



Preparation Steps  
for **Wool**  
**Quality**  
Improvement

*A Quality Wool Clip Starts **Long Before** Shearing*





## ANIMAL CARE

Wool growers are dedicated to looking after their animals and keeping them healthy. Animal care is not only important to a successful business, it is simply the right thing to do.

Care should focus around the **Five Freedoms** which include:

1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst**
2. **Freedom from discomfort**
3. **Freedom from pain, injury or disease**
4. **Freedom from fear and distress**
5. **Freedom to express normal behavior**

*For more, please see the American Sheep Industry Association's Sheep Care Guide, Sheep Production Handbook and the American Wool Assurance program.*

## BREED OF SHEEP, MANAGEMENT AND SELECTION EMPHASIS

**The foundation to improving wool quality**

### Breed of Sheep

Although some breeds of sheep have more valuable wool than others, ALL wool has value and should be prepared properly to optimize its return.



### Management

Wool production is a year-round process. Environmental conditions including pasture management, facilities, feeding practices and general animal health affect wool quality.

Good management also involves determining the timing and frequency of shearing, and preparation of the shearing facility.

Plan ahead, making sure you have:

- Adequate space
- Adequate labor
- Clean, maintained facilities
- Necessary equipment



## Selection Emphasis

Set reasonable goals based on economically important wool traits that can be objectively measured: fleece weight, average fiber diameter, staple length.



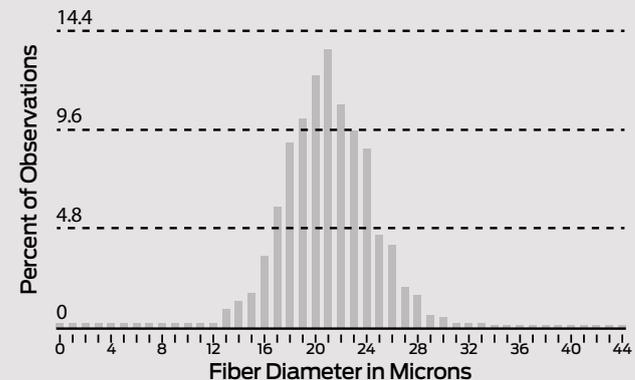
## Micron Test Report

### ANIMAL AND SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Name/Number ..... 2130  
 Breed..... Targhee  
 Sex..... Ram  
 Age..... DOB 04/20/19  
 Sample Location ..... Side

### LABORATORY DATA

Average Fiber Diameter ..... 22.1 Microns  
 Standard Deviation ..... 3.8 Microns  
 Coefficient of Variation ..... 17.2 Percent



– The **National Sheep Improvement Program** is a recommended method to help producers obtain overall selection goals, including wool traits.





*Each step is progressive and must be followed in succession to optimize effectiveness and financial return.*

# STEP 1

## MINIMIZE WOOL CONTAMINATION

Contamination in the domestic wool clip affects the reputation of the entire U.S. industry. Contamination lowers the overall yield or useful ability of wool. Common sources of wool contamination include: dirt, vegetable matter, paint, polypropylene, twine, hair, colored fibers and tags.





*The shearing area must be kept clean with frequent sweeping to reduce risk of contaminating freshly shorn fleeces.*



## PACKAGING/LABELING

Use only new, approved wool packaging materials. Used bags and packs contaminate wool and cause identification problems.

Properly label all wool packages with: grower name, line/type of wool, individual bag number, and classer number (when applicable).





# STEP 2

## SORT SHEEP BEFORE SHEARING AND PACKAGE WOOL SEPARATELY

These categories are suggested guidelines for sorting and packaging wool separately at the producer level. Wool quality will vary within breed due to individual producer emphasis on wool.



### WOOL BREEDS

- American Cormo
- Booroola Merino
- Debouillet
- Delaine-Merino
- Rambouillet



### DUAL OR GENERAL PURPOSE BREEDS

- Columbia
- Corriedale
- Finnsheep  
*Cross-breeding often results in variable wool quality*
- Polypay  
*Variable wool quality due to recent breed formation*
- Panama
- Targhee



### LONG WOOL AND CARPET BREEDS

- Bluefaced Leicester
- Border Leicester
- Coopworth
- Cotswold
- Lincoln
- Perendale
- Romney



## MEAT BREEDS

### *White Face*

- Cheviot
- Dorset
- Gulf Coast Native
- Montadale
- North Country Cheviot
- Texel

### *Non-White Face*

- Clun Forest
- Hampshire
- Oxford
- Shropshire
- Southdown
- Suffolk
- Tunis



## DOUBLE COATED AND HAIR SHEEP CROSSES

- Barbados Blackbelly
- California Red
- Icelandic
- Karakul
- Katahdin
- Navajo-Churro
- Romanov
- St. Croix



## BLACK OR NATURALLY COLORED

- California Variegated Mutant
- Shetland
- Black Welsh Mountain
- Jacob
- *Other naturally colored wool from any breed*





## ADVANTAGES OF PREPARING WOOL BELLIES OUT UNTIED:

- Does not require additional labor or equipment
- Reduces vegetable matter, poly and other contaminants in fleece lines
- Decreases amount of stained and colored fibers in white face fleece lines
- Increases length uniformity by removing short wool from fleece lines
- Standardizes wool preparation allowing for more objective marketing

# STEP 3

## TAGS OUT/BELLIES OUT UNTIED

Wool preparation methods vary according to the breed of sheep and volume of wool. It is important that producers consult with marketing representatives and potential buyers to find out what preparation methods are best for their wool types.





- Remove belly wool during shearing and package separately
- Remove excess tags and top knots, package with sweepings and locks
- Remove areas high in contamination and place with belly wool or locks as needed
- Fold fleece into thirds and roll from britch or rear to the front with flesh side out
- There is no need to tie fleeces with paper twine
- Wool prepared in this manner should have three distinct lines as shown:

**FLEECE WOOL**



**BELLY WOOL**



**LOCKS / TAGS**





# STEP 4

## FULL TABLE SKIRT

Fleece is removed from shearing board and thrown onto a slatted table for skirting.

- Each fleece is skirted to ONLY remove inferior wool: stains, tags, skin pieces, top knots, belly wool, crutching, second cuts, shanks, heavy vegetable matter.
- Requires additional trained help and equipment, but cost can be minimized by using skilled farm or family labor. Consult with marketing representatives about cost effectiveness and benefits to your operation.





# STEP 5

## CLASSING

Grouping like wools for commercial marketing purposes according to wool quality: fiber length, strength, average fiber diameter, yield, color and style.

- Only properly prepared wool (Bellies Out Untied and Full Table Skirted) can be classed effectively.
- Requires trained personnel.
- Classing can occur on the farm/ranch, warehouse, or wool pool, depending on volume and marketing options.





**ASI**



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