Handling

YOUR WOOL CROP

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HANDLING YOUR WOOL CROP

How you handle your wool crop can have an important bearing on the cash returns you get for your wool.

It takes 12 months to produce a wool clip but careless handling at shearing time can easily reduce its market value 10 to 25 percent.

The demand for properly cared-for wool is greatest in history—take advantage of this situation by getting the biggest possible return for your wool crop.

Remember also—good care in handling your wool crop includes the time your sheep are still wearing their fleeces. Several key points on handling wool are listed here:

1. Keep your sheep away from greasy machinery, and from hay and straw piles. The machine grease, dirt, chaff, etc. mean a lower wool price.

2. Fences through which sheep can crawl pull off a lot of valuable wool.

3. Don’t shear your sheep when they are wet. Wet or damp wool, if sacked in that condition, may mold and rot.

4. Shear your sheep on a clean floor or canvas. You’ll get more money for wool that is clean. Keeping wool clean is your best-paying practice.

5. After the fleece is off, separate the dirty, burry, seedy, chaffy and black fibered wool. Sell this dirty wool by itself, or else your whole wool clip may be discounted in price.

6. Tie fleece in a neat pack, skin side out. Use paper twine—never use common binder twine, the fibers of which will reduce the value of your wool. Let the fleece air out for a day or two before you pack it, so the animal heat will be lost.

7. Pack your wool in standard wool bags which hold from 200 to 225 pounds. Store packed wool in a clean, dry place—keep wool off damp earth or cement floors. You can get the right kind of wool bags and paper twine from wool buyers.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Shearing usually is done in spring or early summer.

2. Sheep shear easier when warm. Sheep will be warmer if several are crowded together for a few hours before shearing.

3. Avoid injuring sheep during shearing. If you’re behind it, grab the hind flank. If you’re in front, catch the sheep under the chin. Let the sheep go unless you can catch it by the hind flank or under the chin. Grabbing a sheep by the wool causes a bruise which remains for many weeks. Bruises mean wasted meat if the animal is slaughtered.
4. Use soluble branding paints. Insoluble paint or tar can't be scoured out of the wool, so such fleece brings several cents less a pound. Soluble branding fluids are available at farm supply stores.

5. Be sure you get the highest price for your wool that is in keeping with the quality you have to sell.

**TOP QUALITY PAYS BEST**

Getting the right price for the quality of wool you have is especially important. The incentive payment by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is based on the amount you get for your wool.

In other words, the incentive payment is a percentage of your original payment—not the difference between the price you receive per pound and the incentive price set by the government. For 1955 this was 62 cents per pound.

The more you receive on the market for your wool, the more you will receive as your incentive payment. This makes it pay two ways to produce and market the best possible quality wool.

Example:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original payment</th>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50¢ per lb.</td>
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<td>70¢ per lb.</td>
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