

Raising standards for animal welfare

Textile Exchange's [Climate+ strategy](#) led to a shift in focus towards creating pathways to address climate change through fiber and raw material production. The strategy is called Climate+ to reflect its emphasis on collective action and holistic, interdependent impact areas such as water, soil health, and biodiversity.

When it comes to animal fibers and materials, we recognize that these Climate+ goals must be underpinned by high animal welfare. In addition, regenerative land management that leads to positive Climate+ outcomes can also support animal welfare. For example, regenerative land management can support better quality and more varied pastures giving animals better nutrition and choice of what to eat.

Our Responsible Animal Fiber (RAF) standards, which include the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS), Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS), and Responsible Alpaca Standard (RAS) are all based on the Five Domains of animal welfare.

What are the Five Domains of animal welfare?

1. Good nutrition
2. Good environment
3. Good health
4. Appropriate behavior
5. Positive mental experience

The Five Domains model is an evolution of the Five Freedoms of animal welfare, and the core elements of each are the same. However, the Five Freedoms are essentially focused on eliminating negative outcomes for animal welfare, whereas the Five Domains recognize that to deliver good welfare we need to go *beyond* this, to ensuring animals have positive experiences and a life worth living.

The Five Domains also explore the mental state of animals in more detail than the Five Freedoms, understanding that each of the first four physical domains – nutrition, environment, health, and behavior – will have an impact on the fifth mental domain.

Examples of this shift include focusing on building positive human-animal relationships rather than solely avoiding bad or abusive handling, as well as working to prevent disease rather than only treating sick or injured animals.

The RAF standards all require animals to be managed in extensive pasture-based systems. These systems have the highest welfare potential as well as giving opportunity for land management that supports Climate+ outcomes.

The Five Domains are the baseline for Textile Exchange RAF development, with most organizations in the field of animal welfare agreeing that this model is the benchmark on which animal welfare strategies and standards should be built. This approach will continue to be our guide as we develop our new, [unified standard](#) system.