

5-1952

EC255 Farm Sheep Facts

M. A. Alexander

W. W. Derrick

K. C. Fouts

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Alexander, M. A.; Derrick, W. W.; and Fouts, K. C., "EC255 Farm Sheep Facts" (1952). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 4445.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/4445>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

MAY 1952

c-6.

E.C. 255

AGRI

S

85

E7

#275

RECEIVED
JUN 29 1971

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
LIBRARY

FARM SHEEP FACTS

EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING
W.V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR

CONTENTS

TWELVE NEBRASKA SHEEP-INDUSTRY FACTS	3
NINE MARKET FACTS	5
TWENTY-FIVE EWE FACTS	7
PASTURE FACTS	9
THIRTEEN RAM FACTS	12
THIRTY-ONE LAMB FACTS	13
TWENTY SHEARING AND WOOL FACTS	23
PARASITES AND ONE KILLER	33
GRADING AND MARKETING WOOL	38
SCOURING AND CARDING WOOL FOR HOME USE.....	46
FITTING AND SHOWING SHEEP	47
SHEEP ON SHARES	52
HANDY SHEEP EQUIPMENT	55
DISEASES	59
BREEDS OF SHEEP	61
JUDGING SHEEP	62

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The cooperation of the Nebraska Registered Sheep Breeders, the Midwest Wool Marketing Cooperative Association, the Successful Farming Magazine, the Sunbeam Corporation, the International Harvester Company, the University of Wyoming Experiment Station, and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A., was very helpful in the preparation of this publication. The time, patience, practical information, and suggestions given by William T. Esry, the shepherd of the University of Nebraska from 1927 to 1952, has made this circular useful to Nebraska farmers.

FARM SHEEP FACTS

M. A. ALEXANDER, W. W. DERRICK, and K. C. FOUTS

Department of Animal Husbandry

TWELVE NEBRASKA SHEEP-INDUSTRY FACTS

1. The sheep business in Nebraska may be classified as follows: (a) The production of feeder lambs in the western and north central parts of the state where large bands are run. (b) The production of spring lambs and summer lambs in the eastern third of the state where the farm flock predominates. (c) The fattening of western feeder lambs in the feed crop areas of the state.

2. The farm flock is not a major enterprise on Nebraska farms. It serves as a sideline on farms having a well-drained place which sheep may call their own.

3. The management plan for a Nebraska farm flock could be one of the following: (a) Lamb in November and the first of December to produce choice lambs for sale 10 to 15 days before Easter. A specialized business. (b) Lamb the last of December to the first of January to produce choice lambs for the spring lamb market, May 1 to about June 1. (c) Lamb in April to produce fat lambs for the market from October to Christmas.

4. The plans to raise Easter lambs and spring lambs will eliminate the use of grass for the lambs. They will be fed high quality grain and high quality alfalfa hay for the best results. The ewes will require grain feeding from about October until the lambs are sold (an average of about 1 pound of grain per ewe daily, depending upon the age of the ewe flock). The ewes raising spring lambs may be pastured on grass when it is available in the spring, but the lambs should not be pastured if the heaviest market weight with the best quality is desired. Feed the lambs in the creep and turn the ewes out to pasture after the creep is closed. This is a handy way to separate the lambs and ewes. These two plans permit a maximum number of ewes on grass and a maximum number of ewes in the flock.

5. The plan to lamb in April will permit the maximum use of grass to produce lamb gains for the market, but a smaller number of ewes will make up the flock because the lambs will be eating grass that would carry more ewes during the grazing season. The lamb gains will be smaller on grass in most of Nebraska. The lambs will pick up parasites, which means a rigid worming program must be followed carefully. The ewes must be treated for parasites regardless of the plan adopted. The ewes will require a minimum of grain feeding. The lambs will require some grain feeding, probably the last 60 days before marketing.

6. A farm flock in Nebraska is usually a profitable enterprise when properly organized and managed. A careful study of the **Nine Market Facts** listed in this publication will be helpful in making a production plan to follow. A combination of these and the most practical use of your farm feeds will yield the most net dollars for the enterprise.

7. The Nebraska farm flock unit is 30 to 45 ewes and one good ram. In most cases, 5 to 10 ewes are a nuisance.

8. There must be a part of the farm suitable for sheep before such a flock can become a profitable enterprise.



FIG. 1.—Prime carcasses from spring lambs marketed at the 1951 Omaha Lamb and Wool Show. Note the broad thick leg, loin, and back, and the short neck. Carcasses like these are always in strong demand.

17. If the lambs cannot be finished for the market before the first part of June, then the next favorable market is most likely to be in August after the arrival of the early western shed lambs and before the early-September run of range lambs.

18. Lambs not ready for the August market may be marketed after the large shipments of western range lambs have arrived. This is usually the latter part of October and the first part of November.

