

National Wool Declaration (NWD) & Integrity Program (NWD-IP) – General Information

What is the NWD?

The National Wool Declaration (NWD) is a voluntary declaration that enables wool growers to supply important information about their wool clip. While this information cannot be physically measured, it is of value to buyers, processors and retailers seeking to understand the mulesing status and the risk of dark or medullated fibres in the wool they purchase.

Oversight and Versions

The NWD and NWD-IP are managed by Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX) on behalf of industry. NWD-IP audits are conducted by a third-party auditor. Any changes to the NWD form must be reviewed and approved by the Industry Consultative Committee (ICC) comprising representatives from across industry. The only valid form is **Version 10.0**, effective from 1 July 2024. Growers can access the NWD via their selling agent or AWEX.

Your Responsibilities as the Grower

- The NWD is the responsibility of the owner/manager of the property and must be signed by them to be valid. Your Wool Classer may complete the details on the form, but only under your clear direction. By signing the NWD, you also agree to participate in the NWD Integrity Program (NWD-IP), which involves possible random audit selection.
- The form must not be signed by brokers, Wool Classers, shearers or other representatives.
- Typing errors or missing information may result in a change in your Mulesing Status (MS) before sale or may lead to non-compliance during an audit.
- It is recommended to complete the NWD using the WoolClip app. This is industry's preferred method to support accuracy and traceability.
- Contact your selling agent or AWEX to access the NWD or download from the AWEX website.
- Selling agents may provide their clients with a Wool Classer's Specification that includes an NWD, or a separate NWD form to be used alongside the classer's specification. It is important to ensure that you use the current NWD Version 10.0 to ensure declaration validity.
- The NWD is voluntary. If you choose not to declare a status, your wool will be coded as "Not Declared" (ND). However, declaring your mulesing status – even if it is Mulesed (M) – may still be financially beneficial compared with not declaring at all, as it provides transparency to buyers that they value.

Completing the NWD via WoolClip

You may use WoolClip (AWEX's online platform and mobile app) to submit your NWD. Log in to the app or website (woolclip.com.au), navigate to the "NWD" module and enter details such as mulesing status and pain relief usage.

If you are the owner/manager, you can complete the declaration directly. If you are not, you can send an SMS or email request via WoolClip to the owner/manager for their verification.

Once finalised, WoolClip sends the NWD to your marketing organisation and shares relevant data with warehouses.

Did you know?

By using WoolClip, owner/managers can complete the NWD ahead of time, helping to make shearing days run more smoothly.

Mulesing Status – Mob-by-Mob Declaration

The mulesing status is declared **mob-by-mob**, except for "Ceased Mulesing" (CM), which is a whole-property declaration.

- **Non-Mulesed (NM):** No sheep in this mob have been mulesed.
- **Liquid Nitrogen (LN):** The sheep in this mob have had their breeches treated with liquid nitrogen.
- **Analgesic and/or Anaesthetic (AA):** All sheep in this mob were mulesed with a registered analgesic and/or anaesthetic product.
- **Mulesed (M):** Some or all sheep in this mob were mulesed **without** the use of a registered analgesic and/or anaesthetic product.
- **Not Declared (ND):** You may choose not to declare a mulesing status. If you do not fill in a status for a mob, it will automatically be marked as ND in the sale catalogue.

Declaring Wool from Purchased Sheep

If you have purchased mulesed sheep and **cannot verify** that pain relief was used, their wool must be declared as "Mulesed (M)" on your NWD.

To declare purchased sheep as AA (Analgesic & Anaesthetic) on your NWD, you must ensure you obtain evidence of AA treatment from the seller at the time of sale.

If you purchase sheep from Victoria or Tasmania, you must ensure they comply with the relevant legislative requirement for mulesing to have been performed using an analgesic and/or anaesthetic product, and you should obtain supporting evidence at the time of sale. To declare an AA status for these sheep, growers must provide evidence such as a purchase invoice, National Vendor Declaration (NVD) or waybill confirming the transaction and compliance with these requirements.

