

## WAYS TO AVOID THAT FOUR-LETTER WORD

"U.S. wool has so many positive attributes and is in demand worldwide. But continued problems with poly contamination eliminate its consideration and limit the markets and buyers for wool."

*Götz Giebel  
Südwolle, wool-spinning company with mills in Germany, China and Poland*

The best way to eliminate polypropylene contamination is to avoid all forms of exposure, which can contaminate your wool clip. This includes grazing sheep on hay fields where balers have used poly twine. If you use poly, contamination will result. Therefore, be responsible and follow these guidelines:

- Separate belly wool to help restrict contamination to only a portion of the wool clip.
- Remove twine before grinding feed.
- Pick up and dispose of poly twine in an environmentally sound manner.
- Do not use poly twine for repairs.
- Do not use poly tarps at or near shearing of wool; use canvas tarps instead.
- Do not use poly tarps to scare or direct sheep.
- Avoid poly feed bags. Pick up old poly bags and dispose of them properly.
- Use only new and approved wool packaging material. Never package wool in poly feed bags or tie wool bags with poly twine.
- Be sure that every person who works with your sheep follows the above listed practices.



### **American Sheep Industry Association, Inc.**

Phone: (303) 771-3500

Fax: (303) 771-8200

[www.sheepusa.org](http://www.sheepusa.org)

E-mail: [info@sheepusa.org](mailto:info@sheepusa.org)

3/07-5000

## STRENGTHENING THE AMERICAN WOOL INDUSTRY

# POLY CONTAMINATION

*A series of bulletins containing valuable information for the wool grower.*



**Polypropylene  
contamination.  
It's your wool clip.  
But it's the entire U.S. wool  
industry's reputation.**

You have probably heard or read about it, but may not know just how serious of a problem it is. But just ask any wool buyer and they will most likely tell you that American wool has such great potential ... if only it were not for its contamination with 'poly.' In fact, poly contamination is often cited as a major factor in the U.S. wool industry's inability to fully compete in the international wool market.

"We are expanding and developing markets for U.S. wool, both domestically and internationally, but neither will fully materialize until we eliminate poly. No one wants to pay a premium price for a poly-contaminated clip."

*Jim Bristol, sheep shearer from Michigan  
2007 ASI Wool Council Chair*



"Domestic and international wool marketing opportunities for American wool free of poly contaminants do exist. However, we cannot capitalize on these opportunities until we seriously address the problem of poly. It has – and continues – to damage the reputation of all U.S. wool, making it more difficult to market *any* American wool."

*Terry Martin  
President, Anodyne, Inc.*

"We have been fighting the problem of polypropylene contamination for years. As a textile industry, we have probably done ourselves a disservice by merely mentioning the problem and not being more proactive in driving it back to the people we buy our wool from."

*Tim Almond  
Wool buyer, Burlington Industries Wool Co.*

"Low prices for wool result in lessened producer emphasis on contamination, particularly that of polypropylene. Without a concerted effort to reduce this contamination at the grower level, all other efforts beyond the farm gate are less effective."

*Don Van Nostran  
General Manager, Mid-States Wool Growers Association*

What you may not know is that eliminating poly from the American wool clip is both possible and fairly inexpensive. The process involves three basic steps: (1) removing poly products from your farm or ranch; (2) banning the use of poly products on your property in the future; and (3) replacing poly products currently in use with more wool- and environmentally friendly substitutes. Ready to do your part for improving the quality and image of the American wool clip? Read on to learn sources and methods for reducing poly contamination:

## POLY TARPS

**Poly tarps used for various tasks.** Weathered poly tarps or poly tarps with holes fray, unravel and scatter small pieces of poly. For this reason, wool, in any form, should not be placed on a poly tarp. Use a canvas or nylon tarp instead. Also, **do not use poly tarps to scare or direct sheep**, as shaking causes poly fibers to fray, fall off and scatter. Be sure to share these messages with your shearers and other working crew members. (Poly tarps were repeatedly identified as a major source of contamination in 2004.)



## TEMPORARY REPAIRS

**Pieces of twine used for repairs.** Once the fraying begins, small shreds of poly infest the wool on the animal as they come in contact. Use sisal, wire and other non-poly materials for repairs.



## HAY BALING TWINE

**Poly contamination of feedstuffs.** Current knotting mechanisms on many square balers cut a two inch tail. This tail stays on the bale or is left on the hay field. Longer pieces are also found, indicating careless management practices. To prevent this type of poly contamination, buy or use only hay that has been baled with wire or sisal twine.



## FEED BAGS

**Loose edges on feed bags unravel and contaminate** wool in the same manner as twine strings and poly tarps. Pick up and dispose of feed bags properly and never package wool in poly feed sacks.

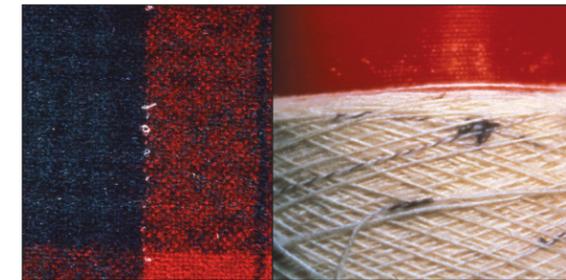


## PROCESSED FEEDS

**Grinding or chopping forage without removing twine.** One piece of poly is cut into thousands of small pieces, which contaminate the ground...and eventually your wool clip. Use poly-free hay for bedding and forage and always remove twine before grinding hay.

## IMPROPER DISPOSAL

**Carelessness or mismanagement results in environmental contamination.** Sheep managed in a contaminated environment are more likely to have contaminated wool. Avoid the use of poly products whenever possible, and promptly pick up and dispose of any poly product on your farm or ranch.



## CONTAMINATION BY POLY

**Contamination of raw materials leads to defective end products.** Many contaminated fabrics cannot be corrected. This adds to the cost of wool goods and decreases the value of raw wool. Most poly contamination is found after the wool has been made into fabric. Contaminated fabric can, at times, be corrected by hand, but the process is tedious and costly.

