

# BISCA

## Wool Handling Rules

### **1. Aims and Objectives**

To promote the knowledge and skill employed in good on farm handling of wool at shearing time in order to maximise the returns to the farmer and benefit the wool industry as a whole. The wool-handling competition requires the competitor to demonstrate knowledge of appropriate handling of different wools and oddments in a highly organised manner and speed of operation.

### **2. Introduction**

Employing a good wool-handler is adequately recompensed by having the job “well done.” This entails following British Wool’s guidelines relating to the handling and presentation of the fleece and avoiding the listed penalties, which might otherwise apply. A correctly presented fleece is more accurately and speedily assessed at the grading depot and achieves a fuller potential value. A distinction between and within our various breeds enables the different wool types to be separately packed, thus avoiding cross-contamination taking place especially with grey fibres and floating kemp. Wool-handlers are an integral part of a team, and they require knowledge of shearing sequence. By having a good technique, the job will appear easy but when attending two or more shearers it demonstrates just how highly organised and skilled the wool-handler must be.

### **3. Competition Organiser Responsibilities**

#### **a. Chief Steward / Referee**

- i. The Chief Steward must be fully conversant with the procedure and running of the competition.
- ii. The Chief Steward is responsible for the overall running of the competition.
- iii. The Chief Steward is responsible for ensuring all stewards are conversant with their individual responsibilities.
- iv. The Chief Stewards decision will be final.

#### **b. Sheep Steward**

- i. The Sheep Steward is responsible that each batch of sheep for competition wool handling should be uniform in size and of similar wool type and clip weight. They should be fully woolled (10 to 12 months’ growth) dry, clean, and healthy.
- ii. Sheep should be thoroughly inspected prior to being considered as suitable for a wool handling competition i.e., no broken necks / split backs.
- iii. Sheep with woolled bellies are recommended as this will reduce the variability factor for both the competitors and judges.
- iv. Tails should also be uniform.
- v. Other than minimal crutching/dagging in the interests of good husbandry, welfare, and uniformity they will have received minimal preparation for competition.
- vi. More than one breed/type may be used in the competition as long as it is the same for each competitor.
- vii. Sheep should be suitably held prior to the competition so that competitors can collectively inspect sheep before the heats commence and any considered to be sub-standard sheep removed before the competition starts.
- viii. The pens should contain only the required number of sheep for that heat so that the shearers are not able to select their sheep, nor have a shorter collection time when the pen is full which would disadvantage competitors. Number of sheep required are recommended as follows:
  - Novice Heats 3, Final 4 (*with a final if possible*)
  - Intermediate: Heats 4, Final 4
  - Open: Heats 4-5, final 7-8

c. Shearing Stewards

- i. Open / Senior classification Shearers who are fully conversant with the Wool handling Rules and regulations will be used.
- ii. Replacement Shearers should be available but not changed within heats / semis or final.
- iii. Two loaded handpieces must be taken onto the boards by each shearer.
- iv. Draw for stands must be made.
- v. Shearers will require 'seconds' for their pens, especially when chutes are not present and shorn sheep are returned to pens.
- vi. The shearers must enter the pen to collect their sheep which will allow the Competitor time to clear the boards.
- vii. Each Competitor will attend two Shearers. Shearers on stands 1, 3 and 5 will wait with hand on pen door for 'GO'. The 'competition steward' (see rule d 3) will observe a synchronised pace is maintained during the shearing process. Shearers on stands 2, 4 and 6 will similarly commence on the second 'GO' when the Shearers on stands 1, 3 and 5 have stepped through after the undermine and starting the neck. They will also maintain an even pace of shearing throughout the competition and finish together. Each team of Shearers will maintain a staggered pattern of shearing – Shearers must complete the crutch and undermine before their co-shearers finish their sheep.
- viii. Shearers may ascertain from the Competitor prior to 'GO' where to throw the belly wool.
- ix. The first flank wool must NOT be broken out nor stretched. The neck wool MUST be broken out (not slipped over the sheep's head)
- x. Blatant assistance by the Shearer will be penalised, e.g., waiting on the undermine, or delaying the next catch especially when a fleece is lying on the Board. Also, the Timekeeper will start the clock as soon as the Shearer has completed the last blow if there is any delay in switching the machine off
- xi. As soon as shearing is completed, Shearers will remove their handpieces and step inside the pen door to allow the Competitors to clear the Board.

