Sections

The standards are divided into two sections. Section One includes standards applicable to the enterprise and all hired workers carrying out live shearing of guanacos. Sub-sections include:

Section 1.1: The Agreement

Section 1.2: Overall Wildlife Conservation Principles

Section 1.3: Working Conditions

Section 1.4: Cultural Protection

Section Two defines specific standards for the management of guanacos during herding, shearing, and release. Sub-sections include

Section 2.1: Conservation Guidelines for Live-sheared Guanaco Populations

Section 2.2: Welfare Guidelines for Guanacos during Herding

Section 2.3: Guidelines for Managing Guanacos in Corrals

Section 2.4: Guidelines for Restraint, Positioning, and Immobilization of Guanacos

Section 2.5: Guidelines for Shearing

Section 2.6: Guidelines for Release of Guanacos
Section 2.7: Urgent Care

Important Note: These Certified Guanaco Friendly Fiber standards are designed to address the welfare of wild guanacos during the live-shearing process. Certification under these standards does not qualify the applicant to be recognized as Certified Wildlife Friendly®.

Section One. Overall Management

1.1 The Agreement

- 1.1.1 **C** Anyone who wishes to produce and market *Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber* must be part of a formal agreement to do so. Agreements may be with individuals, co-operatives, or communities. Anyone involved in shearing, processing, or marketing of *Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber* should certify in the formal agreement that they are not involved in any activity that involves the illegal killing of any wildlife species.
- 1.1.2 The agreement must clearly define the responsibilities of individual and/or community, NGO, business, and other partners to each other and identify the conditions under which any transfer of money, goods, or services occurs.
- 1.1.3 The consequences of failing to meet these standards must be pre-negotiated and documented in the agreement.
- 1.1.4 **C** If anyone involved in the production of *Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber* fails to meet these standards, and/or mis-reports or mis-appropriates funds from the sale of *Certified Guanaco Friendly™* fibers, enforcement action must be taken to correct the situation.

Note: Inability to make substantive corrections in a reasonable timeframe may include but is not limited to, suspension of certification and the loss of ability to market products as Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber.

1.2 Overall Wildlife Conservation Principles

- 1.2.1 **C** Those involved in the production of *Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber* must not reduce or otherwise negatively impact the habitat of key wildlife species.
- 1.2.2 **C** Certified enterprises must not participate in any illegal forestry activities.
- 1.2.3 **Recommended**
Educational opportunities that focus on key species and their conservation threats should be provided for community members and other audiences.

1.3 Working Conditions

- 1.3.1 **C** There must be no child labor.

Note: Child labor, as defined by the [International Labor Organization](#), refers to work that:

- *is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children;*
and
- *interferes with their schooling by:*

- *depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;*
- *obliging them to leave school prematurely; or*
- *requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work*

1.3.2 **C** Certified enterprises must not contribute to the exploitation of women or disadvantaged communities or tribes.

Note: Exploitation includes any activity that promotes women or disadvantaged communities without their full consent or without their full integration into the decision-making process and benefits sharing.

1.3.3 **Recommended**

There should be action to empower women and disadvantaged groups to become involved in certified enterprises.

1.3.4 **Recommended**

Certified enterprises should ensure there is a policy against commercial, sexual or any other form of exploitation and harassment, particularly of children, adolescents, women, and minorities.

1.3.5 Certified products should contribute to increases in local incomes and/or improvements to livelihoods.

Note: To help ensure communities living with wildlife adopt conservation-compatible practices, the associated benefits should be tangible and significant.

1.3.6 Certified enterprises should purchase and offer local services and goods following fair-trade principles.

1.3.7 **Recommended**

There should be a documented and implemented code of conduct for activities in indigenous and local communities that have been developed and implemented with the collaboration and consent of the affected community.

1.3.8 The activities of certified enterprises should not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as food, water, energy, healthcare, or sanitation, to neighboring communities.

1.4 Cultural Protection

1.4.1 Certified enterprises should contribute to the protection and preservation of local historical, archaeological, and culturally and spiritually important properties and sites, and must not impede access to them by local communities.

Note: This standard is about respecting the rights of all groups or communities and their important properties and sites.

Section Two. Management of Wild Guanacos during Live-shearing

This section defines standards specific to the management of wild guanacos during the live-shearing practice.

2.1 Conservation Guidelines for Live-sheared Guanaco populations

Note: The following criteria/recommendations have been adapted from Carmanchahi and Marull, 2012 and Carmanchahi et al., 2022 with the participation of WCS technicians and Pablo Carmanchahi, a biologist at CONICET and Director of the IUCN/SSC/South American Camelids Specialist Group. These criteria/recommendations may be modified in due course based on the results of ongoing studies.

2.1.1 **C** Guanacos must not be killed or sacrificed after shearing.

Note: The fiber obtained from any guanaco that is killed following 'live-shearing' will not be eligible for certification under the Certified Guanaco Friendly™ Fiber standards.

