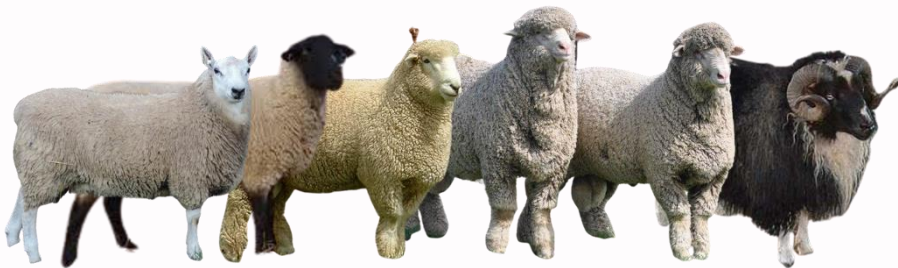


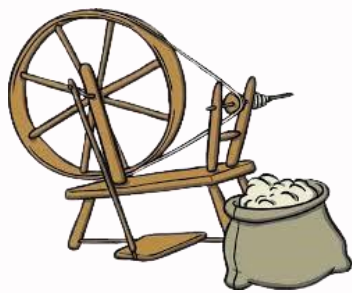
Sheep & Goat Fibers



Fiber is one of the many useful products and services that sheep and goats provide us. Wool (A) is the fiber produced by a majority of sheep in the world. Angora goats produce mohair (B), and cashmere (C) comes from many breeds of goats. While there are differences, all sheep and goat fibers share certain characteristics, including warmth, strength, elasticity, breathability, moisture-wicking, durability, dyeability, and flame resistance. There are no synthetic alternatives to wool, mohair, and cashmere. And they are 100% biodegradable.



Wool is as diverse as the sheep that grow it. There is great variability with regards to length, fiber thickness, and colors of wool. Fine wool has the smallest fiber diameter. It is the most valuable and versatile type of wool and is used in high-end fashion, among other uses. Longer coarser wools are used for outer wear, carpeting, and upholstery. Most meat breeds produce medium wool that is felted or used for other industrial uses. A lot of wool,



especially natural colored, is direct marketed to hand spinners or crafters or sold as value-added products such as yarn, dryer balls, blankets, and apparel. More recent uses of wool include fertilizer pellets, insulation, and surfboards.

Festivals all over the United States showcase the wonderful fibers produced by sheep, goats, and other animals. The biggest is the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2023.

Although sheep are more often associated with fiber production, some of the most extravagant fibers are produced by goats. Mohair is a luxury fiber and should not be confused with Angora fiber (wool) which comes from Angora rabbits. Cashmere goats produce a double fleece that consists of a fine, soft undercoat of hair mingled with a straighter and much coarser outer coating of hair called guard hair. After dehairing, the fine undercoat is sold and processed further. Pure and original cashmere is the most valuable fiber from sheep and goats. Pygora (D) and Cashgora are two additional fibers produced by goats by crossing Pygmy with Angora and Cashmere with Angora, respectively.