If your own sheep were mulesed with pain relief but you do not have evidence to prove this:

- If you cannot provide supporting documentation such as an invoice, veterinary record or statutory declaration, and cannot obtain one from your vet or supplier, the correct mulesing status to mark on your NWD is "M" (Mulesed).
- The AA (Analgesic & Anaesthetic) status may only be used when you have verifiable evidence of pain relief use.

Status Hierarchy and Mixed Mobs

If your mob contains a mixture of statuses, you must declare it using the lowest status in the hierarchy.

The hierarchy, from highest to lowest, is:

NM>LN>AA>M>ND

For example:

- If a mob contains both NM and AA sheep, you must declare the whole mob as AA.
- If a mob contains both LN and M sheep, you must declare it as M.

Ceased Mulesing (CM) – Property-Level Declaration

CM is a property-level declaration (not a mob declaration). To be eligible for CM status, you must meet **both** conditions for the entire property:

1. No lambs born on the property in the last 12 months have been mulesed.
2. No mulesed (or mulesed with AA) ewes or wethers have been purchased in the last 12 months.

When a third-party auditor comes to verify CM status, they will inspect the mob(s) of the youngest sheep relating to your National Wool Declaration to confirm they have not been mulesed.

Roles & Process Flow

On-farm (Grower): Complete identifying and contact details; declare the status of mobs of wool; sign the document once complete.

Brokers: Use the NWD to create sale lots based on similar attributes and the declared mulesing status (MS).

Buyers: Select wool based on the declared specifications in line with their processing needs.

AWEX: Conducts pre-sale compliance audits and AA/LN verification audits based on the information provided on the NWD. An incorrect declaration can lead to removal of lots from sale, downgrade or correction of the mulesing status in the sale catalogue, and notification of both broker and buyer regarding the amended status.

Third-Party Auditor: Conducts independent audits to verify NWD declarations, ensuring program integrity. Non-compliance may result in a change to the declared mulesing status (MS), the audit being recorded as “Not Compliant”, and future NWD submissions from that property being subject to additional verification or audit.

Integrity Program Purpose

The NWD Integrity Program (NWD-IP) is managed by AWEX. Its purpose is to independently verify the accuracy of your declarations, thereby instilling confidence across the wool pipeline. Without this program, the value and credibility of the NWD would be significantly reduced.

Who Gets Audited?

Each year, AWEX randomly selects properties for audit. If you have made a declaration of NM, CM, AA or LN, your property may be chosen. Selection is random: any property, regardless of size or location, can be chosen. Even if a previous audit or verification was compliant, you may still be selected again in subsequent years.



Desktop Audit: Ensure you have completed the NWD and double-checked its accuracy. The onus is on the owner/manager to ensure the information is correct. Your selling agent will submit the NWD to AWEX on your behalf when requested.

AA/LN Verification Audit: To make the audit run smoothly, it's best to have key documents ready. These documents serve as proof of the pain relief used. You should have evidence for any anaesthetic, analgesic (AA) or liquid nitrogen (LN) products used on your mob. The evidence must show the type and amount of product used, and the number of lambs treated.

List of Acceptable Documents



For AA verification

AA purchased from Vet or Supply Company:

Tax invoice showing purchase details, including product type, quantity and lambs treated.

AA supplied by Mulesing Contractor:

Tax invoice citing AA use, including type, amount and lambs treated.

AA sourced from Other Sources (e.g., neighbour, relative): Tax invoice or statutory declaration detailing AA type, amount and lambs treated.

AA Purchased from Auctions Plus: a copy of the Auctions Plus Assessment for those sheep, including confirmation of AA use.

AA supplied by Vendor (for purchased sheep):

Tax invoice, statutory declaration or Animal Health Statement confirming AA use, type and lambs treated.

Evidence from States with Mandatory AA:

If you purchased sheep from a state that requires Anaesthetic/Analgesic (AA) for mulesing, keep your NVD (National Vendor Declaration), purchase invoices, or any other farm records that prove the AA was applied.

For LN verification

LN supplied by Treatment Provider: Tax invoice indicating LN treatment details and the number of lambs treated.

LN sourced from Vendor (for purchased sheep):

Tax invoice, statutory declaration or Animal Health Statement confirming LN treatment and number of lambs treated.

The On-Farm Audit Procedure

Initial Contact: An auditor will contact you a few weeks before a planned visit to arrange a suitable time.

