

The SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme Manual

Version 7.2

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SustainaWOOL™
INTEGRITY SCHEME



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INTRODUCTION

AWEX, in conjunction with its members, would like the wool-consuming-world to understand that its raw material suppliers (wool producers) take the utmost care of their animals and the environment. Not enough focus or energy has been placed on promoting the sustainable nature of the wool production system in Australia, particularly high-quality Merino production systems.

What is “Sustainability” and what is being achieved with the SustainaWool™ Integrity Scheme?

In a general sense, this is the basic philosophy.

“To promote the production of the highest quality wool via the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.”

Sustainable management in the context of this Scheme means managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while:

- (a) Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations,
- (b) Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems,
- (c) Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment, and
- (d) Managing livestock production systems involving the highest possible ethical, animal welfare and quality standards.



The wool consumer is increasingly demanding a higher level of traceability along the pipeline of the production system from which they buy. Not only does the product need to be of the highest quality, there also needs to be a compelling “story” behind the product clearly showing the highest level of environmental and social sustainability and animal welfare.

AWEX understands that it has a major role in promoting the highly professional and ethical wool production systems of Australian wool growers. It also has the important role of advising growers of those production aspects that can be improved or enhanced for the benefit of the product and the production systems. The **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme is a tool which we want to share with all growers to help us work and grow together in an increasingly competitive landscape. AWEX wants Australian growers to stand out from the crowd – in the very best way.

The **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme is available to all Australian wool growers willing and able to demonstrate their production of wool with the highest quality production credentials. The information provided via the **SustainaWOOL™** documentation by each wool supplier will be forever linked with the wool produced from that particular property.

The Grower Checklist is a “self-assessment” document that each declarant signs with the full understanding and knowledge that they can be subject to audit at any time by a registered audit company or authorised entity. The AWEX **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme also works hand-in-hand with our National Wool Declaration (NWD), the highly respected industry- based declaration and audit system covering Mulesing Status and Dark Fibre Contamination in wool clips sold throughout Australia by auction or other means.

THE PROCESS

The SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme is presented via three important documents.

1. The MANUAL
2. The GROWER CHECKLIST; and
3. The AUDIT CHECKLIST

Those seeking accreditation under the Scheme should first read the Manual and be comfortable that they understand its contents. This document covers the reasons behind the Scheme and the importance of promoting the Australian wool producer to the wider “wool using” world. The Manual explains the broader issues around Sustainability and Animal Welfare in wool production and outlines the key requirements and recommendations of the Scheme.

The next step towards accreditation is to complete the Grower Checklist. This document asks the declarant to respond to specific questions and/or statements relating to the main headings in the Manual. This is a legal document and respondents will need to declare (under signature) that their responses are true and correct. The declarant should answer knowing full well that they could be audited (desk-top and/or on-farm) at any time and as a result should be thinking about the records or documentation that might be required by an auditor to validate their responses. In fact, it is **recommended** that all those seeking accreditation should develop solid record keeping procedures as part of management “good practice”, as well as to assist auditors.

Declarants should work towards documenting the protocols followed on the farm which will assist both auditors and the training of staff. These protocols and other important documents should be available for reference by employees and family members.

The final document is the Audit Checklist. This is a very useful document which will help declarants to understand the requirements of any future audit, but also assist the preparation of an appropriate record keeping system for the business

Important Information Related to the SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme Grower Checklist

1. ANIMAL WELFARE / ANIMAL HEALTH

Animal Welfare should centre around the animal's ability to cope with and even thrive within the land and environmental conditions in which it finds itself. Good animal welfare and animal health will require high level management by stock owners to prevent and treat disease, internal and external parasites and control the adverse effects of various predators. Adequate nutrition must be maintained, along with provisions for shelter, humane handling (to reduce injury and stress), and if need be, efficient and humane slaughter of stock.

The **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme accepts the internationally recognised “Five Freedoms” developed by the World Organisation for Animal Health as representing the “ideal” health state:

1. Freedom from hunger, thirst, and malnutrition,
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing adequate shelter,
3. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease/parasites – based on prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment,
4. Freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour, and
5. Freedom from fear and distress.

Minimum standards for the treatment of animals, in this case sheep, are covered by the various Acts already in place in every State of Australia. If a property/owner has been prosecuted under any of the applicable Animal Welfare Government Acts, then this would immediately indicate that compliance has been breached and such properties/owners would be ineligible to participate in the **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme.

