

THE SUSTAINABLE FIBRE ALLIANCE SAFEGUARDING HERDERS LIVELIHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT IN CASHMERE INDUSTRY

[The Sustainable Fibre Alliance \(SFA\)](#) is a non-profit standard-holding and membership organisation. It represents a global alliance of supply chain actors, stakeholders and industry experts with a mission to ensure the long-term viability of the cashmere sector.

Through its work, the SFA aims to minimize the environmental impact of cashmere, safeguard livelihoods and ensure high animal welfare standards. The SFA engages with the entire supply chain, connecting livestock herders to brands and retailers in the global fashion industry.

Over the past nine years, the SFA has grown from a concept into the world's first global organisation for cashmere sustainability, with its training and certification programme able to reach over 160,000 herders in Mongolia and China. The founders of the Alliance grew up in the Mongolian camp and saw first-hand how climate change and overgrazing affected the earth. Fish from rivers were drying up, meals were becoming scarce, and the families who once thrived in this area turned to each other for support. The Sustainable Fiber Alliance was created in 2015 from its desire to find a durable, market-based and scalable solution to protect Mongolia's livestock and pastoral culture for future generations.

The SFA is supported by a growing membership of over 60 supply chain companies that have committed to helping transform the global cashmere sector. SFA membership allows companies to take decisive steps towards securing a more sustainable future for cashmere while demonstrating responsible sourcing to buyers.

The SFA has offices in the UK and Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and a partnership with the International Cooperation Committee for Animal Welfare (ICCAW) in China. SFA has over 60 members from 13 countries around the globe, consisting of traders, processors, spinners, suppliers, manufacturers and brands and retailers.

[The SFA team is working to build a comprehensive system of quality certification based in the SFA Cashmere Standard](#) which defines best practice for responsible cashmere production. Focused on herders, the standard addresses the most pressing sustainability issues associated with raw fibre production and outlines the intended outcomes achieved through the standard's adoption.



The SFA Cashmere Standard was first introduced in January 2023 following an extensive revision and multi-stakeholder consultation throughout 2022. This revision included restructuring and integrating the SFA's three herder-level codes of practice: the Rangeland Stewardship and Animal Husbandry Codes of Practice, which have been in operation in Mongolia since 2017 and 2019 respectively, and the SFA x ICCAW Cashmere Goat Welfare Code of Practice, which has been in operation in China since 2020.

Due to an extended consultation period, herder organisations will continue to operate on the current SFA's herder-level codes of practice, the [Rangeland Stewardship Code of Practice](#), [Animal Husbandry Code of Practice](#), and the [SFA-ICCAW Cashmere Goat Welfare Code of Practice](#) until further notice.

The SFA Cashmere Standard defines responsible cashmere production, by upholding five global principles, which requires herders to:

- Ensure the *welfare* of their goats
- Safeguard *biodiversity and use land responsibly*
- Promote *decent work*
- Preserve and enhance *fibre quality*, and
- Operate an effective *management system*.

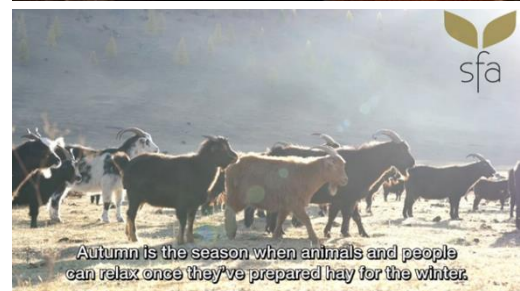
The SFA [has also developed a Chain of Custody system](#) for tracking fibre from certified herder organisations along the supply chain, allowing SFA members to make credible claims about the content of certified cashmere in their products and to use the SFA Certified logo. The system was first implemented in Mongolia in 2020 and was extended into China in 2021. In 2024, the SFA launched the SFA Chain of Custody Standard v1.0, which will come into effect in October 2024, replacing the SFA Chain of Custody Guidelines v3.1. You can download the [SFA Chain of Custody Standard v1.0 – English version here](#) or visit our [Resources](#) page to find the SFA Chain of Custody documents.

The SFA Cashmere Standard and Clean Fibre Processing Standard cover raw production and primary processing of cashmere fibre in Mongolia and China, while the SFA Chain of Custody operates globally along the full supply chain. The SFA operates across 17 provinces in Mongolia and 7 regions in China.

Through its work with the extended cashmere supply chain, the [SFA contributes to 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) of the United Nations Agenda for 2030](#).

Today, the sustainability of the cashmere industry is under threat. Political transitions and international demand for this luxury fibre have prompted dramatic increases in goat numbers. Combined with changing land use practices and climate change, this has resulted to overgrazed and degraded pastures that are less capable of supporting both domestic livestock and native wildlife.

The Sustainable Fibre Alliance encourages the adoption of responsible sourcing and production practices that benefit people, livestock and the environment. The organization is unique in truly representing herder voices and maintains strong relationships with producers, a key-strength of the SFA heritage. The SFA standards allow companies to demonstrate their commitment to transforming the cashmere sector and make credible claims about SFA-Certified products.



The SFA represents a global network of supply chain actors and stakeholders working together to transform the global cashmere sector. Joining the Alliance offers a way to take decisive steps towards securing a more sustainable future for cashmere and the people who depend on it for the livelihood. [The Organizers invite all interested parties to join the Alliance and to participate in their activities.](#)

To know more

[Sustainable Fibre Alliance website](#)

[Sustainable Fibre Alliance News](#)

[News training provided by SFA](#)

[SFA Cashmere Standard](#)

[SFA Chain of Custody](#)

[SFA Impact](#)

[SFA and Oyuna GOBI Award](#)

[International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026](#)

[Article in UNDP website](#)



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