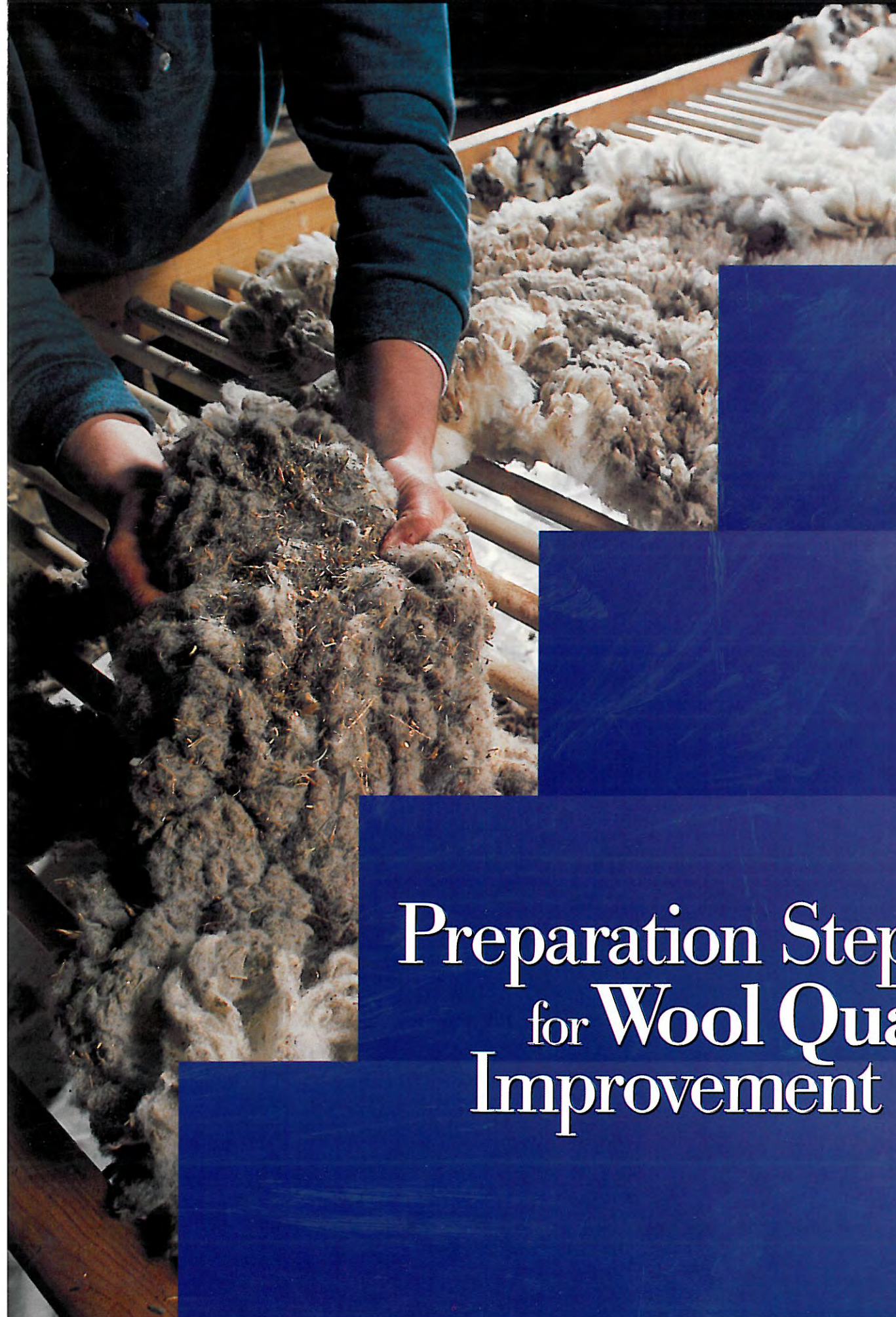


A QUALITY WOOL CLIP STARTS **LONG BEFORE** SHEARING



# Preparation Steps for Wool Quality Improvement



# Breed of Sheep, Selection Emphasis, and Management

## The foundation to improving wool quality

**Breed of Sheep** Although some breeds of sheep have more valuable wool than others, *all* wool has value and should be prepared properly to optimize its return.

**Management** Involves determining the timing and frequency of shearing, and preparation of the shearing facility.

Plan ahead, making sure you have:

- adequate space
- labor
- clean facilities
- necessary equipment

Wool production is a year-round process. Environmental conditions including pasture management, facilities, feeding practices and general animal health affect wool quality.

**Selection Emphasis** Set reasonable goals based on economically important wool traits that can be objectively measured: fleece weight, staple length, average fiber diameter.

