

FAQs for Fleece Producers

Last year we fielded a lot of questions from new producers. We thought it might be helpful to pass a few of these things along.

How do I set a price?

- This is one of the most difficult questions I have received. This is the methodology we have come up as the easiest:
 - Do your homework. The easiest source is the internet. Try to come up with what a range of price per pound of fleece for the breed that you have.
 - Weigh your fleece and multiply the weight by the price per pound.
 - Evaluate your fleece. Does it have a lot of debris, or is it really clean? How does your fleece's staple length measure up to your breed's standard? Is the fleece really fine for your breed?
 - Compare your calculated price with your evaluation of the fleece and adjust overall price accordingly.
 - Look at your overall price. How do you feel about it? Do you think it should be more? Less? How would you feel if the fleece doesn't sell?
 - Final step – mark up your price for the SAFF selling price. SAFF will add a 15% commission, so make sure that your fleece is still within a sellable price range. At the end of the day, you as the producer have to be happy with what price you set. I will guarantee that you will find people who think it is overpriced, as well as people who think it is underpriced. The only opinion that counts is yours.
 - You can change the price of your fleece at any time during the sale. Just check in with us at the front desk for a Price Change Form.

To Show or not to Show – that is the question:

- Many of our new producers were new to producing fleece for spinning as well. I met a few that had small flocks of multi-purpose sheep. The question they asked was “is my fleece good enough to show”. “How does it compare to similar fleeces”. The best way to know, is to have the fleece judged. The grower receives a critique back with a judged fleece. I highly recommend doing a little research on the web. Try it, information is power!

Roll or Fold?

- I asked our wool judge, Ken Wolf, how to best present a fleece for show. He said the final ‘roll’ should be tri-folded, like a men’s wallet, with the neck wool on top. When asked to say more about ‘rolling’, he said that his description of a tri-fold was in response to the compactness of how some fleeces were rolled. The final roll should be neat and tidy, but not so compact that the fleece cannot be moved enough to be examined easily while still in the bag; hence the description of a tri-folded wallet. At the larger wool shows, the fleece never comes out of the bag due to time constraints. The best advice we can recommend is the same as Goldilocks’; not too hard, not too soft, just neat and tidy with the best part of the fleece presented on the top.

Marketing your Fleece

- As a hand spinner myself, I appreciate some of the little extras a grower includes with a fleece that is for sale. For me, the fleeces I choose to spin are more like friends; I am personally

involved with them for a significant amount of my time, and value the preparations as well as the end product.

- Some of the things a grower might include on their tags are: the name of the sheep, where the fleece was grown, a washed lock of the fleece to get an idea of what it will look like, a sample of spun yarn from a few locks, characteristics of the breed. Anything you are comfortable with, and makes your fleece informative, interesting and appealing. One year we had a fleece that was a cross between a Finn and a Navaho Churro. I would have loved to know the back story on that fleece.

Do you only take Wool, Mohair and Alpaca Fleeces?

- No, we will also take llama, mohair, cashmere, pygora, angora, bison, and yak. There are a few requirements:
 - it must be from this year's 'shearing', and it must be in its raw, un-washed, un-processed state.
 - It must be legal to be sold in the U.S. (Pro tip: dog hair is NOT legal to sell.)

Do you only sell whole fleeces?

- We will also accept ½ fleeces for sale.
- Each ½ fleece must be packaged/bagged for bulk sale, and the sales registration fee will apply for each half of the fleece.
- Angora, bison, and yak fiber is often not collected from the animal as a whole fleece. Please present it in a bagged quantity that represents a reasonable working quantity, keeping in mind we will require a registration fee for each bag that is put in the show.