



# Sheep Shearing Facts

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**D**omesticated sheep have been shorn since the dawn of civilization. Early on, wool was a vital resource to support human life. To protect this resource, shepherds tend flocks of sheep with care and respect for the animals. Sheep are provided fresh food and water, and protected from disease and predation.

Most sheep grow wool continuously and they should be shorn annually. The shearing process is not painful to the sheep.

Wool removed from a single sheep is called a fleece. Fleeces are washed and the wool grease (lanolin) is extracted and used in lotions. Clean wool fibers most often are made into clothing or blankets. The lanolin is used in hand lotions.

## Most sheep are shorn annually to:

- Harvest the fiber at the appropriate length for spinning into yarn
- Prevent buildup of manure and urine that can lead to parasitic infection
- Allow adequate wool regrowth to improve the sheep's ability to control its body temperature during extreme heat and cold conditions
- Create a clean environment for newborn lambs

## Professional sheep shearers are trained to:

- Shear sheep with care and respect
- Shear sheep in a precise pattern that protects themselves and the sheep
- Harvest the wool without double-cutting the wool (cutting single fibers twice) or nicking the animal
- Gently handle sheep before, during and after the shearing process
- Use the appropriate tools of the trade

## Wool fibers are:

- Natural and renewable
- Long-lasting and durable
- A great insulator
- Flame-resistant
- Lightweight and breathable