

GLOSSARY

Belly Wool	Short wool found on the belly; usually contaminated with vegetable matter, dirt; may also contain colored fibers if mixed colored flocks have been run together or used the same pastures.
Broken	Wool staple which separates during snapping test.
Black Fiber	Usually refers to fiber from a black faced or natural colored breed of sheep; may come from other animal species running in the same field with the sheep.
Britch	Undesirable change of wool grade, sometimes radical, found on the lower hind leg; often contains kemp fibers. Due to its coarseness and length, it cannot be used as is the rest of the fleece; can be used for some projects.
Cotted	A fleece so matted, the fibers have bonded much like felt; frequently found in neck area from collars and/or rubbing.
Crimp	Refers to the waviness in a staple of wool. In fine wool, there are many crimps per inch; in stronger, coarse wool, a few per inch. A highly crimped fiber will stretch a great deal; crimp gives wool its elasticity.
Grade	Measurement of fineness of wool; three methods used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micron Count: numbering system measuring the diameter of the fiber. Spinning Count: number of hanks of yarn spun from one pound of wool (a hank is 560 yards; 54's would spin 54 hanks). Blood System: indicates what fraction of the subject sheep's blood originated from the Merino breed.
Handle	A term to describe how a fleece feels. Determining handle comes from experience; basically, it is what makes a fleece feel "good."

Kemp	Structurally different from wool fiber; more coarse; will not take up dye as does wool.
Lanolin	Purified wool wax; keeps skin supple, protects fiber from weathering. The fleece is always cleaner near the skin because the wax moves out along the fiber length, carrying the dirt with it.
Second Cuts	Short bits of wool sheared on the second pass; too short to spin.
Soundness Test	Hold a small lock between both hands and snap briskly. A "twanging" sound indicates a sound fleece; the staple will not break or tear.
Staining	Generally, a discoloring of the wool; may be from manure, urine, or bacterial growth. Canary yellow may be caused by environment or heredity; may not wash out. Marking crayons may cause stain, usually washable.
Staple	Group of wool fibers that cling together in the fleece. They vary in character with the different grades of wool.
Tags	Locks of wool near the tail area that have been contaminated with manure and/or urine.
Tender	Term used to describe wool which has a tendency to gradually tear apart along the lock of wool when tested.
Vegetable Matter	Most commonly hay, but refers to any plant matter, i.e., seeds, burrs, etc., commonly found in fields and corrals.
Weathered Ends	Sometimes called "tipping;" on long-wool breeds, the weathered ends need only combing for spinning preparation.
Yield	The amount of clean, usable wool remaining after proper fleece preparation, including scouring.