



## **California Wool Growers Association Sheep Animal Care and Welfare Statement**

Farmers and ranchers who raise sheep in California take great pride in the care they provide for their animals and do not condone or defend mistreatment or abuse of sheep either intentionally or unintentionally. These principles hold true for all management practices. Sheep producers are committed to making sure their animals are treated humanely. Not only is that the right thing to do, but anything less would be self-defeating.

The California Wool Growers Association (CWGA) understands producers' and consumers' interest in the important topic of animal welfare and strives to provide resources that help its member farmers and ranchers utilize the best, accepted sheep care practices and help consumers recognize that lamb and wool producers are committed to responsible sheep care.

CWGA, along with its member farmers, ranchers, and allied stakeholders promote and encourage the training of proper sheep handling and shearing. CWGA provides its members with the Sheep Care Guide, an educational document for proper care, handling and management of sheep as an industry standard for sheep care. In addition, CWG also offers its members training in the industry Sheep Safety and Quality Assurance program that outlines proper management practices to ensure the production of safe, high-quality lamb and wool products for consumers.

### **Shearing**

The shearing of sheep is a necessary process that is of great benefit to the animals' own welfare.

Sheep must be shorn regularly to prevent excess wool from interfering with their bodies' ability to thermo-regulate. The excess wool impedes the ability of sheep to regulate their body temperatures. This can cause sheep to become overheated and die.

Excessive wool coats also make the sheep more vulnerable to becoming immobilized by physical obstacles in the environment and more susceptible to predator and parasite attacks. If not sheared, urine, feces and other materials become trapped in the wool, attracting flies, maggots and other pests. This causes irritation, infections and endangers the health of the animal.

Annual shearings using approved, standardized handling techniques are designed for the comfort and wellbeing of the sheep. Shearing generally takes place before the lambing season in order to aid in lamb health and survival. CWGA sponsors training for sheep shearers and provides educational material on proper shearing techniques.