



Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd

Regulations

Version 1, Dated 20 SEP 2024

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd Regulations is to establish for members the day to day working of the Company and the important information to assist members in the breeding, grading and registration of Valais Blacknose Sheep in Australia.

Please note that the company Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd will also be known and referred to as Valais Blacknose Australia and VBA.

VALAIS BLACKNOSE AUSTRALIA LTD CONSTITUTION

Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd has been structured as a Company Limited by Guarantee, is registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, and is governed under the Corporations Act 2001 of Australia.

The Company is run via a set of rules referred to as The Constitution. These rules can be amended across time as needs within the Company change. Members should familiarise themselves with the Constitution and seek guidance from it as required, as well as all policy and procedure documents.

Directors of the Company

The Company is led by a Board, who are usually Directors of the Company. These Directors will be voted in by the membership as per the rules set out in the Constitution. The Constitution sets out rules for Directors in relation to numbers, election, qualifications, tenure, eligibility, remuneration (i.e. none), etc.

The Constitution allows for the fair and equitable election of Directors across time as Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd encourages diverse contribution from the membership.

If a member requires specific information or guidance, please look at the list of Directors/Committee Members to see if a particular Director will be most helpful as a first point of contact.

Contribution by the Membership

Whether on the Board or in other important capacities, members who wish to contribute in meaningful ways to the promotion of Valais Blacknose Sheep in Australia will have opportunities to do so.

The Meaning of a Company Limited by Guarantee

A Company Limited by Guarantee means that members agree that if the Company were to be wound up while they were a member or within one year of ceasing to be a member, they will contribute up to, and not exceeding, \$20. This money would be used for the payment of the Company's debts, liabilities and wind-up costs. No person, company owed money, or the government, can require a member to pay more than \$20.

See sections 1.1(n) and 22.1 of the Constitution for all information.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Classes

As per the Constitution, VBA has two classes of membership based primarily on the breeding activities of the member. Please see sections 5.2 and 5.5 of the Constitution for all information related to membership classes.

All members will have access to support, education and celebration opportunities provided within the community space on Facebook (@Valais Blacknose Australia Members), as well as one on one where required and appropriate.

Breeder Members

Breeder membership entitles the member to all support and information and the use of the Grassroots breed registry.

To be eligible to become a Breeder Member, a person or stud must:

- be an individual that is at least 16 years of age (and where the individual is less than 18 years of age – they must have signed consent from a legal guardian);
- have at least one (1) Sheep that is a registered ewe or ram and is actively breeding (registering stock each year with Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd and will have registered lambs within the last 2 years);
 - please note, consideration is given to potential members in the early stages of a breed up program.
- be nominated by an existing Member (NB. this can be as simple as a referee from another member from whom you've purchased a sheep or genetics but please ensure you enquire with VBA if this is an issue);
- specifically request membership as a Breeder Member;
- consent in writing to become a Member; and
- agree to be bound by the Constitution, including paying the Guarantee amount of \$20 if it were ever required.

Eligibility for Breeder Membership will be assessed at the end of each membership year. Member status may be changed if the member does not fit the description of a Breeder Member.

Breeder Members have the right to:

- be nominated to the Board;
- to nominate an eligible Member to the Board; and
- to vote at Members meetings.

Associate Members

Associate membership is available to any person with an interest in Valais Blacknose Sheep in Australia. Associate members may own castrated animals or non-breeding stock. This membership

provides access to updates and information about the breed and may be useful to people that are interested in the breed or are considering becoming a breeder in the future.

To be eligible to become an Associate Member, a person or stud must:

- be an individual that is at least 16 years of age (and where the individual is less than 18 years of age – they must have signed consent from a legal guardian);
- consent in writing to become a Member; and
- agree to be bound by the Constitution, including paying the Guarantee Amount if required.

Associate Members have the right to nominate an eligible Member to the Board; they cannot however be nominated to the Board or vote at Members’ meetings.

Process for Application for Membership

People wishing to apply for membership to Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd will need to complete the VBA Membership Application Form online which acknowledges review of the following documents:

- Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd Regulations
- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Social Media Policy

Please note, only one application for membership will be accepted from each stud and family group; this is to ensure fairness in voting within the company.