d. Competition Stewards

Competition stewards are responsible for stewarding the following areas:

- i. 'Runners' for table judging (fleece & oddment boxes).
- ii. Ensuring replacement boxes are available & appropriately labelled for each heat / semi or final.
- iii. 'Pen stewards' to ensure sheep remain in the pen (no assistance to shearer to catch sheep) and to supervise the 2 shearers for their designated competitor are in sync to the best of their ability. In conjunction with the timekeeper, constant monitoring of the shearers is necessary in order to maintain a synchronised and uniform pace throughout the competition (within and between heats). **Monitoring will ensure that shearers complete the crutch and undermine before their co-shearers finish their sheep.**
- iv. To roll & remove fleeces once judged by the table judges.

4. Facilities For Competition – The Stand

- a. The normal stand or trailer may be used.
- b. The stand may be either split-level or on the floor. In the latter there must be a clear distinction between board and floor i.e., white lines.
- c. The floor must be clean and smooth to enable easy cleaning.
- d. A slatted table will be available for each competitor.
- e. Each table should be the same size for each competitor.
- f. The number of containers – colour coded or numbered trays and bins available per competitor for the fleeces and oddments will vary according to the number and type of sheep in the competition.
- g. A duplicate set of containers should be available so that the next heat can proceed without delay.

## **5. The Judges**

Approved “Board” and “Table” judges are to be used.

### a. Board Judges

The number required will be one more than the number of competitors competing at any one time e.g. 3 competitors require 4 Board Judges.

The Board Judges will rotate clockwise, judging each competitor in turn and recording penalties on the **Board Score Sheets**.

A judge has the right to disqualify (after being discussed with the Chief Steward / Referee) any competitor whose work or conduct on the boards /floor area is detrimental to the image of competition shearing and wool-handling.

### b. Table Judges

A Table judge will judge the rolled fleeces and oddments. **Depending on the number of available tables, the Judge may use two tables in order to speed up the operation.**

i. The judged fleece is left open on one table for a steward to clear away while judging continues on the other table

ii. More than one Table Judge can be utilised- I.e. one per table and rotate after each fleece has been judged

iii. Wool sheets and frames are required for the wools after judging. Penalties are recorded on the **Table Score Sheet**.

### c. Judging of oddments:

i. When the Judges’ rota has been distributed, the Chief Judge will identify a Judge for oddment for the duration of the competition.

ii. b. It is recommended a ‘grid’ consisting of 10x15cm sections should be available to assist with judging of oddments.

iii. Penalties are recorded on the Table Score Sheet.

## **6. The Scorekeeper**

The Score Sheets/Time, Board and Table (ie Fleece /Wool and oddments) are collated as follows.

a. Time: the time in seconds is divided by 10 seconds for each penalty point for the first minute and one penalty point per 5 seconds thereafter.

b. Board: Judges “Board” penalty points are totaled.

c. Table: Judges “Table” penalty points for rolled fleeces and the oddments is totaled.

d. Then Time, Board and Table penalty points are entered on a **Master Score Sheet** and totaled. The competitor with the lowest aggregate score is the winner.

e. In the event of a tie, the competitor with the lowest penalties for “table work” will take precedence. If there is still a tie, the competitor with the lowest penalties for “board work” will take precedence.

f. The time of when results are made public must be detailed by the scorekeeper on the results sheet.

g. Disputes must be lodged in writing to the Chief Steward within 15 minutes of results being posted accompanied by the appropriate fee (£20 / €20)

**N B** Only Stewards and Judges are permitted into the score-room

## **7. The Timekeeper**

a. On completion of shearing the time taken by each competitor to finish is separately recorded on a **Time Score-Sheet**. The time “starts” (simultaneously) when the second shearer per competitor pulls the machine switch chord “off” after their last sheep and “stops” when each wool-handler signals that they have finished by raising their broom/hand to clearly indicate this.

b. The timekeeper will also be required to record the duration of any stoppage which may occur through no fault of the competitor.

c. The time allocated for each heat will be predetermined according to the type of sheep and the class of woolhandler. This should be monitored and kept the same throughout the heats.

d. Should any stoppages occur through the fault of the machine or through a sheep escaping, a time allowance or a re-run will be given at the Chief Stewards’ discretion.