19. Regardless of the time of marketing, the lamb must be plump, fat, and blocky to bring the best price.

20. It is better to have lambs in a marketable condition two or three weeks before an anticipated good market than to be two or three days late.

21. The price of fat ewes takes a decided drop after the first of May.

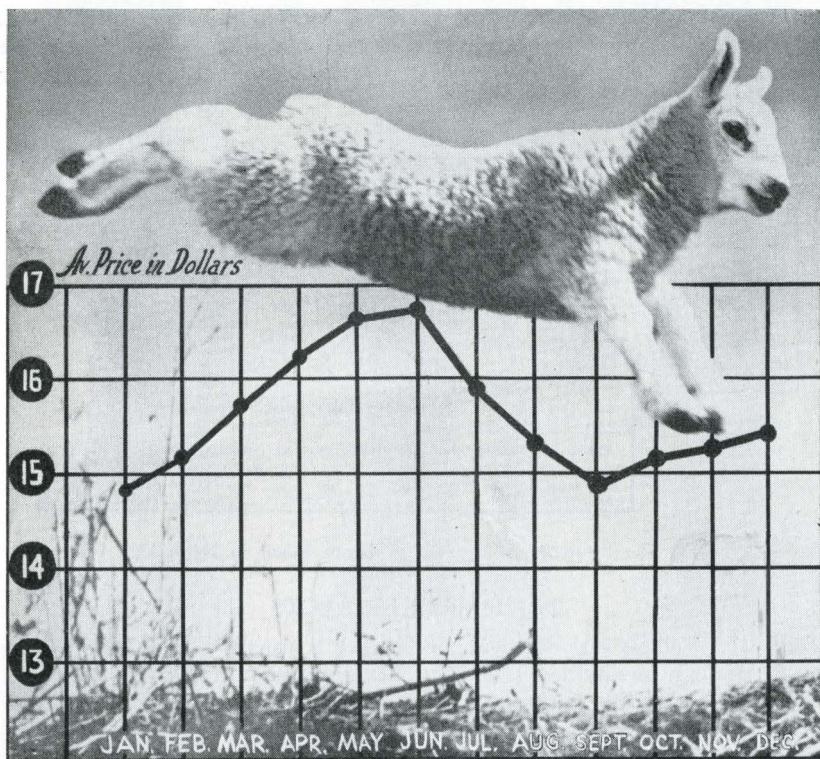


FIG. 3.—Fat lambs are most likely to average highest in late May and early June. After June they drop rapidly. Quality spring lambs well fed make the peak in the market. Above is an average, by months, of top prices paid for fat lambs on the Omaha market for 21 years, 1931-1951.

TWENTY-FIVE EWE FACTS

22. Ewe lambs should **never** be bred.
23. A ewe should drop her first lamb when she is coming two years of age.
24. A ewe completes her usefulness when six to seven years of age.
25. Alert, active ewes are in good health.
26. Grade or western ewes are usually more practical than purebreds for establishing a commercial flock. Young ewes are more desirable than old ewes because they require less feed, the death loss is less, the wool production is more, and more crops of lambs can be raised from them, thus spreading the investment per ewe over a greater number of years, which is most desirable in any kind of business. Old ewes good for one year are very speculative. It takes an experienced and skilled sheepman to make them a success. Old ewes defeat the purpose of the farm flock because they are on the farm only during the winter when feed costs are the highest.
27. Ewes of moderate size with a deep, broad body set on short legs will produce the most desirable market lambs.
28. A medium-tight-fleeced ewe with a good belly covering will produce a heavier and more valuable fleece than one with a long, loose, open fleece.
29. When a yearling, the ewe's middle pair of temporary (lamb) incisor teeth are replaced by a pair of large, permanent incisors. An additional pair is added each year until she has a full set of four pairs at four years of age.

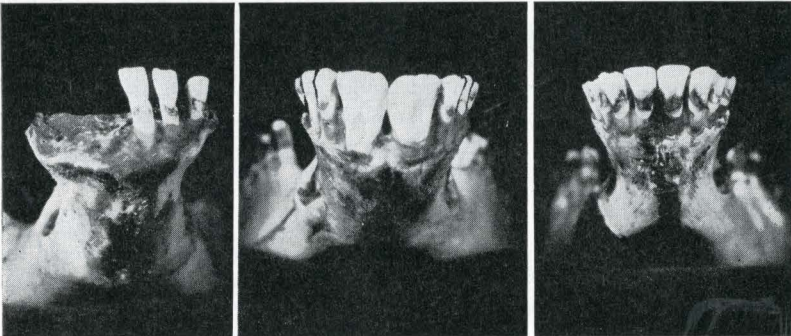


FIG. 4.—At left is the lower jaw and remaining teeth from a broken-mouthed aged ewe. There should be eight teeth. Note length of teeth and space between. At center is jaw of yearling sheep. Note the two broad teeth in the middle. On the outside of each large tooth there are three small lamb teeth to be replaced by permanent teeth. At right is a complete set of lamb teeth. Note that lamb teeth are short, close together, and not broad like the permanent teeth in a yearling sheep.

