

# FACT SHEET

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## PREPARING MOHAIR FOR MARKET

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Preparation of mohair for market is a phase of Angora goat production often neglected by ranchmen.

In the past, "hog round" prices have discouraged good preparation of mohair clips for market. Recently more attention has been given to quality mohair and premium prices have resulted.

The warehouseman is responsible for marketing the clip regardless of the preparation. Good preparation makes his job much less difficult. There is little the warehouseman can do to improve the appearance of a clip after it reaches the warehouse.

Ranchmen who consistently prepare their clip well for market develop reputation clips that buyers request by name. More care should be exercised in preparing small clips because frequently the volume of larger clips helps sell them.

### BREEDING PROGRAM

Preparing the mohair clip for market begins with the breeding program. The Angora goat cannot exceed its inherited ability to produce mohair, even with superior feed and management. The amount and quality of feed has much more affect on the mohair fleece than it does on the wool fleece. The mohair fleece tends to become coarser with an abundance of good-quality feed.

Ranchmen should select their goats for the most popular type of mohair and should strive to obtain uniformity of fineness and length within the fleece and within the flock. A flock that will bulk 24's quality mohair and finer will produce mohair that is popular with buyers.

Animals should not be kept until the fleeces become straight and coarse. A younger flock of goats usually produces a higher quality clip. The selection program should strive for goats that do not become excessively coarse with age and environment.

One of the most important points in a selective breeding program is uniformity. This includes both uniformity of fineness and length. Goats with excessive coarseness on the throat or britch should not be kept for breeding animals. Goats with a great deal of variation in staple length usually make undesirable breeding animals.

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### MANAGEMENT

Management of the flock affects the quantity and quality of the mohair clip. Unless the Angora goat has adequate nutrition and good management, it cannot reach its maximum mohair production. The fleece quickly shows the results of poor nutrition by being poorly grown, of finer fiber and poor luster.

External parasites, mainly lice, affect the mohair fleece by reducing the condition, luster and weight. Spray goats out of the shearing pen and again in about 18 days for the best control of external parasites. Change the type of spray material from time to time for best control. Follow the recommendations in MP-691, Texas Guide for Controlling External Parasites of Livestock and Poultry, available at your local county agricultural agent's office.

Phenothiazine drench should be used only when the goats are in short fleece. The urine from goats recently drenched with phenothiazine stains the mohair fleece. When drenching goats within 45 days of shearing, use a drench other than phenothiazine.

Ranchmen should manage their pastures to keep vegetable defect at a minimum in mohair fleeces. Some noxious, bur-producing plants can be controlled by good pasture management and weed control measures. Fleece contamination can be minimized by pasture rotation and use of supplemental pastures. Sometimes, vegetable contamination of fleeces can be prevented by changing the shearing dates.

"Caping" is the practice of leaving a strip of mohair down the back of the animal to protect it from weather. Capes should be sheared 4 to 6 weeks following shearing or there will be a portion of longer mohair in the fleece. The shorter mohair is more desirable than the 12-month mohair. A better practice is to shear goats with raised combs instead of practicing caping. Raised combs leave about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of mohair on the goat and help protect him from the weather.

To save labor, many ranchmen shear sheep and goats at the same time. When this practice is followed, the sheep should be sheared first. Mohair manufacturers can tolerate a little wool in the mohair but wool manufacturers cannot tolerate mohair in the wool. The shearing area should be thoroughly cleaned before changing from sheep to goats.

The ranchman is responsible for separating the goats for shearing. Kids should be separated from the yearlings and the yearlings from the older goats and sheared separately. Any further separation of goats for shearing should be discussed with your warehouseman.

The ranchman is responsible for determining whether the goats are dry enough for shearing. The under parts of the fleece should be examined for moisture.

The ranchman should supervise or provide a competent supervisor for the shearing pen, and this individual should be on hand at all times.

### Pens and Shearing Floors

The ranchman should provide a good clean place to shear. Catch pens, immediately surrounding the shearing floor, should be sprinkled and cleaned several times a day to keep down dust.

Some ranchmen provide concrete shearing floors. Such floors are permanent and easy to clean, but are hard on shearing heads and shearers tire more quickly.

Portable shearing floors constructed of plywood on 2"x2" frames are practical. Shearing floors should be equipped with trip boards on the outside edge of the shearing floor. Trip boards may be a 2"x2" board or a piece of pipe set in a concrete floor. The trip board helps keep dirt off the shearing floor and helps the shearer throw the animal for shearing.

### Shearer

The shearer should remove the fleece in one piece as nearly as possible. This helps the fleece keep its identity and makes grading easier.

The shearer should keep the fleece as clean as possible. Avoid stepping on the fleece and use new lubricating oil on the shearing head instead of burned lube. Burned lube is difficult to scour out of mohair and may cause it to appear dingy.

The shearer should avoid as many double cuts as possible. Double cuts are made by not keeping the shearing head flat on the goat or by running up into the fleece at the end of a stroke.

The shearer is responsible for shearing the goat without injury. He should not cut the animal excessively and he should not put too much pressure on the belly especially when the animal is full.

### Packing

Mohair buyers object to mohair packed in plastic bags. When handled with hooks and forks the plastic shatters and comes out in the cloth.

Bags should be packed firmly but not too tightly. Excessive weight may lead buyers to believe the shrinkage is excessive.

Lower bags onto a clean floor or a tarpaulin. Bags rolled around in the dirt pick up dust that ruins the appearance of the mohair.

### Transporting

Haul bags in a clean vehicle. Sweep out trailers, pickups or trucks before loading. If bags are to be hauled over dusty roads, cover them with a tarpaulin.

### Storing

Store mohair in a clean, dry place. Most producers store in the warehouse where they transact business.

### Records

Records of average fleece weight are helpful in directing breeding programs. These weight records by age or quality also are helpful.

Grading reports on clips give valuable information on quality and uniformity of the flock.

### RESULTS

Results are the measure of whether a practice is profitable. The following demonstration was established to show the value of producing a quality clip of mohair and *marketing* it rather than *selling* it.

This producer followed a selective breeding program designed to produce a quality clip. The average fleece weight was 5.6 pounds per goat. The youngest animal was 2 years old at the time of shearing. The mohair was graded at the ranch. The goats were run under range conditions with little feeding.

Pounds and grade of mohair		Price received per pound	Total
Kid	741 lb.	\$ 1.10	\$ 815.00
Light burry kid	59 lb.	1.00	59.00
26's	538 lb.	.50	269.00
24's	860 lb.	.45	387.00
20's and below	150 lb.	.40	60.00
Stained	95 lb.	.27	25.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,443 lb.</b>		<b>\$1,615.75</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Marketing commission		\$48.84	
Resacking at warehouse		.50	
		<b>\$49.36</b>	
<b>Net return to producer</b>			<b>\$1,566.39</b>
Mohair of this quality was selling at 40 cents per pound at the time of this demonstration and would have given the following return			
2,443 lb. original bag mohair @ 40¢			\$ 997.20
Less marketing charges			49.36
			<b>\$ 927.84</b>
Mohair sold on a graded basis			\$1,566.39
Original bag mohair			927.84
<b>Return for grading</b>			<b>\$ 638.55</b>

No charge was shown for grading since this was for demonstration purposes. Some warehouses provide graders for \$20 to \$25 per day.