## **8. The Commentator**

The commentator should not influence the outcome of the competition in any way through the following areas:

- a. Making competitors aware of an error (i.e. missing a crutch / belly / cleaning of boards between sheep)
- b. Is not responsible for the synchronisation of shearers- see 3 c) competition stewards

## **9. Competitor Guidelines**

- a. All competitors compete at their own risk.
- b. Competitors must be suitably attired e.g. suitable footwear, sponsors logo on attire, etc.
- c. Competitors are responsible for supplying their own broom.
- d. Competitors have the option to consult with their shearers their preferred order of sheep prior to commencing their heat / semi or final
- e. Competitors have the option of having a 'board buddie' to assist with clean-up / set-up of containers prior to the commencement of their heat / semi or final

## **10. Team events**

Team events consist of 2 competitors for 2 shearers with 1 table. There will be 2 approved 'Board' judges (one to watch the board, one to watch the table) and a table judge. All judges to rotate as would normally.

## **RULES**

### **1. Points Allocation for Objective Measurement.**

- a. **Credit Card (CC)** – 1 penalty point, applicable to judging on the board and clean up.
- b. **Paper size (A4)** – 1 penalty point, applicable to judging fleece throw on the table.
- c. **Open Hand (OH) / Grid (10cms x 15 cms).** – 2 penalty points – applicable to fleece roll and oddments.
- d. **Fixed Penalty (FP), Discretionary Penalty (DP)** – will apply in various sections as indicated. Generally, up to 5 points for each operational fault and 10 points for a product (wool) fault.

### **2. Board Judging Procedure.**

#### **Scored by:**

Each wool handler will attend to two shearers.

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| a. Check 'Boards', 'Floor' & 'Table' are clean at start.   | <b>CC</b>   |
| b. Competitors must keep one foot on the floor at all times.                                     | <b>FP-5</b> |
| c. The wool handler must not approach the shearer until the 1 <sup>st</sup> belly has been shorn | <b>FP-5</b> |
| d. The belly wool is thrown clear by the shearer and not handed to the wool handler              | <b>FP-5</b> |
| i. A sheep with 'no belly wool (NBW) must be noted on the Board Scorecard                        |             |
| e. Removal of crutch wool before the shearer steps through                                       |             |
| Oddments are placed straight away in bins  |             |
| i. Remove all crutch wool before the shearer steps through.                                      | <b>CC</b>   |
| Place in oddments box  |             |

- ii. If a competitor misses a whole crutch and makes no attempt (for oddments left) **FP-10 & C.C**
- iii. Return flank wool
- f. Any short 'Discoloured' wool (Top knot / Face), cleared as it's being shorn to avoid contaminating other wools. **CC**
- g. Preparation of fleece 'pick up' and placement on the table:  
The wool handler may prepare the 'pick up' of the fleece as the Shearer completes the last flank
  - i. The fleece must be thrown from britch to neck. **FP-10**
  - ii. The correct way up for the breed. **FP-10**
  - iii. A fleece which is not flat and fully exposed will be penalised (Folded over or tucked under.) **A4**
  - iv. A fleece hanging over the table will be penalized. **A4**
- h.
  - i. The shearing area must be clean before the next sheep is drawn out **CC**
  - ii. Using locks or fleece to sweep the boards will incur penalty **FP-5**
  - iii. Failing to remove fleece from boards before the shearers draw out next sheep. **FP-10**
- i. Blatant assistance by the shearer will be penalised, e.g. waiting on the undermine, or delaying the next catch especially when a fleece is lying on the boards. Also, the Timekeeper may start the clock as soon as the shearer has completed the last blow if there is any delay in switching machine off. **FP-5**
- j. A waiting fleece may be placed on a clean floor area. **CC**
- k. The belly wool must either be placed into the same fleece with which it has been shorn, or into an oddment box Penalty for placing the belly wool into a different fleece. **FP-10**
- l. The Belly - wool must be placed in the britch end of fleece. The appropriate place for the belly wool is inside the fleece at the britch end of the fleece. **FP 10**
- m. The fleece is rolled britch to neck & secured with the neck wool.
  - i. Rolled & secured to shoulder. **FP 5**
  - ii. Rolled & secured sideways or back to front. **FP 10**
- n.
  - i. When the rolled fleece is placed into the allocated container. It is deemed to be finished and can be removed for 'Table Judging' **FP 5**
  - ii. Fleeces of dissimilar type which are placed together in the same container will incur a penalty **FP-10**
- o.
  - i. The table top is clear prior to the next throw **CC**
  - ii. Wrapped fleeces remaining on the table when the next throw is

