Communication and preparation are key
Remember, a fleece’s quality and value can be significantly increased or diminished on shearing day.

American Sheep Industry Association
www.sheepusa.org
info@sheepusa.org
(303) 771-3500

Preparing for Shearing
American Sheep Industry Association
5-30 DAYS BEFORE SHEARING

- Schedule shearers
- Schedule extra labor as needed
  - Sheep handlers
  - Wool handlers/classer
- Order supplies
  - Wool packs/bags, clips and markers
  - Veterinary supplies including antiseptic spray, antibiotic medication, fly ointment
  - Other supplies such as disinfectant, insecticides, wormers, vaccines, hoof trimmers, branding fluid
- Reduce wool contaminants throughout the year (such as poly, paint, hair, colored fibers, vegetable matter, burrs, etc.)

2-5 MONTHS BEFORE SHEARING

- Prepare holding pens
- Prepare restrooms, potable water, handwashing station
- Prepare wool storage area
- Prepare wool handling and packaging equipment
- Prepare shearing area
  - Shearing Board/Floor: A solid, clean shearing floor is essential, such as a raised board or a solid wood floor on the ground (such as 2'x8' sheets of plywood). Never use tarps or carpet.
  - Overhead Machine mounting site, if needed by the floor is essential, such as a raised board or a solid wood floor on the ground (such as 2'x8' sheets of plywood).
  - The floor should be:
    - Flat, non-sloping
    - Solid
    - Smooth, but not slick or rough
    - Easy to sweep and keep clean
    - Large enough for each shearer to have ample space to shear
    - Covered to provide protection from the elements
    - Clean
- Prepare sheep handling area
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    - Large enough for each shearer to have ample space to shear
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    - Clean
- Prepare wool handling and packaging equipment
  - Clean the area from any debris and contaminants
  - Setup equipment as needed (skirting tables, sorting bins/racks, packing equipment)
- Prepare wool storage area
  - Ensure the area is empty, and will remain dry (ideally, not directly on concrete)
- Prepare restrooms, potable water, handwashing station and other amenities as needed

1-5 DAYS BEFORE SHEARING

- Keep sheep dry - wet or damp wool should not be shorn
- Pen sheep
  - Prepare as needed (consider breed, wool color, age, sex, sick/diseased)
  - Shear white sheep first
  - Shear colored or wool with medullated fiber (hair) next
  - Shear sick or diseased sheep last
- Fast sheep
  - To ensure sheep safety and comfort as well as shearer safety and wool quality, fasting is critical.
  - Sheep should be fasted from ALL feed and hydration sources
  - Fast sheep according to their stage of production, keeping in mind the time the first and the last sheep will be shorn.

5-30 DAYS BEFORE SHEARING

- Prepare holding pens
  - Clean from all contaminants such as twine, brush, weeds, shavings, straw
- Prepare shearing area
  - Shearing Board/Floor: A solid, clean shearing floor is essential, such as a raised board or a solid wood floor on the ground (such as 2'x8' sheets of plywood). Never use tarps or carpet.
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1-5 DAYS BEFORE SHEARING

- Keep sheep dry - wet or damp wool should not be shorn
- Pen sheep
  - Sort into groups as needed (consider breed, wool color, age, sex, sick/diseased)
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DURING SHEARING

- An owner/manager should be present at all times
- Identify sheep with any diseases or issues
- Provide support and guidance as needed
- Provide water for workers
- Ensure sheep are close and easy to catch for the shearer
- Shear sheep
  - Shear white sheep first
  - Shear colored or wool with medullated fiber (hair) next
  - Shear sick or diseased sheep last
- Wool handling - sort and prepare wool only as it will add value to your wool
  - Remove belly wool during shearing
  - Remove topknots and excess tags and package with floor sweepings
  - Remove area of high contamination and place with belly wool or floor sweepings
  - Remove foreign contamination such as poly twine, areas with hair, colored fibers in white fleeces
  - Separate weak (tender or broken) fleeces from strong fleeces
  - Fully skirt wool
  - Class wool
  - Fold fleece into thirds and roll the fleece with flesh side out
- Package wool
  - Package into clean packs/bags
  - Label bales/bags with producer, bag number and contents
  - Keep a record of bales/bags including bag number and contents
- Provide water and feed to sheep immediately after shearing
- Provide shelter for sheep when inclement weather is expected
- Pay shearer and other labor. Provide snacks and meals as helpful.
- Store wool in a clean, dry place

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS WITHOUT FEED AND WATER PRIOR TO SHEARING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ewes (and adult male sheep)</th>
<th>Minimum number of hours without feed</th>
<th>Maximum number of hours without feed</th>
<th>Minimum number of hours without water</th>
<th>Maximum number of hours without water</th>
<th>Special considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-pregnant, non-lactating</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Exceeding these maximums may induce metabolic problems and/or clinical diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early – mid pregnancy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Exceeding these maximums may induce metabolic problems and/or clinical diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late – pregnancy and lactation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Where practical, unweaned lambs should remain with their mothers until ewes enter the woolshed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogglets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use special care when handling pregnant hogglets. Exceeding these maximums may induce metabolic problems and/or clinical diseases.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exceeding these maximums may precipitate clinical diseases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SHEARING DAY

BEFORE SHEARING

- Ensure supplies are ready (wool packaging, veterinary supplies, other supplies)
- Have a morning meeting
  - Ensure outside equipment is disinfected
  - Point out facilities/amenities
  - Reiterate who is doing what tasks
  - Discuss animal handling and animal welfare expectations

AFTER SHEARING

- Provide water and feed to sheep immediately after shearing
- Provide shelter for sheep when inclement weather is expected
- Pay shearer and other labor. Provide snacks and meals as helpful.
- Store wool in a clean, dry place

Discuss protocols for when:
- Injuries occur to sheep or workers
- Health issues are found
- Black or contaminated wool is found
- Move sheep into pens/ramps close to shearer