On acceptance of your membership, you will receive a Welcome Pack by email to the company. This pack will include:

- Important documentation for your membership
- Step by step guide for the Grassroots registry
- Step by step guide of how to register a lamb/sheep
- Information on where to get your DNA sample collection tool and vials
- Sheep Care & Husbandry – a guide by Alicia McConnell

All membership applications and renewals may be approved or disapproved at the discretion of the Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd Board as per the rules of the Constitution (see section 5 of the constitution). The secretary will notify applicants of the application outcome via email following the next Board meeting.

Membership Fees

<u>Membership Fee Schedule (as of 19 SEP 2024):</u>		
Breeder Member	\$150 excluding GST	(\$165 including GST)
Associate Member	\$75 excluding GST	(\$82.50 including GST)

All fees, including membership fees, will be due after the issuing of an invoice from Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd to the member responsible for the fee. Invoices will be emailed to the membership email address and will be payable within 14 days.

Please note, for the membership period of the company's initial 'year' October 2024 to 30th June 2025, membership fees will be prorated for the nine months in the year, i.e. Breeder Membership \$123.75 and Associate Membership \$61.88. Membership fees will be halved if a new membership application is made after 31st of December.

SHEEP REGISTRATION

The Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd DNA Verified Registry

Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd is founded on the essential requirement for a DNA verified registry of animals. All Australian born animals must be DNA typed and parentage verified (progeny, sire and dam) to verify their Valais Blacknose heritage. Applications for registration must include a suitable tissue (Allflex TSU) sample and will remain pending until DNA proof of identity is obtained. DNA typing is arranged through Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd and the cost of the test is included in the registration fee.

All animals must be identified by a unique, individual identification number via ear tag. The identification method must comply with current Australian NLIS requirements. Breeders must supply their Property Identification Code (PIC) to Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd for recording ownership and pedigree information.

Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd will recognise the pedigree of any registered Valais Blacknose Sheep with proven DNA verified pedigree back to original imports within Australia and the imported genetic material of registered purebred Valais Blacknose Sheep internationally.

There is no age limit for registration of an animal. However, registrations after 12 months of age will incur a higher fee.

The Grassroots Registry

Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd registry is maintained on the Grassroots platform. Access to Grassroots is available to Breeder Members only via their website. An additional mobile app is available for purchase directly from Grassroots but is not essential for access.

For Members, click on this link to access the website: [Grassroots - Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd](#)

De-registration of animals and progeny thereof may occur if an animal is found to have disqualifying faults or factual discrepancies in the original registration. Please see section on the breed standard for what is a disqualifying fault. If you are aware of any sheep registration issues:

- A written submission of the concern must be presented to Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd Board stating the owner, animal's registration, and the disqualifying fault or concern.
- Inspection of animal arranged with a designated inspector to report findings
- Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd to action findings

DNA Testing Processes

A certificate of service must be supplied when applying for registration of progeny resulting from rams not owned by the breeder of progeny. In addition, verification of embryo production and implantation records must be provided if registering lambs produced in this way. Only Purebred or Australia Class (F5) rams can sire registered offspring. Service can be natural or by artificial insemination. The rams name and registration number and date of service must be stated on the service certificate and verified by the technician performing the work in the case of Artificial Insemination.

Only the breeder can register lambs produced and those lambs will carry the breeder's prefix. The breeder is the current registered owner of the ewe that gives birth to the lamb to be registered. In the case of embryos, the owner of the embryo will be deemed the breeder of the lamb. Proof of embryo ownership must be provided.

All purebred sheep must conform to the breed standard and all sheep to be registered must be free of structural or disqualifying faults before application for registration is submitted. Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd retains the right to inspect any sheep registered with the organisation after adequate notification is given to the current owner.

Registration of Rams

As per the Breed Standard for Valais Blacknose Sheep, there are specific rules for the general appearance, conformation, and markings of animals. As such, additional information will be required particularly for the registration of rams. Members are required to supply photos/video to prove rams meet breed standard for registration. The Board reserves the right to request further information or animal inspections.

Registration Fees

Registration Fees include the costs associated with DNA verification (where applicable) and GST.

REGISTRY ACTIVITY	FEE
Ewe Registration	\$66
Ewe Registration (over 1 year of age)	\$88
Ram Registration	\$88
Ram Registration (over 1 year of age)	\$110
Duplicate Certificate	\$11
Transfer of Ownership	\$16.50
Lease of Animal	\$16.50

Payment Fees Associated with Registration

All fees, including registration fees, will be due after the issuing of an invoice from Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd to the member responsible for the fee. Invoices will be emailed to the membership email address and will be payable within 14 days.

