

Another Tomorrow Animal Welfare Policy

As a core principle, Another Tomorrow does not use materials that require killing animals. As a result, we do not use animal skins, horn, silk, or down. However, none of our materials are sourced in isolation and as a result we take into account our holistic impact.

The ethos of Another Tomorrow begins with a commitment to the well-being of all the animals that are a part of the production system, from the microbiota of the soil through to the top predators in the ecosystem. This commitment means that the whole system must be taken into account in any decisions made, as the consequences of a perfectly sensible decision in one aspect will have impacts on many others.

The policy is intended to set out the principles of engagement, and identify some of the causal links between elements of the system, to help ensure the best possible results for the animals on whom the company relies for its products.

Definitions

The *production system* is the ecosystem on which the animals depend for shelter and nourishment.

Animals are all living beings in the system.

Nourishment is the provision of choice in nutrition, allowing animals to become locally adapted to their production system and thereby able to maintain their health naturally.

The starting point for our wool: Another Tomorrow grows wool, not meat

This simple statement is at the heart of the production system envisaged here. Of our two farm partners, one operates in a manner fully consistent with this vision and a second, which is already Responsible Wool Standard certified and has ceased tail-docking, is beginning this journey of transition to allow sheep to live their full natural lifespan.

Sheep are allowed to live out their natural lifetimes on the property and are humanely euthanised when they are no longer able to care for themselves.

Sheep will be provided with the basic needs acknowledged by all responsible animal welfare policies: food, shelter, clean water and freedom from undue stress. In addition to those basic rights, sheep will not be mulesed¹ or tail-docked. Lambs will be given pain relief medication prior to marking². Veterinary attention will be provided to any animal in need of it.

Fly strike risk will be addressed with strategic crutching³ and application of fly strike prevention solutions, preferably organic. Active management of fly strike during the summer months will include frequent in-paddock inspections and treatment of individual sheep as needed.

Sheep will be given sufficient nutritional choice to maintain their health naturally, reducing or eliminating the need for treatment of intestinal parasites and other nutrition-related health problems. As the diversity on most properties will be dispersed, this may mean actively shepherding⁴ the flock to areas with greater diversity on a regular basis.

Moving sheep from one place to another on the property will be done with a minimum amount of stress on the flock, the working dogs and the humans involved. This means that any one involved in managing sheep will have training in low-stress stock handling and will keep the well-being of the animals in mind at all times.

¹ Mulesing is the controversial removal of skin wrinkles near the breech, to minimise the susceptibility to fly strike through retention of urine or other liquid in the wrinkle. Prevention of fly strike is possible through other means.

² Marking occurs at about 6 weeks of age, and involves vaccination, and bloodless castration of the males.

³ Crutching is shearing the breech area and tail to remove wool, urine stain and any dried feces that might attract flies.

⁴ Active shepherding is deliberately moving sheep into and through a grazing zone with variations in diversity.

The social structure of the flock will be maintained by keeping families together throughout their lifetimes (i.e. not dividing the flock up into year classes, and not artificially weaning the lambs). This allows mothers to teach their lambs how to forage successfully in a diverse production system, and also reduces stress through the stability of the social network of the flock.

Sheep will be provided with shelter from the elements, in the form of trees, shrubs, rocks, slopes, etc that allow them to be out of the wind when they wish to be. After shearing, sheep will be provided with shelter in sheds or other structures as needed to prevent hypothermia. As older sheep are more susceptible to skin cancers in Australia, provision of shade in areas the sheep choose for mid-day rest (tops of hills) is a priority.

Implications for the production system

The principles outlined above require an ecosystem that is healthy and diverse. Because forage diversity is key to the nourishment of sheep, they eat broadleaf plants in preference to grass, and will, therefore, eat the diversity first. If there is not sufficient abundance of forage in the system, the diversity will rapidly disappear. Because sheep are not sold, the stocking rate needs to be conservative to ensure that the inter-annual variability of weather, and the impacts inherent in human-induced climate change, can be bridged without damaging the diversity of the production system. *This means a low stocking rate is required. The stocking rate will be dependent on rainfall, land type, soil type, and plant resilience (perennial vs annual). Rather than specify a stocking rate, the criterion is the maintenance of diversity and abundance.*

A healthy production system in turn requires healthy biota in the soil. Over time, a diverse, abundant production system will result in leaf "litter" at the soil to air interface, providing a micro-environment where soil biota can thrive. *This means no use of pesticides or herbicides, or chemical fertilizers.*

Allowing sheep to live out their natural lifetimes means sheep demographics on the property will run from newborn lambs to sheep in their teens. Older sheep will need particular attention to their teeth and feet, to ensure they can continue to care for themselves. *This means no use of forage crops (e.g. turnips) that require sheep to eat close to the ground, causing damage to teeth thereby. Feet will be trimmed as needed to avoid foot problems generally, and footrot in particular.*

Reducing the incidence of skin cancer requires provision of shade in key areas—the tops of hills and open basins—to minimise exposure to extreme UV in the middle part of the day when the sheep are at rest. *This means an active program of revegetation on properties where shade trees have disappeared in these locations.*

Other animals in the production system

Working dogs, wild animals and people are the other members of the production family. Working dogs and wild animals will be allowed to live out their lifetimes on the property. There will be sufficient abundance to support the local wildlife, and no hunting will be done. Dogs will be provided with shelter, fresh water and nourishing food, and given ample exercise every day. They will receive veterinary treatment when they need it, including euthanasia if required, and care will be taken to ensure their feet and coats are in good condition.

All animals, including people, will be treated with respect and compassion.