

Spinning and Dyeing Wool



Serious Sheep Talk



A male sheep is called a **ram**. Ewes are female sheep. A baby sheep younger than one year is called a **lamb**. Sheep eat grasses, grains, woody plants, and weeds. They do not have top front teeth; but, the roof of their mouth is hard. They are raised in groups of 5-1,000 sheep called **flocks**. Larger groups of sheep (1,000-2,000) are called **bands**. Sheep farmers may use dogs to guard their sheep and keep away wolves and coyotes. Some farmers use donkeys or llama to guard their flocks. There are over 35 breeds of sheep in the United States and over 900 breeds in the world.



Sheep provide us with wool - the fuzzy covering that grows on them. Sheep are sheared, or given a haircut, once a year. Shearers try to shear the wool off in one large piece since it is easier to handle than lots of small pieces. Sometimes, shearers have contests to see who can shear a sheep the fastest. The wool that comes from each sheep is called a **fleece**. The fleece is taken to a warehouse to be sorted. Then it goes to a mill where it is cleaned, carded, combed, and spun. It may be used for clothing, blankets, rug pads or carpets, insulation, and tennis balls.

Sheep also provide us with meat. Meat from a sheep less than one year old is called **lamb**. Meat from a sheep over one year old is called **mutton**.

Sheep also provide us with many by-products. These by-products may be used in shampoo, soap, medicines, paints, pet foods, ice cream, detergents, and even marshmallows.

Trivia Facts

- The National Park Service used sheep to control brush on Civil War battle fields.
- Sheep have poor eyesight but have an excellent sense of smell and hearing.
- There are more than one billion sheep in the world.
- Sheep producers, who don't want their sheep to get dirty, put jackets on them to keep dirt, seeds and flies from getting into their wool.

Jokes

1. What do you say when you toast a sheep?
2. How can you tell when sheep like a movie?
3. What do you get when if you cross a sheep with a porcupine?
4. What do you call a shy sheep?



Farm Facts



- Most sheep farmers specialize and raise their animals for **either** meat **or** wool.
- Today, sheep are raised in all 50 states with most on large ranches in western states.
- Different types of sheep grow different types of wool.
- Sheep protect the environment. They graze on lands eating clover, alfalfa, grasses, and brush.

Joke Answers

1. Here's to EWE!
2. They all flock to see it.
3. An animal that knits its own sweater.
4. Baaaaaaashful



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Earth Friendly Animals



While the farmer cares for the sheep, sheep can also help the farmer and us. Sometimes sheep are used to graze leftover stalks and seeds after crops have been harvested. They even reduce the need for chemicals that kill weeds because they help control the weeds along roadsides and pastures. The pointed hooves of sheep break up the soil so seeds can find a place to grow. This also helps prevent erosion as new plants grow.

Sheep are active in fire prevention by keeping brush controlled to reduce damage from wildfires. They feed from the land, recycle nutrients back into the soil and provide people with food and clothing. Sheep are a renewable resource!



Some Sheep Surprises!!!



When sheared, an average fleece weighs 8.5 pounds. This is enough to make a wool suit. Wool clothes are *flame resistant*. That means they will not catch on fire. Wool is a *renewable resource* - it keeps growing back!



Wool is used to clean up oil from oil spills. Wool sponges soak up the oil, and the oil can then be cleaned out of the sponge. The oil is recycled and the sponge can be used over and over again.

The inside of a baseball contains 219 yards of tightly wound wool.



Sheep are used to control mice in apple orchards. Mice chew on the tree bark which damages the trees. When sheep are put in the orchard, they eat the grasses where mice hide. Sheep also clean up fallen apples and fertilize the ground.

What Do You Remember?



- A male sheep is called
 - a fleece
 - a lamb
 - a ewe
 - a ram
- Which number tells how many sheep may be in a flock?
 - 1
 - 26
 - 1126
 - 2126
- Sheep are "*earth friendly*" animals because they
 - live in flocks.
 - provide wool blankets.
 - are guarded by dogs.
 - can control brush and reduce damage from wildfires.
- What do sheep eat?
- What is the difference between a flock of sheep and a band of sheep?
- What are the steps involved in processing wool?
- What are some products we get from sheep other than wool?



Critter Computations



- ❖ A fleece weighs 8.5 pounds. How much will 3 fleeces weigh?
- ❖ If one baseball has 150 yards of wool yarn inside, how many yards of wool will be in 5 baseballs?
- ❖ It takes 3 packages of wool yarn to make a sweater. Each package costs \$2.99. How much will it cost for the resources to make a sweater?
- ❖ Tom is selling three of his sheep at the market. Each sheep weighs 125 pounds. The market price is \$6.92 per pound. How much will Tom receive for his sheep?