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Your Sheep Business

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PROTECT THE VALUE OF YOUR WOOL. To bring its full value, good wool must be properly prepared and handled in marketing. Most wool buyers base their bids partly on how much time they will have to spend improving the appearance and value of the wool before they sell it. Producers can do much to improve this condition when they first handle the wool.

The manufacturers buy wool in the green on the percentage of scoured wool it will yield and on the basis of quality. If fleeces carry an excessive amount of tags, dung locks, chaff, burrs, and other foreign material, the price is discounted. Producers are interested in getting heavy yield of fleece per sheep and producing a high quality product. Good breeding stock that is well fed will determine the yield and quality. Good management and proper preparation of the wool for market will help the price.

A good quality fleece, no matter what grade it falls into, is grown on a healthy sheep that has had good care. Such a fleece has a soft, lively springy feeling and fibers are strong. Wool produced on sick or improperly fed sheep is harsh, lacks the bright appearance and the elasticity of a well-grown fleece. Such fleeces do not stand the strain of the manufacture as the fibers break and the price is discounted.

Every year more producers are selling their wool on the basis of its quality. This has had a great influence in improving breeding stock as well as management. More purebred rams are used, sheep are better fed and managed and wool is better prepared for the market.

The sheep producer that gets the best price for his wool:

First - Shears when the wool is dry. Moisture injures the wool because when damp it becomes moldy, fibers rot and are weakened. Water will stain the fleeces.

Second - Shears on a clean floor or on a canvas, to avoid dirt and chaff.

Third - Shears close to the skin and avoids second cuts. Second cuts lower the grade of the wool. Keep the fleece as near as possible in one piece. A broken fleece lacks the good appearance and takes extra grading at the mill.

Fourth - Removes tags and manure locks either before or after shearing and sacks them separately. By doing this, the good wool will not be stained and the whole fleece will not be reduced in value.

Fifth - Turns the fleece with flesh side down, folds tail end in up to the hips, folds neck wool back and then folds sides until brightest wool shows. The shoulders and sides have the best quality fleece and these parts should be exposed.

Sixth - Uses paper twine for tying. Binder twine lowers the value of the entire fleece because the fibers become mixed in the wool and are extremely hard to get out.

Seventh - Uses the right fluids for branding. Brands reduce the price of wool.

Eighth - Allows the wool to cool and stores it in a clean, dry place. If packed, preferably in clean wool sacks, it may be more thoroughly protected.