Raising sheep: shearing

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Shearing sheep used to be used to harvest the wool. The wool was then sold for a pretty good profit. Our military was one of the main buyers shepherds could depend on. Other manufactures also bought the wool for various products like clothing or blankets. The market for wool is not in demand like it was 10 or 20 years ago, but the sheep don't know that so they are still producing it.

Most shepherds now just give the wool away or throw it away. Some are still fortunate to locate some buys like local spinners in the area. Another idea is to find a dance club in your area. A lot of dancers use the wool in the toes of their ballet shoes. 1 or 2 small bags of the wool will usually hold them for about a year.

Sheep are usually sheared at least once a year. In different parts of the country or even the world, the time of year they shear may vary. Some farms shear right before the ewes lamb and if you happen to be in the northern states it is still winter. Then some will shear right after they lamb. Most shepherds in the southern states try to shear before the hottest part of the summer. Don't be alarmed if you see sheep in a pasture with some wool on them. If they have plenty of shade, fresh water and are not stressed during the time when they day is

the hottest the wool actually can protect them from the sun's rays. Problem arises when they are stressed, if they are not sheared, their body has trouble releasing the heat and their body cannot cool as quickly as it could if they were not carrying all the wool.

There are basically 2 kinds of clippers/shears used on sheep. One is for maintenance and the other is for show. You can go to Premier 1 Supplies and browse through their clippers to see the various types available.

Their 4000s series are the most popular clippers and usually used for maintenance shearing. The 4000s have a larger head and wider spaces few teeth on blades for going through thicker wool.

The 4000c clippers are for show shearing. These clippers have more teeth making a finer and closer cut through the wool that needed for the show ring.

Care of the shears/clippers is also important. Proper lubrication is essential to prevent overheating and premature wear on the blades. Also keeping the blades clean will also help your clippers in better working condition. There are various types of lubricants and coolants. The staff at Premier is very knowledgeable and more than willing to guide a new shepherd in the supplies they may need.