



# IWTO Certificates

## Introduction

The efficient international trading of wool requires:

- clear specifications regarding the quantity and quality attributes of the delivery; and
- a means by which all parties to the transaction can be assured that these specifications have been achieved.

IWTO Certificates are essential in achieving these requirements. IWTO Testing Standards and Regulations have been developed by the international wool trade to specifically meet the needs of buyers and sellers. Both parties can utilise IWTO Certificates with confidence, knowing that these certificates are produced by impartial, independently audited test houses and that they are recognised by the IWTO Arbitration process (the "Blue Book".)

Test Houses licensed by IWTO to issue IWTO Certificates are provided with a unique Laboratory Number which must be printed on the Certificates. (The logo can not be used on other documents.)

### IWTO Certificates - The 'Gold Standard'

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IWTO Certificates have been designed to provide maximum integrity to all trading partners.

This integrity begins at the very first stage - **Sampling** - whereby all bales are weighed and sampled in strict accordance with IWTO Regulations by, or under the supervision of, independent sampling staff.

At the next stage - **Testing** - many rigorous steps need to be followed:

- Test Houses must be Licensed by IWTO and undertake testing in strict accordance with the published IWTO Testing Standards & Regulations.
- The IWTO Certificate must show all relevant test results, as well as detailed reference information to allow verification and trace-back, should a problem occur.
- Independent Auditing by a internationally-recognised accreditation body must have been successfully completed on at least an annual basis, to ensure the test house meets the technical standards required by IWTO.
- IWTO licensed laboratories must demonstrate their ongoing proficiency to accreditation authorities by participation in interlaboratory trials.

*Only test houses that meet all these standards can be licensed to issue IWTO Certificates.*

Fuller details can be found at <http://www.iwto.org/laboratories/rules.htm>

Finally, should something go wrong, all IWTO Certificates are backed by the IWTO Arbitration Rules that



clearly outline the rights and responsibilities of all concerned, including the test house.

## Other Types of Documents -Test House Certificates or Test Reports

For a number of reasons, test houses (even those licensed by IWTO) may issue its results on documents that **ARE NOT** IWTO Test Certificates. Some test houses will issue its own "Test House Certificate" whilst others will call the document a "Test Report". Some of the reasons for issuing these non-IWTO documents are outlined below:

- the test house is not IWTO Licensed, either for any tests, or for the specific tests reported;
- the test house was not able to meet all the sampling, testing or reporting requirements for IWTO Certificates;
- the test house used an 'in-house' or other test method that is not recognised by IWTO;
- the testing was conducted using modified or abbreviated IWTO methods; or
- sampling and bale weighing has not been supervised by independent sampling staff or has not followed the IWTO Regulations.

(It should be noted that there are some cases where IWTO-Licensed laboratories issue certificates against nationally approved standards as opposed to IWTO standards. Two specific examples are Bulk and Length After Carding (LAC) Tests. Test methods, that have sampling Regulations, have been developed and endorsed by the NZ National Council of Wool Interests and Standards Australia and New Zealand. IWTO-Licensed laboratories in New Zealand routinely conduct these tests and issue Test House Certificates to report the results. These certificates cannot be issued as IWTO Certificates because the test methods are not IWTO methods.)

Regardless of the reason, *the trading partners need to be aware that these documents carry no official recognition from IWTO.* There is much less certainty in using test house certificates or reports than in using IWTO Certificates.

## Commercial Implications - What to Look Out For

IWTO Certificates:

make sure that the certificate includes the title "IWTO Test Certificate", the IWTO License Number and logo and that the IWTO testing standards used are shown on the certificate. If not, contact IWTO or refer to the published list of Licensed Laboratories at <http://www.iwto.org/laboratories/laboratories.htm>.

Test House Certificates or Test Reports:

Be aware of how the samples were taken, what standards (if any) exists for testing, what data is included and excluded, and whether arbitration is clearly defined. The document could note that an IWTO test method was followed, but this **does not** give it any official IWTO status. If in doubt, use IWTO Certificates in trading where possible.

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