2.1.2 **C** Both pre-calving and post-calving herding and shearing in a specific population in the same season are not allowed.

Note: Pre-calving herding and shearing are strongly recommended, between September 15 and November 15.

2.1.3 If postpartum shearing is carried out, mothers and calves should be gathered in holding pens prior to release.

2.1.4 **C** Chulengos (young guanacos) must not be sheared.

2.1.5 Herding and shearing should not be carried out in years with adverse weather conditions, in particular when rainfall is less than 50% of the average annual rainfall.

2.1.6 Herding and shearing should only be carried out when the affected population has a density greater than or equal to 10 guanacos/km².

2.1.7 Population surveys of guanacos should be carried out using the linear transect method from vehicles before and after herding and shearing, to evaluate the effects of this activity on the population.

2.1.8 **C** All sheared guanacos must be identified with a colored collar with a numbered tag attached to it, to assess potential recaptures and mortalities due to handling.

2.1.9 **Recommended**

In adult individuals, the collar should not be tight, with two fingers entering comfortably between the neck and the collar.

Note:

(i) *with juvenile individuals, the collar must leave room for future growth of the neck. It may be necessary to leave a space of up to three fingers between the neck and the collar.*

(ii) *With very small individuals, the collar must not be left hanging very loosely as this may endanger the animal by snagging on something or getting its leg stuck through it. If unable to leave enough room to grow without leaving the collar too loose, no collar should be placed on the animal.*

2.1.10 **C** Under no circumstances should a tag be placed in a guanaco's ear.

2.2 Welfare Guidelines for Guanacos during Herding

- 2.2.1 To minimize the effort and stress of the guanacos, a maximum herding distance of 10 km from the start to the chute is recommended.

Note: it is advisable to prioritize short-distance herding (ie, to sectorize management areas to reduce distances and herding time).

- 2.2.2 To avoid injury or dispersal of guanacos, herding, whether on horseback or motorcycle, should not force the animals to move faster than the normal pace of the group of guanacos. Herding can only be speeded up in the last section near the pens.
- 2.2.3 To minimize the effort and stress of the guanacos, the first kilometers of herding should be conducted at a walking pace. In approximately the last 3 km before reaching the chute, the herd can be taken at a trot, and at the mouth of the chute, they can be pushed to a run.
- 2.2.4 **C** The use or presence of dogs is never permitted.

Note: No dogs should be present in the roundup, the corrals, or during the shearing.

- 2.2.5 Herding should be carried out at the coolest time of day.
- 2.2.6 **C** Under no circumstances must the guanaco be hit, poked, or mistreated.
- 2.2.7 After herding the guanacos, they should be allowed to rest for at least one hour before beginning the shearing.
- 2.2.8 Livestock management activities (e.g., movement of livestock in or out of the area, rounding up livestock) should be avoided for at least two days prior to the herding of guanacos and between roundup events during the same season.
- 2.2.9 Water must be provided if guanacos are corralled for 12 hours or more.
- 2.2.10 All modifications to the standard fencing made to facilitate the herding and corraling of guanacos should be temporary and removed no more than 30 days after the shearing to avoid interruptions of wildlife movement.
- 2.2.11 Any individual of a species other than guanaco that enters the chute or the corral should be removed as soon as possible to avoid accidents and deaths.

2.3 Guidelines for Managing Guanacos in Corrals

- 2.3.1 **C** Under no circumstances may the corralled guanacos be yelled at, hit, poked or mistreated.
- 2.3.2 **C** Under no circumstances is the use and/or presence of dogs allowed. There should be no dogs in corrals.

Note: Noise should be kept to a minimum.

- 2.3.3 The density of guanacos in corrals should be maintained at no more than 1 guanaco/m² to minimize trampling, injuries and agonistic behavior between individuals.
- 2.3.4 The number of guanacos confined in the pens should not exceed the number that can be sheared and released within 48 hours after ending the roundup, considering the facilities and available personnel.
- 2.3.5 **C** Guanaco must not be penned for more than one night.

Note: Guanacos that have not been sheared within 48 hours must be released.

- 2.3.6 Corrals and handling pens should be made of netting, wire, and matting to prevent injury from contact with rigid structures, and should have subdivisions and protective material to reduce external visual stimuli for the guanacos.
- 2.3.7 **C** Inside corrals, guanacos must be herded on foot, in a very calm manner, and passively leading the animals towards the pen.

Note: Useful and permitted tools for moving animals include panels, flags, plastic bags, and cowbells. These should be used only to stimulate and direct the movement of the animals without causing undue stress.

- 2.3.8 **C** Guanacos must not be dragged during any stage of the herding and corralling.

2.4 Guidelines for Restraint, Positioning, and Immobilization of Guanacos

- 2.4.1 At least 2 people should carry out the final restraint of each guanaco, holding it by the hind legs and the chest/head.

Note: The restraint, positioning, and immobilization guidelines can be modified if it is considered that the immobilization method used by the company is more effective and less traumatic for the guanaco.