made incur a penalty

**FP-10**

- p. All wools must be kept within the designated area. Wools thrown / swept into another competitor's area / container must be removed Immediately to avoid a penalty. Judge to remove these if necessary. **DP-5 to 10**
- q. On completion the work area is left clean. **CC**
- r. Should all the oddments' bins be occupied, the competitor is permitted to make a separate pile on the floor for such items as wet wool, black wool etc., and inform the judge at the end of the heat. These items will then be brought to the Table Judge separately into the bins. However, should any bins be empty, the competitor will be penalised for what is on the floor **CC**
- s. Competitors to give a clear signal when they have finished by raising the broom / hand. They must not interfere with their wools after they have signaled that they have Finished **FP-5**
- t. Competitors must remain on their stand until all competitors have finished in each heat / semi of final **FP-5**

### **3. Table Judging** (rolled fleeces and oddments).

- a. On arrival at the judging table, the fleece must be tipped out of the container by the Judge
- b. The Judges must have sufficient table space in order to open and inspect every fleece
- c. The discretion of the Judge should be used with droppy and matted fleeces which may prove difficult to roll and tuck in
- d. When correctly rolled the fleece roll is cylindrical with a level top-line (like a swiss-roll and not like a rugby football) and the length approx. 150% of height

### **4. The Fleece**

- a. The fleece is rolled in the approved manner and according to breed type. i.e. staple tips in (most breeds), or staple tips out e.g. Scottish Blackface, Herdwick or Rough Fell (See British Wool Leaflet). **FP-10**
- b. Compact and Neat **DP – OH up to 20**  
Compactness and Shape  
Penalty on breaks in fleece showing tips wrong way **2 points per OH**
- c. Tuck-in and Secure **DP up to 10**  
The Fleece roll is secured at mid-point
- d.
  - i. Presence of oddments in fleece- CC/Skin unit  
Skin presence – one point/unit size of a little fingernail (12mm)
    - Locks
    - Urine stain
    - Dags
    - Skin
    - Black wool in white fleece
    - Extraneous matter such as straw, bracken, seeds etc.
    - Skirting of the fleece is not required.

- Do not penalise full staple length wool within fleece.
  - Presence of oddments in fleece
- ii. Belly wool is clean & dry
- 1 point per CC**  
**FP 10**

**5. Oddments Penalties** OH / Grid (10cm x 15 cm).

There should be a clear distinction between the following:

- a. Dags
  - b. Urine stain – tail and pizzle
  - c. Locks – fragments of fleece brushed up, second cuts, clean crutch wool
  - d. Extraneous matter
  - e. Clean & Dry belly wool
  - f. Good fleece wool
- F.P 10 points**  
**2 points per OH**

Should all the above bins be occupied, the competitor is permitted to make a separate pile on the floor for such items as wet wool, black wool, etc. and inform the judge at the end of that heat. These items will be brought to the Table Judge separately to the bins.

The Judge will empty each bin in turn. Identify contents. **Separate out what should not be in the bin.**

**N.B. OH no maximum penalty**