

Livestock Handling Shearing and Animal Husbandry

Business Name:		ABN:
Business Address:		
Contact Person:	Phone:	Email:

THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS APPROVED BY THE PCBU ON THIS PROJECT

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation (WHS Regulation), a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) is required to ensure that a RISK ASSESSMENT is prepared before the proposed work starts.

Full Name:		
Signature:	Title:	Date:

CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

Client:	SCOPE OF WORKS
Project Name:	
Project Address:	
Project Manager:	
Contact Phone:	
Date Risk Assessment supplied to Project Manager:	



RISK MATRIX									
LIKELIHOOD	INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR	CATASTROPHIC	SCORE	ACTION	HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS	
ALMOST CERTAIN	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE			Elimination Remove the hazard.	
LIKELY	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4A ACUTE	DO NOT PROCEED	Substitution Replace the hazard.	
POSSIBLE	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	3H HIGH	Review before work starts.	Isolation Isolate People from the hazard	
UNLIKELY	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	2M MODERATE	Ensure control measures in place.	Engineering Isolate the hazard	
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.	Administrative Change	
								PPE	

Risk Rating & Required Action:	
4A	Stop work. The risk is intolerable. Eliminate the hazard or redesign the activity before proceeding. A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or higher-level authorisation is required.
3H	Review and approve additional controls before task starts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.
2M	Ensure all nominated controls are in place and effective. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.
1L	Proceed, following standard operating procedures. Monitor and keep records.

Consequence Scale:			
Consequence	People (injury/illness)	Project / Assets	Compliance / Reputation
Catastrophic	Fatality or permanent total disability	project shutdown	Significant regulator intervention; criminal prosecution
Major	Serious injury/illness (hospital > 5 days)	critical delay	Improvement notice; major media coverage
Moderate	Medical-treatment injury; lost-time > 1 day	moderate delay	Minor breach; adverse client comment
Minor	First-aid only, no lost time	negligible delay	Isolated non-conformance
Insignificant	No injury	no schedule impact	Deviation caught and corrected on site

Notes on Hierarchy of Controls:
Remember to apply controls in the preferred order shown by the coloured pyramid:

1. **Eliminate**
2. **Substitute**
3. **Isolate**
4. **Engineering**
5. **Administrative**
6. **PPE**

Always document **why** a lower-order control is accepted if elimination or substitution is not reasonably practicable.

aligned with Safe Work Australia's Managing the risk of fatigue at work (2023) and ISO 45001:2018 clauses 6–8.

