



MANAGEMENT

Glossary of Wool Terms

no. 1.400

by S.B. LeValley ¹

APPAREL WOOL: Wool suitable for manufacture into apparel fabrics.

BELLIES: Short and often defective wool from belly of sheep.

BLACK WOOL: Fleeces from sheep containing gray, brown or black wool.

BRAID: Long, coarse, lustrous wool.

BREAK: Wool that is abnormally weaker in one spot along the fiber length.

BREECH (OR BRITCH): Coarse hair fibers on lower hind legs.

BULK GRADE: The largest percentage of grade in a lot of original-bagged wool or the major grade of a fleece.

CARBONIZING: Removal of burrs from wool by immersion in dilute sulphuric acid.

CARPET: Wools too heavy and coarse to be made into apparel; suitable for carpets and rugs.

CLOTHING: The shorter length wools within a grade.

COLOR: In wool trade usage, this refers to the actual color of the wool; a bright white to cream is most desirable.

CORE-TESTING: The coring of bales or bags of wool for the determination of yield and clean content.

CRIMP: The natural waviness of the wool fiber; it varies with the diameter of the fiber.

CROSS BREED: A sheep or the wool from a sheep resulting from the cross of two different breeds.

FELTING: The matting together of wool fibers.

FIBER DIAMETER: Measured by the latest in computer technology and reported in microns.

FLEECE: The wool from a single sheep in the shorn grease state.

FLEECE WOOL: Usually all fleeces grown in the states east of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

FRENCH COMBING: Wool of medium staple length, suitable for combing.

GRADE: The classification system used to describe grease wools. The grades are: Fine—64s, 70s, 80s; Half-blood—60s, 62s; Three-eighths-blood—56s, 58s; Quarter-blood—50s, 54s; and Low-quarter-blood—46s, 48s.

GRADING: The classification of fleeces according to grade and length.

GREASE WOOL: Wool as it is shorn from the sheep, before any processing.

HANDLE (or HAND): The actual feel of wool.

HANK: A 560-yard unit of wool yarn wound on a reel.

KEMP: Brittle, chalky white, weak fiber found as an impurity in the fleece.

Colorado
State
University

Extension

LANOLIN: Wool grease; this substance, sometimes called “yolk,” is a secretion from the sebaceous glands of the sheep.

LOCK: A small, approximately finger-size bit of wool that tends to stay together when shorn from the sheep.

NOILS: The short and sometimes defective wool fibers removed in the combing of top.

PELT: The skin of the sheep with wool still attached to the skin.

PULLED WOOL: Wool removed from the skins of slaughter sheep.

RANGE WOOL: Wool grown on large ranches, distinct from wool grown on small farms; usually termed Territory wool.

RAW WOOL: Grease wool in natural state before scouring.

SCOURING: The actual separation of dirt, grease, and foreign matter from grease wool; this is usually done in a lukewarm, mildly alkaline solution, followed by a rinse.

SECOND CUTS: Short tufts of wool cut at least twice by the shearing.

SHEARING: The removal of wool from the sheep by the use of power clippers or blade shears.

SHRINKAGE: The weight raw wool loses when scoured, expressed as a percentage of the original weight.

SORTING: The separation of the whole fleece into parts, as well as removing the off-sorts.

SOUNDNESS: Freedom of the fiber from breaks and tenderness; relates to strength.

STAPLE: This term refers to the length of a lock of shorn wool; in the trade, “staple” refers to the longer length wools within a grade.

TENDER: Wool that is weak throughout the entire length of the fiber.

TOP: A continuous strand of partially manufactured wool, which previously has been scoured, carded, and combed; an intermediate stage in the process of worsted yarn.

TYING: After the wool is shorn it is rolled into a neat bundle and tied with a paper fleece tie.

VEGETABLE MATTER: Any material of plant origin found in the fleece, such as burrs, stickers, chaff and seed heads.

WASTINESS: The loss of fiber in carding and combing due to vegetable matter, weakness or tenderness or shortness of fiber.

WOOLEN: A system of processing that utilizes the shorter length wools within a grade.

WORSTED: A system of processing that utilizes the longer length wools within a grade.

YIELD: The amount of clean wool that is derived from grease wool in the scouring process; is expressed as a percentage.