An Animal Welfare document prepared by Animal Health Australia (AHA) – the “Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines – Sheep” - has been endorsed (January 2016) by the Australian States and Territories. This document attempts to formalise a sound and acceptable Animal Welfare regime in Australia. From October 2017, animal welfare and biosecurity has been included in the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program, which also references this AHA document.

Whilst supportive of these document's contents, the **SustainaWOOL™** Scheme goes a step further in relation to mulesing. We recognise the desire of many growers, brands, and processors for the mulesing procedure to cease as soon as practicable and are strongly supportive of any research leading towards a “non-mulesed” Australian wool industry. The international community has sent a very strong message for this outcome to be the “end goal”.

However, the best possible welfare outcome for the animal must remain paramount in this discussion, so where ceasing to mules is not possible (at this time), accredited suppliers **are required** to use a registered Pain Relief product on all stock undergoing the mulesing process.

For tail docking and castration, the **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme **recommends** use of a pre- and/or post-procedure analgesic pain relief products.

A CLEAR CHOICE FOR PROCESSORS AND BRANDS

SustainaWOOL™

SustainaWOOL™

The **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme clearly identifies suppliers who do not mules (ceased or never mulesed) as **SustainaWOOL™ GREEN** suppliers. Those that continue to mules but are using a registered pain relief product are identified as **SustainaWOOL™ BLUE** suppliers.

Wool users (processors and brands) are thus able to make a clear choice to source product through the **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme from the

Green or Blue (or both) suppliers with the highest level of confidence. This clear division also allows SustainaWOOL™ partner processors, brands, and retailers to send strong commercial messages to both groups through strategically targeted contracts and special prices at auction. AWEX will work closely with both groups to disseminate information and share practical experience on achieving a non-mulesed outcome without jeopardizing the welfare of the animal.

The International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) document International Specifications for Wool Sheep Welfare – 2016 also provides a very well-rounded reference point for the requirements of the international community regarding Animal Welfare, and AWEX fully endorses this document.

It is a **requirement** for accreditation that the following protocols are adhered to when performing Castration and Tail Docking. Castration must be carried out using the rubber ring method only. Tail Docking must be carried out using the rubber ring or cauterised (hot) knife methods only. Tail length should be sufficient to cover the vulva for ewes and the equivalent length for males. For both castration and tail docking, lambs must be a minimum of 24 hours old and maximum of 12 weeks old (without veterinary involvement) and the procedures must be performed by suitably trained and skilled personnel. If registered and readily available, the **SustainaWOOL™** Scheme **recommends** for suppliers to use a pain relief product during these procedures, preferably a pre-procedure analgesic.

AWEX understands professional wool producers will uphold the highest possible standards of care for their animals and care for the environment. This means that sheep are kept in the best possible health; that sheep have been given reasonable protection from the effects of disease, pests, predators, and that appropriate corrective action is taken if sheep require treatment or relief from pain and suffering. The **SustainaWOOL™** document allows professional suppliers the opportunity to advise the world of the very actions that take place on their properties on a normal day-to-day basis to allow them to produce a quality product from their valued stock. Declarants should, however, understand that an auditor would require that random mobs of sheep be inspected to verify their health and welfare. An auditor will also need to verify that the correct registered Animal Health products are being used and that label instructions are strictly adhered to.

Proof of purchase of a registered Pain Relief product is a **requirement** for accreditation. A check of the general condition of stock (Body Condition Score or BCS as a guide), watering points (water troughs/creeks), general water storage facilities (dams/tanks), pastures and/or conserved fodder would assist an auditor to understand the level of maintenance of the health and wellbeing of sheep on the property.

Accredited wool growers will be **required** to provide to an auditor their Animal Health Plan (verbal or written). This should outline such items as an integrated parasite (internal and external) plan, likely health challenges and stock mortality minimisation strategies. The plan should clearly cover the protocols used by management to train staff in administering animal health treatments and the humane slaughter of stock. Up-to-date records of Animal Health Treatments are also a requirement of the **SustainaWOOL™** Scheme.

2. TRACEABILITY

The ability for wool purchased under the **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme to be traced back to its source is paramount to the Scheme's success. Not only does transparent traceability allow a solid conduit for individual "stories" to be told from properties or wool producing areas, but it also gives brands and retailers confidence in the integrity of fibre delivered to them under this Scheme. Many systems are already in place to trace a bale back to the producer such as the National Wool Declaration, the registered Farm Brand and Stencil, the Classers Specification provided by the grower to their respective broker, and the regulations already in place including the testing/sampling and displaying (showing) of wool for sale. The countermarking, documentation, and various systems in place in the transport, dumping, packing, and exporting of the bales allows the integrity of purchased wool to be upheld.

