



4 March 2025

The New Zealand Merino Company completes animal welfare investigation

Following the allegations of animal welfare concerns raised by PETA in late 2024, NZMC committed to a set of immediate actions.

It is important to note that much of the footage released by PETA has been wrongly attributed to ZQ properties.

1. Investigation of the two identified ZQ farms

NZMC's third-party auditor, Control Union, completed its investigation into the two ZQ grower properties identified in publicly released videos captured at New Zealand sheep farms.

The scope of the investigation was limited to the two ZQ farms and followed international ISO guidelines, ensuring impartiality, transparency and thoroughness.

Two breaches of ZQ and RWS were identified for each property. These breaches related to not meeting expected standards for training and supervision of staff and contractors, minimising stress and best practice animal handling.

Both ZQ growers have cooperated fully and have produced clear action plans to prevent future breaches.

2. Spot inspections

Control Union routinely carries out spot inspections of our ZQ grower properties, primarily focused on animal welfare. As part of our immediate response, 52 spot inspections have been completed with additional key requirements added to the criteria.

From the 52 inspections, a total of 35 corrective actions were issued. This is consistent with expectations and with historic audit results. The majority of the corrective actions involved issues with documentation and record keeping.

3. Rapid response assessment

The rapid response assessment has been completed by ZQ growers to measure the understanding and effectiveness of current animal welfare protocols. Growers have expressed willingness to be involved in the development of enhanced monitoring controls.

The Ministry for Primary Industries is continuing its investigation of the wider footage it received from PETA. NZMC will continue to engage with this process as required.

Angus Street
CEO
The New Zealand Merino Company

Ends

About the ZQ programme

Wool certified to the ZQ Standard meets strict standards of animal welfare, environmental sustainability, fibre quality, traceability and social responsibility. Established in 2007, the ZQ Standard was the world's first ethical wool production standard. ZQ represents the wool of choice for world-class brands that want to assure consumers of the ethical and sustainable nature of their materials.



The ZQ programme has been a global force for positive change in the wool industry, including leading the charge by banning the controversial practice of mulesing in New Zealand, a decade before it was outlawed in 2018.

The wool of our growers is recognised globally not only for the quality of the fleece but also for the high standards that are independently audited by Control Union to the rigorous requirements of the ZQ Standard and the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) owned by Textile Exchange.

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