

How do we get Wool from Sheep?



Warm clothes that we wear during the winter are mostly made of wool which comes from sheep. Wool is also obtained from goats and other animals like llama and alpaca. Mostly it is the wool from sheep that we use for our winter dresses. Wool is basically fine soft hair that forms the coats of these above mentioned animals. Hair grows on the body of sheep, as they grow on our heads. Sheep and similar, other animals have fine thick wool' hair which are called fleece. The fleece or hair of a sheep insulates it from the cold in winter. In other words, wool is animal fiber forming the protective covering or fleece of sheep. Do you know how this wool comes to you from sheep? Wool is mainly obtained by shearing fleece from living animals and sometimes from slaughtered sheep also.

When the fleece is sheared, it is rolled up in bundles sorted out into different qualities or grades, cleaned, stains of various type, dried, entangled fibers are disentangled, twisted and spun in soft, loose irregular thread or yarn. Such strands used together are called 2-ply, 3-ply etc., according to the coarseness or fineness of fabric desired. Wool may be dyed at the various stages of the manufacturing process. Wool fiber is warmer but coarser than cotton, linen, silk and rayon.

Nobody knows when man first tamed the sheep. But records reveal that the primitive man had domesticated sheep both for wool and meat. After the passage of centuries, man has been able to breed many varieties of the sheep. Some of them are valuable for their wool and others for their meat. A species of sheep named 'Merino', found in Spain and Africa is highly productive in wools. Its whole body except legs and nose is covered with hair. Merino sheep are found in the United States of America and Australia also, which produce large quantities of superior wool. Wool obtained from Merino sheep is very warm.

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Australia is the biggest producer of wool in the world. Thirty percent of world's wool is obtained from Australia alone. The United States of America ranks next to Australia. Australia's yearly production of wool is about 1700 million pounds and U.S.A. produces about 300 million pounds of wool annually.

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