The **SustainaWOOL™** Grower Checklist also allows suppliers to nominate their ability to trace individual animals on their property. This shows an even deeper level of care and also a responsibility towards high quality management of their flocks. It is a **requirement** of accreditation that all sheep on the property be identified with a secure form of individual identification and that mobs are routinely monitored and their location on the farm known

and documented.

AWEX **requires** for accreditation under this scheme that a National Wool Declaration (NWD) be completed covering every bale of wool offered for sale. This verifies that there is full traceability under the AWEX's NWD Scheme for Mulesing Status and Dark and Medullated Fibre Risk (DMFR).

3. ENVIRONMENTAL CARE / CHEMICAL HANDLING AND STORAGE

The general thrust of this section of the Scheme is for declarants to successfully show that reasonable care has been taken to avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects on the environment. Some of these items are covered by State/Territory Government Acts such as the **requirement** for a Farm Chemical Users course to be completed by at least one person working on the farm. It also covers the requirement for an inventory of all chemicals to be kept as well as compliance with safe handling and storage requirements. Compliance with the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (applicable to your State or Territory) is a **requirement** for accreditation under the SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme.

4. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The sustainability of farming communities requires the existence of a strong economic and social framework. The SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme champions the nurturing of strong employer - employee relationships built on mutual trust and respect. These bonds have the added benefit of strengthening the local communities through social integration and economic activity.

The provision of adequate facilities and amenities for workers and their families on-farm is an important pillar on which this mutual respect can be built. This could include, but is not limited to, reasonable accommodation (when required), access to first aid, and provision of clean and functional meal and toilet facilities. Compliance with all National and State Work, Health & Safety (WH&S/OH&S) legislation and regulations will be a **requirement** for accreditation.



Providing a safe workplace is also a **requirement** of the SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme. This includes general health and safety issues covering employers, employees, and their children. It should also cover visitors whether for work or recreation purposes. Adequate training and protocols to support responsible use of agricultural machinery and animal handling equipment, stock handling and on-farm construction are also **required**.

Supporting certifications or licences should be maintained and furnished to an auditor where applicable.

Compliance to National and State employment legislation is a **requirement** of the Scheme to ensure the rights and conditions of employees are protected and respected.

5. WOOL PREPARATION / SHEARING

Notwithstanding the importance of having a clean, green and ethical product, the quality of the wool and its preparation for sale is paramount to making this whole Scheme a success. The highest standard of quality should be the target for all involved in this Scheme and where this quality can then be augmented by the highest standards of animal welfare and environmental care, then the result is a comfortable,

reassured and satisfied consumer. It is also true that no amount of preparation and classing can improve a poor quality/poorly bred raw product. Having the best possible genetics for that particular environment, sound management and healthy/strong stock is the solid base from which this whole Scheme can add value to the wool producer, the processor and the final consumer.

AWEX **requires** that the wool is removed by trained and/or careful shearers (i.e. AWI's 5 Pillars of Shearing), the wool is prepared using the basic guidelines of the most current AWEX wool classer Code of Practice, and that the wool is classed by a Registered Professional or Owner wool classer. It is a **requirement** that all bales be packed to AWEX specified weights and specifications and that only AWEX authorised nylon packs in good condition (not repaired) are used. It is also a **requirement** that all bales be appropriately and clearly branded/marked, and that the Description used is truly representative of the contents of each individual bale. A fully completed NWD should be submitted covering every bale of wool being offered for sale. This Declaration should be made available to AWEX on request.

To ensure efficient but safe removal of wool, for operators and stock alike, it is a **requirement** that shearing shed and yard facilities be fully maintained to minimise the possibility of accidents and/or injury. The shearing shed environment should be safe, healthy, have adequate lighting and ventilation. All shearing and associated machinery should also be well maintained – not only before shearing begins, but regularly checked throughout the process.

The welfare of the animal should also be paramount throughout shearing. This includes, but is not limited to, minimising time off feed and water, confirming with shearers of their animal welfare responsibilities, and having protocols in place to treat animals for severe cuts or injury (including the use of a Pain Relief product where practicable). Shearers should be linked with the sheep they shear (i.e. counting-out pens) to create accountability for the quality of their shearing.



6. HANDLING AND TRANSPORT

It is a **requirement** of the SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme that sheep are handled and treated humanely, with respect and without inflicting undue fear or distress on the animal. Handling may cover, but is not restricted to mustering, yard work, animal health procedures, surgical treatments, shearing, crutching, or any other activities requiring close or disruptive interaction with sheep. In all situations, the health and wellbeing of the animal must be paramount.