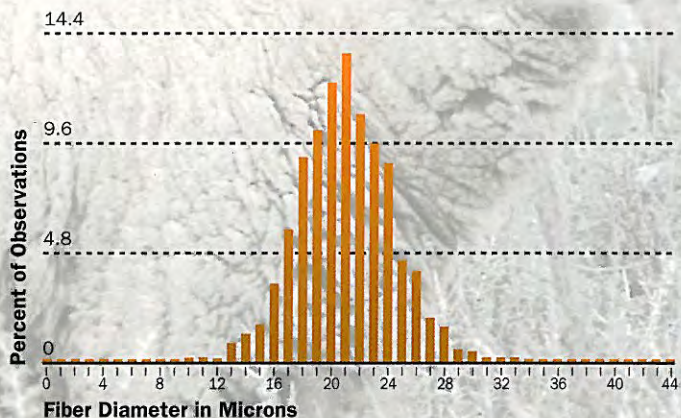
### Micron Test Report

#### ANIMAL AND SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Name/Number ..... 2130  
Breed ..... Targhee  
Sex ..... Ram  
Age ..... DOB 05/07/92  
Sample Location ..... Side

#### LABORATORY DATA

Average Fiber Diameter ..... 22.1 Microns  
Standard Deviation ..... 3.8 Microns  
Coefficient of Variation ..... 17.2 Percent



The **National Sheep Improvement Program** is a recommended method to help producers obtain overall selection goals, including wool traits.





# STEP 1

Each step is progressive and must be followed in succession to optimize effectiveness and financial return.

## Minimize Wool Contamination

Contamination in the domestic wool clip gives every U.S. sheep producer a bad image.

Contamination lowers the overall yield or useful quality of the wool clip.

Common sources of wool contamination:

dirt, vegetable matter, paint, polypropylene twine, colored fibers, and tags.

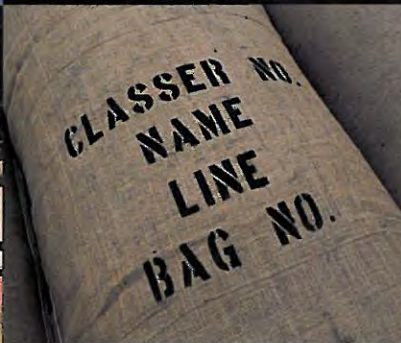


The shearing area must be kept clean with frequent sweeping to reduce risk of contaminating freshly shorn fleeces.

### Packaging/Labeling

Use only new and approved wool packaging materials. Used bags and packs contaminate wool and cause identification problems.

Properly label all wool packages for: grower name, line or type of wool, individual bag number, and classer number (when applicable).





## Sort Sheep Before Shearing and Package Wool Separately

These categories are suggested guidelines for sorting and packaging wool separately at the producer level. Wool quality will vary within breed due to individual producer emphasis on wool.

Further separations based on wool quality (fiber diameter, length, degree of contamination, animal age, etc.) should occur within each category when volume, market opportunities and financial incentives exist.

### Wool Breeds

- American Cormo
- Booroola Merino
- Debouillet
- Delaine Merino
- Rambouillet



### Dual or General Purpose Breeds

- Columbia
- Corriedale
- Panama
- Targhee
- Finnsheep

*Cross-breeding often results in variable wool quality*  
**Polypay**  
*Variable wool quality due to recent breed formation*



### Meat Breeds

- White Face*
- Cheviot
- Dorset
- Finnsheep
- Gulf Coast Native
- Montadale
- North Country Cheviot
- Texel

- Non-White Face*
- Clun Forest
- Hampshire
- Oxford
- Shropshire
- Southdown
- Suffolk
- Tunis

### Long Wool and Carpet Breeds

- Blue-Face Leicester
- Border Leicester
- Coopworth
- Cotswold
- Lincoln
- Perendale
- Romney

### Double Coated and Hair Sheep Crosses

- Barbados Blackbelly
- California Red
- Icelandic
- Karakul
- Katahdin
- Navajo Churro
- Romanov
- St. Croix

### Black or Naturally Colored





# STEP 3

## Tags Out/ Bellies Out Untied

Wool preparation methods vary according to the breed of sheep and volume of wool. It is important that producers consult with marketing representatives and potential buyers to find out what preparation methods are best for their wool types.



- Remove belly wool during shearing and package separately
- Remove excess tags and top knots, package with sweepings and locks
- Remove areas high in contamination and place with belly wool or locks as needed
- Fold fleece into thirds and roll from britch or rear to the front with flesh side out
- There is no need to tie fleeces with paper twine if the flock is uniform, sorted properly prior to shearing, or if wool is to be classed
- Wool prepared in this manner should have three distinct lines as shown:

Fleece Wool



Belly Wool



Locks/Tags



### Advantages of Preparing Wool Bellies Out Untied:

- Does not require additional labor or equipment
- Reduces vegetable matter, poly and other contaminants in fleece lines
- Decreases amount of stained and colored fibers in white face fleece lines
- Increases length uniformity by removing short wool from fleece lines
- Standardizes wool preparation allowing for more objective marketing



# STEP 4

## Full Table Skirt

Fleece is removed from shearing board and thrown onto a slatted table for skirting.



Each fleece is skirted to only remove inferior wool: stains, tags, skin pieces, top knots, belly wool, crutchings, second cuts, shanks, heavy vegetable matter.

Requires additional trained help and equipment, but costs can be minimized by using skilled farm or family labor. Consult with marketing representatives about cost effectiveness and benefits to your operation.



# STEP 5

Grouping like wools for commercial marketing purposes according to wool quality: fiber length, strength, average fiber diameter, yield, color and style.

## Classing

Only properly prepared wool (Bellies Out Untied and Full Table Skirted) can be classed effectively.

Requires trained personnel.

Classing can occur on the farm/ranch, warehouse, or wool pool, depending on volume and marketing options.