JOB STEP	POTENTIAL HAZARDS	IR	CONTROL MEASURES	RR
SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
1. WHS Governance, PCBU Duties and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear allocation of WHS responsibilities between owners, managers, contractors and labour hire providers Failure to consult with workers, including seasonal, migrant and shearers teams, about WHS issues and changes to livestock handling systems No integration of WHS Act 2011 duties into business planning and decision-making for livestock and shearing operations Inadequate consideration of overlapping duties with other PCBUs (transport companies, abattoirs, shearing contractors, feed suppliers) Poor incident reporting culture leading to under-reporting of near misses, animal handling injuries and plant-related incidents Insufficient monitoring of legal compliance, codes of practice and relevant Australian Standards for agricultural and livestock work 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and document a WHS governance structure that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of officers, managers, supervisors, contractors and workers in accordance with the WHS Act 2011 Develop a written WHS policy for livestock handling, shearing, dairy and animal husbandry that is endorsed by senior management and communicated to all workers and contractors Implement formal consultation mechanisms (e.g. regular toolbox meetings, pre-season briefings for shearers and stock handlers, health and safety committee where practicable) Document and maintain agreements with other PCBUs (shearing contractors, livestock carriers, processing plants, feed delivery companies) addressing overlapping WHS duties and interface risks Implement a simple accessible hazard and incident reporting system (paper and/or digital) with feedback loops and visible corrective actions Schedule regular compliance reviews against WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations, relevant Model Codes of Practice (e.g. Managing Risks of Plant, Work in Confined Spaces, Managing Fatigue), and agriculture-specific guidance Ensure officers receive due diligence training focused on livestock and shearing risks so they can verify appropriate resources and systems are in place 	3H
2. Contractor Management and Labour Hire (Shearers, Musterers, Slaughter Teams)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of shearers, musterers, slaughterers and stock handlers without verification of competence or training Inadequate assessment of contractor WHS systems for high-risk activities such as sheep shearing, cattle herding, slaughtering and stockyard operations Lack of clarity around who controls the work environment and plant when contractors are on site Labour hire workers not inducted into specific property, dairy, poultry shed or abattoir hazards Poor communication of site rules regarding animal handling, motorbike and side-by-side use, and mechanical feeding systems to contractors 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal contractor and labour hire management procedure that requires pre-qualification checks of WHS capability, insurance and prior performance Require shearers teams, slaughter contractors and stock handling contractors to provide documented safe systems of work and risk assessments aligned with the farm's WHS risk controls Use written work agreements or scopes of work that clearly define WHS responsibilities, supervision arrangements and control of plant and equipment Provide a structured site-specific induction for all contractors and labour hire workers covering yards, sheds, dairy, poultry houses, slaughter floors, traffic management and emergency procedures Require evidence of competency for high-risk activities (e.g. animal handling training, motorbike and side-by-side training, use of mechanical feeding systems, exposure to zoonoses controls) Include WHS performance expectations and KPIs in contractor agreements, including a process for stopping work and rectifying unsafe practices Audit contractor compliance periodically during peak operations (shearing season, slaughter runs, major musters) and record corrective actions 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors pressured to meet unrealistic throughput targets, leading to shortcuts and unsafe animal handling practices 			
3. Worker Competency, Training and Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers performing livestock handling, milking, shearing, slaughtering or motorbike mustering without adequate skill or supervision Inadequate training in animal behaviour and low-stress handling techniques for cattle, sheep, poultry and other farm animals Lack of formal induction for new, young, seasonal and migrant workers into farm-specific and animal-specific hazards Insufficient supervision during high-risk tasks such as foot handling, castration, dehorning, mechanical feeding, use of race and crush, or removing hides or fleece No refresher training on use of plant (side-by-sides, motorbikes, feed systems, shearing plant, milking equipment) leading to unsafe practices becoming normalised Language and literacy barriers preventing understanding of procedures and safety signage 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an induction and training program for livestock handling, dairy, poultry, shearing and slaughter operations including proper layer standard operating procedures and emergency response Provide formal training in low-stress and humane animal handling techniques, including recognition of animal stress, flight zones and kicking and charging risks Maintain a competency matrix that records required skills and current competency for each role (e.g. stock handler, milker, shearer, slaughter floor worker, motorbike rider) Implement a mentorship and supervision system where inexperienced workers are paired with competent supervisors until assessed as competent for independent work Schedule regular refresher training on key risks such as zoonoses, machine guarding, manual handling in shearing sheds and milking parlours, and vehicle operation Provide translated or pictorial training resources and signage where workers have limited English proficiency Document competency assessments (observations, checklists) for critical tasks such as foot handling, use of cattle crushes and drafting gates, and motorbike/side-by-side operation 	2M
4. Livestock Behaviour and Animal Handling Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design of stockyards, race crushes and poultry sheds that promotes baulking, crowding, aggression or escape attempts Lack of standardised procedures for cattle herding, sheep shearing setups, poultry catching, dairy cow movement and slaughtering preparation Overcrowding and rushed handling of animals increasing kicking, crushing, trampling or goring risk No system for segregating aggressive or injured animals from main herd or flock 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to consider animal behaviour impacts when planning motorbike or side-by-side mustering routes and speeds Poor coordination between handlers during operations such as loading/unloading, foot inspections, hide/fleece removal and slaughtering sequences 		[REDACTED]	
5. Dairy Operations and Milking Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate design or maintenance of milking parlours causing slips, trips, crush injuries and entanglement in moving parts Uncontrolled exposure to chemicals used in cleaning and sanitising milking equipment Failure of milking equipment leading to electric shock, burns or animal distress and kicking Deficient procedures for handling cows in herringbone or rotary dairies, especially nervous or fresh-calved animals Poor management of wastewater and effluent causing slippery surfaces and biological exposure Inconsistent procedures for isolation and tagging of faulty milking plant and equipment 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