The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines – Land Transport of Livestock Edition 1, Version 1.1 2012 provides the basis for correct handling of sheep during land transport in Australia. Livestock transport companies must operate under this code. The Standards and Guidelines ensure that vehicles are safe/compliant and that the operators are trained and exhibit the skills to safely and humanely transport/handle livestock.

Owners/managers should recognise that these Standards & Guidelines exist, and it is suggested that their chosen carrier be reminded of their responsibilities under this code. Property owners moving their own stock in private farm vehicles and

trailers should also recognise and adhere to this code. Minimisation of distress on the animal should be a priority when transporting stock, so issues of overcrowding, lengthy deprivation of water (especially in summer months) and biting/aggressive dogs should be prevented.

SustainaWOOL™ growers should adequately prepare stock before travel including the identification of stock that are unfit for travel.

7. COMPLIANCE AND THE AUDITING PROCESS

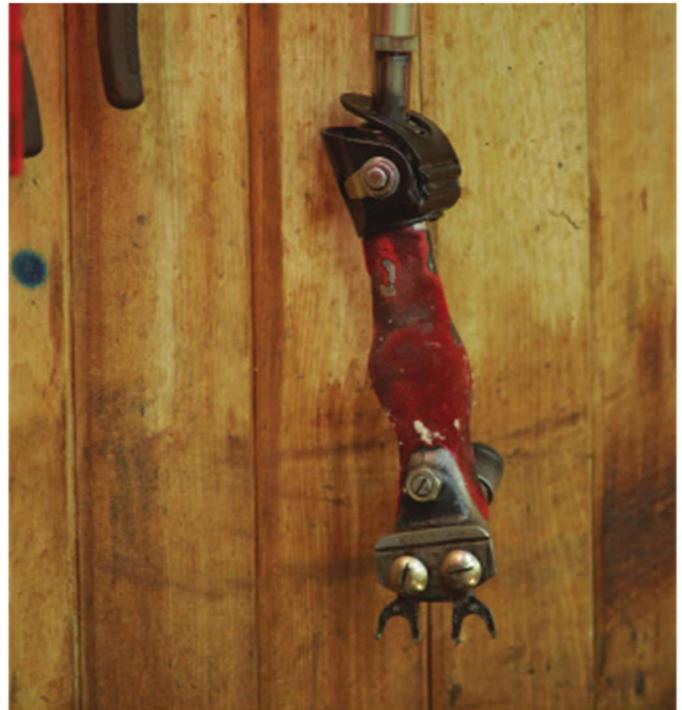
Auditing of the **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme will be conducted by authorised auditor(s), namely the AWEX's trained and experienced team. More information on the **requirements** for accreditation and what to expect from a desktop or on-farm audit can be found by reading the accompanying document titled **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme Audit Checklist.

Auditing is on a random basis with properties chosen from a database of all accredited farms by the AWEX auditing team. **SustainaWOOL™** auditors are required to select at random and inspect up to 20% of member farms each year. These inspections are in excess of the 225 NWD inspections conducted each year.

The NWD auditing regime employed builds on the internationally recognized 'Acceptance Quality Limit' approach adopted for AWEX NWD farm inspections, where AWEX seek to detect a small proportion of non-compliant properties with high statistical confidence. Such an auditing regime used is applicable and justified due to the large size of the population of NWD-declaring farms and to maintain low entry cost for accredited properties.

CONCLUSION

The AWEX **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme has been designed to augment the marketing of the highest quality wool from Australia. It provides professional wool producers with the opportunity to show the world just how well they look after their stock, their staff, and their environment. Sustainable wool production, including the highest levels of animal welfare, is more than just a trend – it is fast becoming a necessity to satisfy the



discerning consumer. The **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme is a major tool to connect wool growers to wool consumers, in all markets around the globe.

The completed, signed and dated **SustainaWOOL™** Grower Checklist document will remain in force as the true and correct record from each declarant until such times as an updated, signed and dated version is received by AWEX. A replacement document is required when changes to activities on the property make the original document no longer true and correct.

The AWEX **SustainaWOOL™** Growers Checklist is an evolving document. AWEX reserves the right to add to, or alter, items on the Checklist from time-to-time as is necessary to cover the changing requirements of our clients and the consumer. Any new version of the document will be made available to current and future suppliers to allow them to restate their declaration and update their accreditation.

