

Previsit Activities: Sheep and Wool

The sheep as a provider of natural fiber and good nutrition.

Description

Meet a Southdown ewe from our flock and work with her wool. Explore the changes in sheep farming and wool working over the years.

Grades K-3. Feel the thick wool, rich with lanolin. What products are made from wool? When are lambs born and sheep sheared? How do we care for sheep? Card wool to clean and prepare it for spinning.

Grades 4-6. How did sheep contribute to Vermont's history and impact on the land? Consider the origins, care, and physical characteristics that allow sheep to adapt to their environment and help them to survive. What characteristics of wool make it good to spin? Good to wear? Spin wool into yarn.

What's Going to Happen With My Students?

There are two components to this program: Outside at the sheep pasture we will learn about the animal. Of course, everyone will get a chance to touch a sheep and feel her wool. We Inside we will work with wool, learning the basic process to turn it from raw material to something useful.

In addition to this main program, which you have selected, your students will also participate in other activities, as time allows, such as visiting the animal barns, playing old-fashioned games, and viewing the Farm Life Exhibits, among others.

What Do the Students Need to Know Before Coming to this Program?

Students should know what wool is used for.

Try This...

- 1.) Have students bring in something made from wool for Show & Tell. Did someone you know make the item? Is it store-bought or homemade? Have a general discussion of what wool can be used for.
- 2.) Read a sheep-themed children's story. Some books include:
 - a. *Farmer Brown Shears His Sheep*, Teri Sloat
 - b. *Weaving the Rainbow*, George Ella Lyon
 - c. Nancy Shaw's *Sheep in a Shop*, *Sheep on a Ship*, *Sheep Out to Eat*, *Sheep in a Jeep*, *Sheep Take a Hike* books.

continued

- 3.) Look at pictures of different breeds of sheep. There are many breeds – just as there are many different breeds of dogs, for example. Draw a picture of a sheep.
- 4.) On separate cards, write the steps which lead to a wool sweater:
 - a. Shear the Sheep [cut off the wool; once a year in the spring]
 - b. Wash [the clean]
 - c. Comb the Wool [to straighten fibers]
 - d. Dye [to color using natural dyes, such as goldenrod for yellow]
 - e. Spin [to twist into yarn]
 - f. Knit or Weave [to make the sweater, etc.]

Give each card to a student. Have the other students line them up in the correct order.

- 5.) Find one interesting fact about sheep to share with your class.