6. Shearing Sheds, Using Shearers and Removing Hides or Fleece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly designed shearing sheds and board layouts leading to congestion, line-of-fire hazards and fall risks Defective or poorly guarded shearing plant causing lacerations, entanglement or electric shock Inadequate systems for fatigue management of shearers and shed hands during peak periods Unsafe manual handling techniques for catching, tipping and restraining sheep for shearing and foot handling 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear procedures for coordination between farm management and contract shearing teams Uncontrolled risks during hide or fleece removal including knife injuries, repetitive strain and zoonotic exposure 		[REDACTED]	
7. Stockyard and Slaughtering Facility Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate design of stockyards, races, crushes and slaughter pens leading to pinch points, escape routes and worker crush zones Poorly maintained gates, latches, ramps and loading docks creating impact and fall hazards No standard system for segregation of animal classes (bulls, cows with calves, rams, cull animals) in yards and lairage areas Inconsistent pre-slaughter handling and stunning procedures leading to increased animal agitation and worker exposure Lack of traffic management controls around loading ramps and storage where trucks, loaders and animals interact Inadequate cleaning and waste management resulting in contaminated walkways and disease vectors 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Mechanical Animal Feeding and Feed Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly guarded augers, conveyors, mixers and mechanical feeding systems causing entanglement and amputation Uncontrolled exposure to dust from grain and feed causing respiratory issues and explosion risk in enclosed areas Blockage clearing performed without isolation, leading to contact with moving parts 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate systems for inspection and maintenance of mechanical feeders, silos and feed delivery points Overhead or elevated equipment creating fall-from-height risks during inspection and servicing Unplanned interaction between feed delivery vehicles, loaders and workers during unloading of animal feed 		[REDACTED]	
9. Motorbike and Side-by-Side Use for Mustering and General Farm Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal system for assessing suitability of motorbikes and side-by-sides for terrain, load and mustering tasks Inadequate driver and rider competency management, including lack of training in off-road and mustering techniques Poor maintenance of motorbikes and side-by-sides leading to brake failures, tyre blowouts and steering faults Absence of property-wide traffic management rules covering speeds, routes, passengers and proximity near livestock Failure to plan mustering operations considering fatigue, weather, communication coverage and emergency response Inadequate roll-over protection and seatbelt use systems for side-by-sides in agricultural and commercial environments 		[REDACTED]	2M
10. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Work Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High manual handling demands in shearing, foot handling, milking, feeding, poultry catching and slaughtering tasks Repetitive twisting, bending and forceful exertions causing musculoskeletal disorders Work pacing and payment systems (e.g. piece rates for shearing) encouraging unsafe lifting and sustained high-intensity work 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient rotation of workers between tasks, leading to localised fatigue and cumulative strain • Inadequate design of workstations, including height of platforms, handling of feed bags and carcasses, and access to animals' feet • Lack of early reporting culture for musculoskeletal discomfort and minor strains 		[REDACTED]	
11. Zoonoses, Biosecurity and Chemical Exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled exposure to zoonotic diseases from cattle, sheep, poultry and other livestock (e.g. Q fever, leptospirosis, salmonella, campylobacter, avian influenza) • Poor biosecurity practices during movement of livestock, visitors, contractors and feed deliveries • Inadequate management of animal waste, carcasses and by-products in slaughter, dairy and poultry operations • Uncontrolled use of veterinary medicines, pesticides, disinfectants and cleaning agents around animals and workers • Insufficient vaccination and surveillance and education for workers at high risk of zoonoses • Inadequate decontamination and hygiene facilities (handwashing, change rooms, boot washes) for workers moving between areas 	4	[REDACTED]	2M
12. Environmental Conditions, Fatigue and Remote/Isolated Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to extreme heat, cold, rain, dust and UV during mustering, stock work, feeding and yard operations • Extended working hours during peak periods (shearing, calving, lambing, slaughter runs, harvest) leading to fatigue and impaired decision-making • Remote and isolated work in paddocks, stock routes and distant yards without 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reliable communication or check-in systems • Poor scheduling of high-risk tasks at times of greatest fatigue (e.g. early mornings, late evenings, consecutive long days) • Inadequate provision for hydration, rest, shade and shelter for workers and contractors • Insufficient planning for severe weather events and their impact on livestock handling and access routes 		[REDACTED]	
13. Traffic Management, Deliveries and Interaction with Mobile Plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled interaction between livestock, workers, delivery trucks, loaders, tractors and feed vehicles around loading ramps and feed storage • No clearly defined traffic routes, parking areas or exclusion zones at dairies, yards, poultry sheds or slaughter facilities • Unloading of animal feed and livestock without agreed communication signals and supervision responsibilities • Visitors and contractors unfamiliar with farm layout driving into stock handling or pedestrian-only zones • Reversing vehicles and mobile plant operating in areas with limited visibility and high noise levels • Lack of systems to manage light vehicles and buggies operating in the vicinity of mustering motorbikes and livestock movements 		[REDACTED]	2M
14. Emergency Preparedness, First Aid and Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of planning for emergencies common to livestock operations such as severe animal attacks, crush injuries, machinery entanglements and roll-overs • Insufficient first aid resources at remote yards, dairies, shearing sheds and slaughter areas • Workers and contractors unaware of emergency procedures, property 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	addressing and how to direct emergency services to remote locations • No structured incident investigation process to identify root causes and systemic failures • Inadequate mechanisms for psychological support following serious incidents, animal welfare events or fatalities • Poor coordination between on-farm emergency response and neighbouring properties or external emergency services		[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	