THE PUREBRED PROGRAM

Structure of the Program

The purebred program involves the breeding by natural methods, artificial insemination or embryo transfer of pure animals stemming from originally imported embryos, i.e. a pure registered dam with a pure registered sire. Imported Purebred Valais Blacknose with purebred pedigree information will be recorded and DNA typed on arrival into Australia as part of their Australian registration. Rams and ewes that have donated material for embryo and semen production must have samples submitted for DNA testing.

Purebred animals produced via natural breeding, by artificial insemination or embryo transfer will be included in the Purebred Program.

THE AUSTRALIAN BREED UP PROGRAM

Structure of the Program

This program consists of a grade or appendix system which requires the use of a purebred ram to produce each new generation. This program will be kept separate from the Purebred registry.

The origin or foundation ewe chosen to begin the grading up process may be of any fibre producing sheep breed, though heritage longwool breeds may be more suitable to achieve the desired result more quickly. Importantly, the origin ewe should be structurally sound and correct without any appearance of genetic faults.

Breed Up Classes within the Australian Breed Up Program

F1 ewe – E Class (48-71.9% Valais)

- Produced by origin/foundation ewe (other wool breed) x purebred Valais Blacknose ram (or Australian Breed Up Pure Ram)

F2 ewe – D Class (72-83.9% Valais)

- Produced by F1 ewe x purebred Valais Blacknose ram (or Australian Breed Up Pure Ram)

F3 ewe – C Class (84-89.9% Valais)

- Produced by F2 ewe x purebred Valais Blacknose ram (or Australian Breed Up Pure Ram)

F4 ewe – B Class (90-95.9% Valais)

- Produced by an F3 ewe x purebred Valais Blacknose ram (or Australian Breed Up Pure Ram)

F5 ewe – A Class (96-99.9% Valais) – Australian Breed Up Pure

- Produced by an F4 ewe x purebred Valais Blacknose ram (or Australian Breed Up Pure Ram) – both ewes and rams may be registered at this point and Australian Breed Up Pure rams may be used for breeding in the Australian Breed Up Program using the rules above.

Registration Requirements for the Program

F1 – F5 ewes (see below) may be registered with DNA parentage testing each generation. If there is a break in the DNA record and there is no proof of parentage, then the resulting animals must be registered as F1.

Only F5 rams may be registered. All F1 – F4 ram lambs must be neutered and cannot be registered or used to register progeny. The above describes the production of each class throughout the breed up program.

All Australia Class (F5) ewes and rams must be inspected by an approved inspector by the breed Society. They must meet the purebred Valais breed standards before submitting an application for registration.

Please note, if breeding an F5 animal with a pure animal, the progeny will be registered on the Australian Breed Up Program Registry as an Australian Breed Up Pure Valais Blacknose Sheep.

In line with the New Zealand system of registration:

- Valais Blacknose crossbred ewes and wethers (F1 – F4) receive a pink registration certificate with pedigree and registration number.
- Australia Class (F5) animals receive a blue registration certificate with pedigree and registration number.
- NB. Imported Registered Purebred Valais Blacknose (held in recognised international registration systems) supply white registration certificates and will be given an Australian registration matching the international name and registration number.

THE VALAIS BLACKNOSE SHEEP BREED STANDARD

Origins of the Breed

The Valais Blacknose sheep originates from the areas around the Canton of Valais in Switzerland and for hundreds of years this was the only place they could be found. They are known to be a hardy breed that has adapted to the steep, rocky topography in the alps and the extreme weather conditions even in the summer. In their home country, this large breed has been providers of both meat and wool since the 1400's but were only recognised as a breed as recently as 1962.

The long white wool of the body, the black face and ears, and black markings on the knees, hocks and ankles combined with the spiral horns make this an attractive and rather distinctive breed. The breed is well known as a good producer of meat and is well known for the long coarse wool which has been widely prized for felting applications and carpets. This rare breed sheep was in decline in the early 20th century but is now found in many countries around the world.

Genetics (embryos and semen) were first brought into Australia in October of 2020 by Belinda Cardinal and Tony Urek. Since then, several other breeders have contributed to the important work of increasing the genetic pool in Australia.

These beautiful sheep are definitely - the cutest sheep in the world!

The Valais Blacknose Australia Ltd Breed Standard

The Breed Standard has been set by the original Swiss Breed Society with all registries around the world, adopting these important standards. This standard relates to purebred animals, with the Australian Breed Up Program animals moving closer to the standard with each generation or class.