Accredited suppliers will receive an Accreditation Number for their records. The contents of the **SustainaWOOL™** Integrity Scheme Grower Checklist will be linked to this exclusive Accreditation Number. It is recommended that this Accreditation Number be quoted on any Classer's Specification or NWD submitted by accredited properties.

For further details

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A. RELEVANT GOVERNMENT ACTS and CODES OF PRACTICE

1. Animal Welfare Acts

States and Territories

NSW	<i>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 No 200, Animal Research Act 1985 No 123</i>
VIC	<i>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986</i>
QLD	<i>Animal Care and Protection Act 2001</i>
SA	<i>Animal Welfare Act 1985, Animal Welfare Regulations 2012</i>
ACT	<i>Animal Welfare Act 1992</i>
WA	<i>Animal Welfare Act 2002</i>
NT	<i>Animal Welfare Act (currently under review)</i>
TAS	<i>Animal Welfare Act 1993 (No. 63 of 1993)</i>

Farmers are expected to comply with the Codes of Practice and Standards and Guidelines:

- AHA Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines Edition One, Version 1, 2016
- International Specifications for Wool Sheep Welfare 2016

2. Environmental Care Acts

National

The Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for matters of 'national environmental significance'. Information for Farmers on this Act can be found at <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/>

States & Territories

ACT	<i>Environment Protection Act 1997, the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 and Nature Conservation Act 1980.</i>
NSW	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (the Act).</i>
NT	<i>The Environment Assessment Act 1994 and the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1996.</i>
QLD	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1994 and the Nature Conservation Act 1992.</i>
SA	<i>Natural Resources Management Act 2004, the Environment Protection Act 1993 and the Water Resources Act 1997.</i>
TAS	<i>Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 and the Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Act 1987.</i>
VIC	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1978 and a Planning and Environment Act 1987.</i>
WA	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986 and the Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945.</i>

3a. Farm Chemical Users Course

There is a mandatory requirement for buyers and users of Agricultural Chemical to undergo a registered Chemicals Users Course in the majority of States. This requirement exists under State Government Acts such as the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* (the OHS Act) and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* (OHS Regulation) in NSW and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007* in Victoria. Please see legislation applicable to your State or Territory.

3b. Chemical Use/Handling/ Labelling Legislation

National

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA) – administration of the following acts:

- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992 (Admin Act)
- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Act 1994 (Agvet Act)
- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code, which is a schedule to the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994 (Code Act) see also APVMA info for Farmers: <http://apvma.gov.au/node/1163>

4. Social Responsibility, Employment & WHS

- Work Health & Safety Act 2011 (ACT/NSW/NT/QLD)
- Work Health & Safety Act 2012 (SA/TAS)
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (VIC)
- Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984 (WA)
- The Fair Work Act 2009
- The Fair Work Regulations 2009

5. Wool Preparation

- AWEX Code of Practice (Latest Version)

6. Handling, Transport, and Traceability

- AHA Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines; Land Transport of Livestock. Edition One, Version 1.1 2015
- Meat and Livestock Australia LPA NVD/NLIS for more information visit www.mla.com.au

B. ABBREVIATIONS, DEFINITIONS AND NOTES

- **Authorised Auditor** = Auditor(s) chosen by AWEX Ltd for the SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme.
- **AWEX** = The Australian Wool Exchange Ltd.
- **WH&S** = Work, Health & Safety.
- **Mulesing** = The removal of skin from the breach and/or tail of a sheep using mulesing shears. (Source: Animal Health Australia)
- **Shedding Breeds** = Breeds that shed fibre (e.g. Afrikaner, Australian White, Awassi, Damara, Dorper, Karakul, Meatmaster, Persian, Van Rooy, Wiltipoll, Wiltshire Horn).
- **Contact with Shedding Breeds** = Mated to, or run in the same paddock, as shedding sheep/lambs or their crosses.
- **Corrective actions** may include (but are not limited to):
 - treatment for internal parasites (e.g. worms)
 - treatment for external parasites (e.g. lice) • treatment for infections (e.g. footrot)
 - treatment for flystrike
 - removal of grass-seeds from the eyes of animals
 - treatment of injuries
 - humane slaughter of suffering animals
- **Registered Animal Health Products** = Product must be registered in Australia by the Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Registration means that the product can be supplied or sold and used safely according to the label directions.
- **Pain relief product** = Registered for use by APVMA for the relief of pain during procedures in sheep.
- **Post-procedure Pain Relief** (e.g. Trisolfen).
- **Pre-procedure Pain Relief** (e.g. Buccalgesic®, Metacam 20®, , and NumoCaine®, used with the Numnuts® ring applicator.

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