



Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.



Knitting Kind

An animal-friendly knitting experience

The leading wool producers are Australia, South America, and New Zealand. As with most widely used animal-based products, wool production and sheep farming come with major animal welfare issues. **One of the biggest problems is the practice of live lamb cutting (mulesing) of merino sheep.** Lamb cutting is the process where large strips of skin are cut away from lamb's buttocks without anaesthesia. This cruel procedure is only practiced in Australia, and carried out in order to avoid fly infestation (flystrike). With effective, pain-free alternatives available, there is no justification for continuing this cruelty.



What can I do?

In order to make kinder choices when choosing knitting materials, it can be useful to ask yourself the following questions:

Could this yarn be made from alternative materials?

Yes, you can find a list of common alternatives on the following pages.

Does it really have to be merino wool?

If so, make sure that your purchase does not support animal suffering by taking the following actions:



Find out more about the yarn brand. If your favourite brand publicly opposes live lamb cutting (mulesing) and its wool is certified with the following labels, you can be relatively confident that your wool is free of lamb cutting:

- Responsible Wool Standard (RWS)
- Nativa™
- ZQ Merino

Useful tip:

Be cautious when noticing other labels – even if it says organic, lamb cutting cannot be ruled out for certain.

A general rule to apply is, if a brand cannot verify that its wool is lamb cutting-free, avoid it. Australia is the top wool producer, yet only ~20% is lamb cutting-free, leaving a high risk of supporting unknowingly this cruelty.

Alternative materials:

Attention! Synthetic fibres are often mixed with natural fibres (animal or vegetable origin), so make sure to check their origin.

Bamboo

can be processed into viscose fibres or environmentally friendly Lyocel. The material is:

- like a mixture of silk and cashmere
- light
- durable
- insulating
- resistant to odours



© Unsplash | Kazuend

Cotton

is the best-known alternative to wool and accounts for about a third of the world's fibre production. Organic cotton produces 70% less CO₂ than conventional cotton. The material is:

- soft
- sensitive to skin
- wrinkle-free
- absorbent



© Unsplash | Marianne Krohn

Hemp

grows fast and comes without the use of pesticides or chemical fertilisers. The material is:

- fully compostable
- durable
- sensitive to skin
- antimicrobial



Linen

is obtained from the stems of the flaxplant. Cultivation and processing are particularly environmentally friendly. The material is:

- tear resistant
- cooling
- quick drying
- anti-allergenic



TENCEL™

is a cellulose fibre made from sustainable forestry. The material is:

- made from trees like eucalyptus, beech, and spruce
- easily recyclable
- soft
- insulating



©Larisa_stock - stock.adobe.com

Modal

is a viscose fibre that is primarily obtained from the wood pulp of sustainably grown beech.

The material is:

- soft and smooth
- easily recyclable
- 50% more absorbent than cotton
- quick drying

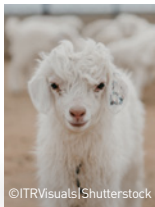


© Unsplash | Zuzana Kacerova

Fine wools

Mohair, alpaca, cashmere and angora wool are often used for knitting. Unfortunately, there are major animal welfare concerns also associated with these materials. Cashmere goats, angora goats (mohair) and alpacas suffer during the collection of these materials, often due to the lack of animal welfare guidelines in the producing countries. The main issues regarding animal welfare are:

- Stress, panic, and injuries caused during shearing with alpacas being especially prone to extreme stress when restrained
- In some cases, wool is forcibly removed from the animals such as cashmere goats where the fine under hair is painfully torn out with metal combs



- Outdoor keeping often lacks shelter to protect from strong winds and other weather conditions, and an adequate provision of food and care
- There is often a lack of medical treatment following the shearing process and in the case of Angora rabbits, they often suffer from harmful infections, particularly of the eyes as result of unchecked breeding and poor cage keeping

There is no animal-friendly production of angora wool.

Therefore, FOUR PAWS strongly reject its use and purchase.

When buying cashmere, mohair or alpaca-based wool, make sure to select products certified by more robust standards such as the Good Cashmere Standard (GCS), the Responsible Alpaca Standard (RAS), or the Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS). However note, these certifications do not eliminate animal suffering, but do reduce risks to animal welfare. Even better, is to seek sustainable animal-free alternatives.

Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.



FOUR PAWS International
**VIER PFOTEN International –
gemeinnützige Privatstiftung**
Linke Wienzeile 236
1150 Vienna | Austria
Phone: +43-1-545 50 20-0
office@four-paws.org



[four-paws.org](https://www.four-paws.org)



[four-paws.org/linkedin](https://www.four-paws.org/linkedin)



[four-paws.org/instagram](https://www.four-paws.org/instagram)



[four-paws.org/facebook](https://www.four-paws.org/facebook)



[four-paws.org/x](https://www.four-paws.org/x)



[four-paws.org/youtube](https://www.four-paws.org/youtube)