The Audit Itself: The auditor will physically examine a sample of the mob to verify its mulesing status. This involves running the sheep through a race so the auditor can check for scars consistent with mulesing.

- If a selected mob has been sold, you will need to provide proof of the sale (e.g., National Vendor Declaration (NVD) or account sale).
- The mob(s) must be brought to sheep yards with a race. The auditor will run the sheep into the race for audit of the tail & breech regions for scars consistent with mulesing.
- For mobs greater than 200 sheep, 200 animals (for example a “wing” sample from a large mob) will be examined. For mobs fewer than 200, the entire mob will be examined.
- The auditors closely examine the sheep for distinctive scars on the breech and/or tail region that result from the mulesing operation. The sheep must be in a race – not in paddocks or open yards. This unique scarring can be differentiated from shearing cuts, LN treatments or other methods of breech modification.
- For a CM audit, the auditor will ask to examine young mob(s) that support the CM declaration.
- If LN treatments or other breech modification methods are used (i.e., methods that result in removal or loss of skin from the breech and/or tail of a sheep), the owner/manager must provide evidence of the treatment/ modification for the entire mob(s) – e.g., tax invoice from the contractor who performed the treatment/ modification. If the sheep are purchased, the same trace-back to the treatment/modification must be sourced from the vendor.
- Depending on wool length, cleanliness of sheep and number of mobs to be inspected, the audit will take approx. ½ to 1 hour. Additional time is available for the owner/manager to discuss the NWD and its Integrity Program with the auditor.

After the Audit

Once the audit is complete, observations will be written down by the auditor. At this time, the owner/manager can discuss any aspect of these observations and add comment for inclusion in the report.

The auditors send their findings to AWEX. Based on the written observations, AWEX sends a formal report back to the owner/manager, listing outcomes of the audit in terms of compliance.

What You'll Need for a Smooth Audit

- ✓ **Property information:** Full contact details, ABN and Property Identification Code (PIC).
- ✓ **NWD forms:** A copy of the NWD(s) for the mobs being audited.
- ✓ **Farm records:** Documentation to support the status you have declared (e.g., breeding/lambing records, chemical/treatment records for AA declarations; purchasing records for CM declarations).
- ✓ **Access to sheep:** The sheep selected for audit must be available on the day and easy to access (e.g., in a yard or shed).

These audits exist to maintain trust and transparency in the system. When an audit is conducted, the auditor is assessing compliance with the declaration you made.

What Happens If I Am Found Non-compliant?

If the audit finds a significant number of sheep whose status does not match the declared status:

The wool's mulesing status (MS) will be changed to the correct status, and the audit will be marked as **“Not Compliant”**.

- **Non-Compliance Level 1 (NC-L1):** The property (PIC) remains eligible to submit a declaration for the next shearing but may be subject to audit for any declaration of NM, CM or AA.
- **Non-Compliance Level 2 (NC-L2):** AWEX will monitor all future declarations for the brand/PIC through its database. Any NWDs declaring CM, NM or AA will not be accepted and will be invalidated prior to sale. The mulesing status in sale catalogues and test certificates will be changed to Not Declared (ND).

The NWD status for all lots from that mob will be downgraded to the correct status (e.g., “Mulesed (M)”), and a note of non-compliance will be recorded in the sale catalogue. This is a crucial detail for buyers, and AWEX will notify both the buyers and your broker of the corrected mulesing status.

Will I Be Fined If My LN or AA Verification is Non-Compliant?

No fines will be applied as a direct consequence of an LN or AA verification result; however, buyers of the wool will be informed where the status of specific lots has changed.

Incorrect Declarations

There can be several reasons why a declaration might be wrong or incorrect – ranging from an honest mistake, a declaration completed by someone other than the owner/manager, misunderstanding of questions, incorrect assumptions about the status of purchased sheep, or a deliberate and misleading error.

The auditor or AWEX staff will discuss the circumstances of incorrect declarations with the owner/manager. In all circumstances the broker(s) and the buyer(s) will be notified, since the wool was sold on the understanding that the declaration was correct.

Growers can appeal the finding by submitting a formal written appeal to AWEX.