Your Sheep Business

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The wool crop of the state is now being harvested. This is the time for growers to remember that they can do much at shearing time to improve the quality of their product and obtain thereby a better price when they sell it.

Regardless of who buys the wool, the producer is penalized for improperly packed wool. The reason for this is that it costs more to process wool that is poorly prepared for market, and this added cost naturally is charged back to the grower as a reduction in the price paid him for his wool. Manufacturers are willing to pay more, as much as 10% on a grease basis, for foreign wools because they are better prepared for market and therefore easier and cheaper to process than our domestic wools. Records show that we are improving our wool, but that much improvement is yet to be made.

To make such improvement and by doing so increase the returns from our wool clip there are certain things necessary to keep in mind in preparing wool for market. These are:

1. Shear only when the wool is dry. This is to avoid mold caused by dampness and bad musty odors which will scare out the buyer.

2. Shear only on a clean surface. This is to prevent the fleeces picking up chaff and other materials which lower the value of the fleece.

3. Black or gray or other off-colored fleeces should be packed by themselves. Scoured black and gray wools are discounted from 10¢ to 30¢ per pound from the comparable white classification. Do not risk pulling down the value of white fleeces by packing gray or black fleeces with them.

4. Pack buck wool separately. Buck wool sells for 5¢ per pound, grease basis, off the comparable ewe wool grade.

5. Pack tags and dung locks separately. If tags and dung locks are left on, the price may be discounted as much as 3%. It is profitable business to pack such wool separately, to sell on its own value without reducing the sale price of the good wool.

6. Keep out the trash. Chaff, burrs, and other foreign matter should be kept out of the fleece. Such foreign matter must be carbonized to be separated. This increases the cost to the manufacturer and the buyers will discount the value of the fleece to take care of this extra cost. Burry and seedy wool may be discounted as much as ¼ to 1/3 from the grease price of clean wool. If the necks are chaffy, separate them, pack them together, and sell them for what they are.

7. Tie all fleeces. Untied fleeces may take a discount of 2¢ per pound from the grease appraisal price.

(Over)

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DIVISION AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING, PAUL E. MILLER, DIRECTOR. PUBLISHED IN FURTHERANCE OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION ACTS OF MAY 8 AND JUNE 30, 1914.

8. Use paper wool twine for tying. If fleeces are tied with sisal or binder twine, loose fibres may become meshed with the wool, with a serious reduction in value. Manufacturers will not buy fleeces that have been tied with sisal or binder twine except at very low prices.

9. Pack similar wools together. If various kinds are mixed together it is difficult for anyone to make a fair appraisal, with possible lower prices resulting to the grower. Pack each kind by itself. Mark the bag for what it contains.

These practices can result in fairer appraisals and better prices to the producer.