



# BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM

## SHEEP AND WOOL WEEK: WOOL AROUND THE WORLD

Wool refers to the fiber that is shorn from sheep and it is found all around the world. More broadly speaking, any fiber or hair from an animal used in the making of clothing and textiles can also be considered "wool." Wool from different animals has different benefits. For example, sheep's wool is excellent for winter because it traps heat and wicks moisture away from the body. It must be cared for properly or it may shrink.

At Billings Farm we have a flock of Southdown sheep which we shear once a year in the spring. The breed is originally from the **United Kingdom** but is found in many countries today. Their wool is considered fine to medium.

Lambswool is the first wool shorn from a lamb. Typically, the lambs are under a year old when they are shorn to get lambswool. This wool is very soft, smooth, and resilient. It tends to be more expensive and harder to come by because it must be the lamb's first wool. This means each animal can only give lambswool once in its life.



Clarabelle, a Billings Farm  
Southdown Sheep



Merino Sheep Wool

Merino wool comes from Merino sheep which originated in **New Zealand and Australia**. Merino sheep have been transported around the world for wool production. In the early 1800s, Merino sheep were brought to Vermont and started the sheep boom. Their wool is fine and less bulky than other sheep wool.

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Cashmere is made of the soft hair from the undercoat of a goat. There is also a specific breed of goat called Cashmere, who are bred to produce large amounts of wool. Originally found in **Tibet and the Himalayas**, Cashmere is well known around the world as the softest wool. Unlike sheep, Cashmere goats are brushed instead of sheared to obtain their fiber. It can take two goats to make enough fiber for just one sweater.

Mohair is another goat hair fiber from Angora goats originally found in **Tibet and Turkey**. Mohair is very silky and shiny but still warm. It's also a strong fiber making it resilient and wrinkle free.



A Cashmere Goat

Alpaca wool originated in the **South American** countries of Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina. The wool is lightweight, soft, and durable. It's comparable to sheep wool but is considered warmer. Alpaca wool is naturally available in many colors and can be artificially dyed.



A Variety of Natural Alpaca Wool Colors