

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A FLEECE

The condition of the fleece determines the clean yield so look the fleece over carefully. Determine whether you are going to dye the fibre or end product or not. Choose a fleece that is pleasing and has good lustre and handle. Lambs produce very fine soft fibre, however, in general, the first shearing will not have much lustre. Some breeds produce fleece with more/less lustre.

Look for

Cotting (*felted weathered area*)

Weathering -*bleaching of tips*

Dirt and vegetation matter

Bedding material

Staining - yolk or canary staining (*yolk stains should wash out while canary staining and some vegetable matter can affect the dye uptake*)

Crimp - *generally the finer the crimp the more grease the fleece will have.*

Staple length

You Should

Do a snap test - to determine the soundness of the fibre. If you find breaks or weakness - carefully examine the rest of the fleece.

Wash a sample - just a few locks is sufficient - to check the feel. Fleece always feels softer than it is when it is still in the grease.

Crimp and Staple Length determine how you process and spin the wool.

Generally the shorter the staple the more varied ways it can be spun. The determining factor in this case would be fineness of fibres. Finer fibres can be spun woollen and produce a softer more loftier yarn. The longer the staple the more difficult to work with and may need specialized processing.

Shearing Look for 2nd cuts
Has it been skirted sufficiently

Sorting According to Marilyn Kruger "The joy of spinning" sort your fleeces from "**Best to Hopeless**". Try to avoid the "hopeless"

Grade Wool is graded Fine, Medium and Coarse - determine which you are looking for ahead of time if you have a specific project in mind

The fleece or wool chosen should suit the end product you wish to produce. fine grades do well used as worsted or woollen garments and blankets. While medium grades are good hand knitted outerwear, household good and upholstery yarn. Coarse grades are best suited for carpets and upholstery.

Submitted by Jean Pataky
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