The characteristics of the Valais Blacknose Sheep fall into three areas:

- General Appearance
- Conformation
- Wool

General Appearance

- Black nose to centre of the head
- Black encompassing the eye area connecting with the black of the nose, no gap is permitted
- Black ears – black should meet the white of the head- a gap of white between ears and face is required
- Black hooves and ankle area, i.e. black socks
- Black spots on knees and hocks – they can be non-symmetrical and can be very small
- Females:
 - Females should have a black tail spot. This spot should be interrupted with a finger width of white on the tail
 - Females missing a marking feature (ie a knee spot) may have a point deduction depending on overall conformation and wool
- Males
 - Males must not have a tail spot
 - Scrotum may be black but the black must not extend upward into the main fleece, i.e. black must be contained to the belly area
- A black patch around the umbilical cord location is acceptable for males and females
- Other colour patterns are mismarked

The Spitti

- Occasionally purebred Valais Blacknose (i.e. from purebred parentage on the dam and sire lines) may produce offspring that are marked in reverse pattern and this is referred to as 'Spitti'
- Some spittis have predominantly black wool instead of white, while others may have a splotching pattern
- Sheep with common mismarks, e.g. extra black leg spots or a single colour spot, are not considered to be spitti

- Spitti rams should be castrated and are not eligible for registration for breeding purposes
- Spitti ewes are eligible for breeding and registration

Head and Neck

- Short, compact, well-proportioned head, with medium length ears
- Wide mouth, broad forehead, Roman (convex) nose
- Pronounced, regal head shape in rams; mature rams often develop protuberances behind horn base
- Short, straight, well-muscled neck
- Horns – males and females
- Spiral outward from head, horizontally. Well set off from cheeks (you should always be able to fit a flat hand comfortably between the horn and the cheek)
- Black stripes in the horns are acceptable

Chest, Shoulder and Withers

- Broad, deep chest
- Shoulders line naturally with neck and chest
- Well-spaced, broad withers
- Rib curvature is well proportioned and rounded

Back and Loin

- Long, straight top line
- Wide back and well-muscled loin

Pelvis, abdomen and hindquarters

- Medium sized belly with small belly hollows (paralumbur fossa)
- Wide and medium length pelvis
- Well-muscled hindquarters

Height at wither (over two years)

- Female 72-78 cm
- Male 75-83 cm

Weight (over 2 years)

- Female 70-90 kg
- Male 80-125 kg

Conformation

Limbs

- Strong, well placed, and well woolled
- Solid strong hooves
- Straight legs – not bow legged, not knock-kneed/cow-hocked
- Slight hock angulation
- Short strong pasterns
- Solid bone structure
- Joints straight and sound

Gait

- Spacious, surefooted, straight and wide-legged
- Doesn't sway or waver
- Even and stable movement
- Mobile with ease

Wool

- Fleece in lambs is soft to the touch and becomes coarser as the sheep matures
- The Swiss measurement for fineness of 5-4 equates to approximately 28-38 micron depending on age and gender with finest wool in lambs and coarsest wool in adult males
- Staple length is 10cm based on 6 months growth and is the minimum length required for showing
- Fleece weight when shorn
 - Lambs 1-1.5kg
 - Ewes and rams 2.5-3kg- based on twice yearly shearing with 6 months growth
- Fleece is uniformly white and evenly distributed over the whole body including head and legs
- In females, only some black hairs are tolerated on the neck area; in males up to 18 months of age this is a reason for exclusion/castration

Undesirable Traits: Reason for Castration/Exclusion of Rams

Undesirable Anatomy

- Uneven jaw length – undershot/overshot, incisor teeth not in contact or correct position relative to dental pad
- Weak and or fallen pasterns
- Stunted growth/small in stature
- Undescended or missing testicle(s)
- Scrotal hernia

Undesirable Markings

- Black spots on body – above the belly line, especially in males
- Black tail spots (in rams)
- Markings missing from knees, hocks or head

Undesirable Wool

- Major flaw in the wool examples below
- Kemp fibres - short Medullated (hollow) fibres with pointed tips. These fibres are coarse, brittle, weak and prickly and do not take up dye
- Tender fibres - break easily and may occur due to malnutrition, disease or scarring
- Excessive number of guard hairs – long, coarse, stiff, outer coat hair
- Mixed coloured wool in rams under 18 months of age

The information provided has been translated from the original breed standards, while taking into account the breed standard used in the UK.