

CARING FOR LAND AND ANIMALS

The American Sheep Industry



PROVIDING QUALITY FOOD AND FIBER FOR AMERICA

Food and clothing for America — that's what American sheep production is all about. That, and a lifelong commitment to quality and conservation.

The sheep industry is a unique blend of the past, the present and the future. Each day, 110,000 men and women all over America put this combination to work for you. Producers are stewards of the land and their animals. For thousands of years, sheep producers have protected and developed their industry and its caring traditions. Today, they produce lamb and wool by natural grazing compatible with the environment.

In a world filled with disposable products and chemical substitutes for nearly everything, the American sheep producers are proud of the high-quality food and clothing they produce from nature's renewable resources. And these natural, renewable products are produced by one animal.

SHEEP ARE NATURE'S ENVIRONMENTAL GIFT

Sheep are earth-friendly animals, no matter where they graze. They are efficient converters of renewable forage to high-quality food and fiber. In many areas of the country, sheep are

used to graze leftover stalks and seeds after crops have been harvested. Sheep also help control weeds in ditchbanks, roadsides and pastures, cutting down the need for chemical herbicides.

In range operations, sheep have been successful in suppressing brush for wildfire

control. They also are effective in weed control in new forest plantings.



Following well-planned rotational grazing, sheep are safely and naturally reviving lands and benefitting wildlife in the process.

Sheep harvest the land, recycle vital nutrients back to the soil and provide man with nourishment and shelter.

HOW WE PRODUCE

The American sheep industry is diverse. Some producers have farm flocks of 50-200 animals. Others have large range operations of 1,000-5,000 sheep with shepherds who live with the sheep, and dogs that guard the sheep from predators and help move them to

new grass and water. There are even hobbyists such as hand-knitters that have small flocks of 1-10 sheep.

The adaptability of sheep to a wide range of climates and management systems makes it possible to raise them all over the United States.

CARING FOR OUR ANIMALS

Producers care about their animals. Stories of shepherds go back to Biblical times and continue throughout history. Producers are committed to humane husbandry practices that provide a healthy, comfortable existence for their animals and result in the most wholesome, natural products possible.

Production management decisions are made with the health and welfare of the animal in mind.

Almost all lambs have their tails removed at an early age. The procedure is simple and the benefits are substantial in terms of cleanliness and hygiene. Most lambs also receive an ear tag with a number on it. The process is much

like having an ear pierced, and gives producers the ability to keep accurate health and production records on an individual animal.

Producers make provisions for the health of their ewes during lambing. Where possible, producers spend day and night with their sheep during lambing, assisting when needed and helping the lambs get a good start.

Special facilities are necessary for handling sheep in order to minimize stress and the possibility of injury. Producers make sure the facilities allow easy access to water and feed. Barns are kept clean and have good ventilation.

When sheep are transported, producers load just the right number of animals. Putting too many or too few animals on a truck can result in injuries to the animals.

The nutritional needs of sheep are most often met through grazing. The industry has adopted nutritional guidelines for the animals' needs appropriate to each stage of life.

The industry also promotes quality assurance guidelines on the proper use of all health care products.



WOOL—NATURE'S MIRACLE FIBER

Wool is one of the most valuable and remarkable gifts on earth. It is produced naturally, continuously and without chemicals from natural resources.

Shearing time is an important time for producers. Sheep are carefully shorn to protect the valuable fleece and the sheep that provides it. When



held correctly for shearing, most sheep do not struggle and can be easily held and turned for their “haircut.”

In some climates, sheep need shelter after being shorn. And yet, within a week, their fleeces have grown back to provide protection from all but the worst weather. The eight to twelve pounds of wool on each animal must be shorn every year to keep the animal comfortable and healthy.

PROTECTING THE FLOCK

Producers take their responsibility to protect their sheep seriously. Even so, up to 10 percent of lambs are lost to predators. Sheep are defenseless against predators. Attacks by wild animals or domestic dogs can cause great stress, suffering and even death. A mixture of management tools including guard animals, shepherds, fences and other control practices are used to deter predators from the flock.

*Producing wholesome,
high-quality food and fiber —
sheep are a natural.*



American Sheep Industry Association
6911 South Yosemite Street • Centennial, CO 80112-1414
303-771-3500