- 2.4.1.1 **C** Handlers must always avoid handling guanacos by their ears.
- 2.4.2 A dark hood with an orifice for the nose should be placed over the guanaco's head to cover its eyes and reduce visual stimulation.

Note: Care should be taken to ensure that the nostrils are unobstructed.
- 2.4.3 The physical immobilization of the guanaco should be done as quickly as possible (less than a minute).
- 2.4.4 Guanacos should be placed gently on their sides on a stretcher to facilitate movement within the shearing pen.
- 2.4.5 The legs of guanacos should be tied immediately after placing the individual on its flank.

- 2.4.6 **C** Handlers must not tie all four legs together or stretch the guanaco by two of its legs. The legs should be tied using devices that maintain a comfortable position, tying the hind and front legs separately.

Note: When tying the legs, flat ropes should be used to avoid damaging the skin with the rope.

- 2.4.7 One person should be responsible for supporting the guanaco's head throughout the process, until release.
- 2.4.8 **C** If it is determined that a female is in an advanced stage of pregnancy (very swollen belly or if it is possible to feel the chulengo inside), or any guanaco is visibly sick or malnourished, this animal must be released immediately without shearing.

2.5 Guidelines for Shearing

- 2.5.1 **C** Under no circumstances is the use and/or presence of dogs allowed. There should be no dogs in the shearing shed.
- 2.5.2 Electrical shearing equipment should be used. The electricity generating equipment should be placed at a considerable distance (at least 50m) from the shearing site to minimize noise.
- 2.5.3 The entire procedure, including immobilization, positioning, shearing, and release, should be completed in less than 10 minutes per individual.
- 2.5.4 Shearing combs and knives should be replaced and sharpened periodically to prevent cuts and injuries to guanacos.

Note: Cuts to the animal should be avoided. If an individual suffers cuts or injuries during shearing, these must be sutured and disinfected correctly by a veterinarian.

- 2.5.4.1 Avoid overheating or lack of lubrication of the shearing combs and blades.
- 2.5.4.2 The sharpening of combs and shearing knives should be done away from the animals.
- 2.5.5 Only the brown area and the upper white flanks of the fleece should be sheared.

Note: The lower sides and ventral area of the animal should not be sheared as these parts lack commercial value and increase the shearing time.

- 2.5.6 If biological samples are collected, they should be taken by veterinarians, biologists, or related professionals with experience in collecting these types of samples. In the case of blood samples, blood should be extracted from the femoral vein.
- 2.5.6.1 In the event that biological samples are taken, the process of collecting them should not exceed 3 additional minutes.

2.6 Guidelines for Release of Guanacos

- 2.6.1 The area where the animals are released should be free of fences, buildings, tall bushes, rocks, or any other large obstacles that the guanaco could run into.
- 2.6.1.1 **C** In addition, the animal must have its back to the shearing shed/tent.
- 2.6.2 The animal should be transported out of the shearing pen on the stretcher for release.

- 2.6.2.1 After gently lowering the animal to the ground, first the hood should be removed so that the animal regains vision, and then the legs are released.
- 2.6.2.2 Handlers should be positioned behind the guanaco, allowing it free and unobstructed movement when being released.
- 2.6.2.3 The animal should be allowed to get up and walk away on its own.
- 2.6.2.4 **C** In the event of postpartum shearing, the females must be released in the reunion pen where the chulengos are. Both can be released once the mother and chulengo have made contact and are reunited.
Note: They may take a few seconds to recover, orient themselves, and exit.
- 2.6.2.5 **C** Under no circumstances should the guanacos be chased or stimulated with shouts, slapping, etc

2.7 Urgent Care

- 2.7.1 A basic first aid kit that contains injectable antibiotic, spray healing (“*curabichera*”), liquid disinfectant (povidone-iodine), hemostatic (hydrogen peroxide), corticosteroids, euthanasia, and suture material should be at hand.

2.7.2 Recommended

A veterinarian should be present and in charge of emergencies, the clinical management of animals, and making the decision to perform euthanasia when appropriate.

- 2.7.2.1 Under strict recommendations of the veterinary professional, guanacos that have suffered irreversible injuries from accidents will be euthanized. The use of commercial euthanasia is **Recommended** or, if not available, a high dose of a dissociative anesthetic, followed by a knife to the heart or throat cutting.

Note: It should be noted that wild guanacos are unpredictable and whilst every care and precaution must be taken to ensure that accidents do not occur, the health of the wild guanaco may not be immediately clear (i.e. the wild guanaco could be sick, lame, or of advanced age) and, combined with the unpredictable reaction of individual wild guanacos to the live-shearing process, accidental injury or death may result.

- 2.7.2.2 Autopsies and sampling for diagnostic studies are the veterinary professional's responsibility.

References:

- Carmanchahi P. and Marull C., Boletin 2012. Boletin GECS
- Carmanchahi P., Rago V., Gregorio P., Panebianco A., Marozzi A. 2022 Boletin GECS