

Knitting Kind

An animal-friendly knitting experience



Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.



The wool business is thriving worldwide. The leading 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 practise of mulesing of merino sheep.**

Mulesing is the process whereby lambs are restrained on their backs while strips of skin are cut away from their backside without anaesthesia. This cruel procedure is only practiced in Australia, and it is carried out in order to avoid myiasis (flystrike), which is thought to be prevented by removing the skin, although has often been shown to be ineffective.



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/supplier. If your favourite brand/supplier publicly opposes mulesing and its wool is certified with the following labels, you can be confident that your wool is mulesing-free:

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

Useful tip: Be cautious when noticing other labels – even if it says organic, mulesing cannot be ruled out for certain. A general rule to apply is, if the wool originates from Australia, it is possible that mulesing could have taken place.

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 Monocel. The material is:

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



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



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 flax plant. Cultivation and processing are particularly environmentally friendly. The material is:

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



Lyocell/Tencel

is a cellulose fibre made from sustainable forestry.

The material is:

- made from eucalyptus wood
- easily recyclable
- soft
- insulating



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



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 during shearing, with alpaca especially suffering with 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 husbandry is often insufficient with a lack of protection from strong winds and other weather conditions, and an inadequate 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.

Avoid buying cashmere, mohair and alpaca. Since standards have either not yet been sufficiently checked or animal welfare problems have not been adequately addressed, FOUR PAWS advises against the use or purchase of these wool materials.

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