SAMPLE

EMERGENCY RESPONSE – CALL 000 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ensure to have an Emergency Management Plan in place as well as adequate numbers of trained first aid staff with easy access to fully stocked first aid kits, rescue equipment, material safety data sheets, adequate access to emergency communication equipment and fire-fighting equipment suitable for all classes of fire and ignition sources.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CODES OF PRACTICE. DELETE THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES FOR ANY STATE THAT ARE NOT APPLICABLE

Queensland & Australian Capital Territory

Work Health and Safety Act 2011
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
 Legislation QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/work-health-and-safety-laws>
 Codes of Practice QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>
 Legislation ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>
 Codes of Practice ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Victoria

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017
 Legislation VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations>
 Codes of Practice VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/compliance-codes-and-codes-practice>

New South Wales

Work Health and Safety Act 2011
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2025
 Legislation NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/legal-obligations/legislation>
 Codes of Practice NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/list-codes-of-practice>

Western Australia

Work Health and Safety Act 2020
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022
 Legislation Western Australia: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/legislation>
 Codes of Practice WA: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/codes-practice>

Northern Territory

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011
 Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulation 2011
 Legislation NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-safety-laws>
 Codes of Practice NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Safe Work Australia Links

Law and Regulation (All States): <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/law-and-regulation>
 Model Codes of Practice: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources-publications/model-codes-of-practice>

South Australia

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)
 Legislation for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/resources/legislation>
 Codes of Practice for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/codes-of-practice#COPs>

Model Codes of Practice

- Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work
- Confined spaces
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals
- Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace
- Welding processes
- First aid in the workplace
- Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Managing the risk of falls in housing construction
- Managing electrical risks in the workplace
- Demolition work
- Excavation work
- Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination
- Managing the work environment and facilities
- How to manage work health and safety risks
- Managing risks of plant in the workplace
- Construction work

Tasmania

Work Health and Safety Act 2012
 Work Health and Safety (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2012
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012
 Work Health and Safety (Transitional) Regulations 2012
 Legislation for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>
 Codes of Practice for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Details of permits, licenses or access required by regulatory bodies (add or delete as required):

- Permits from local council
- Authorisation to commence work
- Any required documents.