30. The gestation period for a ewe ranges from 143 to 151 days, or about five months.
31. It is natural for ewes to breed only in the late summer and fall.
32. The time between heat periods for the ewe is 14 to 18 days.
33. While in show condition, a ewe is an uncertain breeder.
34. Ewes in thin condition may be induced to come in heat earlier if they are given about a half pound of whole oats, barley or corn each day for two

weeks before the breeding season starts. Ewes in good condition do not need grain, but a fresh pasture may induce earlier breeding.

35. Trimming the wool from around the dock of the ewe before the ram is turned in will insure a more successful breeding season.

36. Make the ewes take plenty of exercise, **especially the last two months before lambing.**

37. A good legume hay, preferably alfalfa, is extremely desirable as part of the winter ration for pregnant ewes. When plentiful, alfalfa may be the entire ration. Another ration might be 1 pound of alfalfa and 3 or 4 pounds of good silage supplemented with about one-sixth of a pound of cottonseed cake or similar feed and 1 pound of bone meal to every 35 ewes. If silage, fodder, or a native hay makes up the entire roughage, each ewe should receive one-fourth pound of cottonseed cake or a similar protein feed and in addition a mineral like bone meal fed at the rate of 1 pound a day for each 35 ewes. The mineral should be fed with the feed. When silage, fodder, or a native hay is included in the ration it becomes necessary to add a protein supplement and a mineral. Sorghum silage is equal to or better than corn silage. Sorghum fodder is better than corn fodder. If the ewes need more conditioning, a half pound each day of any grain will usually be sufficient.

38. Pregnancy disease or lambing paralysis may develop when silage or fodder makes up the entire ration. It is usually prevented by reducing the amount of silage or fodder eight weeks before lambing and adding grain and a little alfalfa hay. Cottonseed cake or a similar feed and bone meal should have been included with the silage or fodder, or native hay from the beginning of the winter feeding period. Ewes running in the cornstalks suffer the same feed deficiencies as they do when fed fodder alone. Lambing paralysis usually shows up two to four weeks before lambing time. It can be prevented but not cured; that is, it cannot be stopped quickly in a flock. Thus it is very important to see that the ewe is getting plenty of protein, minerals, and quickly available carbohydrates in her ration.

39. To insure a good flow of milk, all pregnant ewes need a light grain ration the last six weeks before lambing. After lambing, the ewe should have no grain for two days. A handful of bran, with leafy alfalfa hay in small amounts, is best for her. Water with the chill removed will be appreciated.

40. Keep the ewe and lamb in a small pen by themselves the first two or three days. Under such conditions, fewer ewes will disown their lambs.

41. Trim the loose wool tags from around the udder to prevent the lamb from sucking them. Use round-pointed shears to prevent injury.

42. To prevent the udder from caking, it may be necessary to milk the ewe in the evening the first two or three days after lambing. After that time the lamb should take all the milk.

43. The third day after lambing the ewe may be fed the grain ration she received before lambing. In two weeks the grain allowance may be 1 to 1½ pounds per day and she should have all the roughage she will eat.

44. Feeding the ewe grain after lambing pays dividends if the lamb is to be sold for the Easter trade or by the first of June as a spring lamb. The following grain mixtures are suitable for the ewe before or after lambing. The amount per ewe will be determined by her physical condition.

MIXTURE I	
Oats ¹	80 lbs.
Wheat bran	15 lbs.

MIXTURE II	
Corn ¹	40 lbs.
Oats	40 lbs.
Wheat bran	10 lbs.
Linseed meal or a similar feed ..	10 lbs.

MIXTURE III	
Corn	40 lbs.
Linseed meal or a similar feed ..	10 lbs.

MIXTURE IV	
Oats	80 lbs.
Corn	120 lbs.
Wheat bran	30 lbs.
Linseed meal or a similar feed ..	20 lbs.

MIXTURE V	
Oats	140 lbs.
Wheat bran	10 lbs.
Linseed meal or a similar feed ..	10 lbs.

¹ The corn in all the mixtures may be replaced by an equal amount of grain sorghums. The oats may be replaced by an equal amount of good barley.

45. Feeding thrifty young ewes (two to four years old) grain after they have been turned on a good pasture with their lambs is a doubtful practice.

46. Stop feeding grain and reduce the roughage allowance of the ewes three or four days before weaning time. Milk out the tight udders for a few days after weaning the lambs.

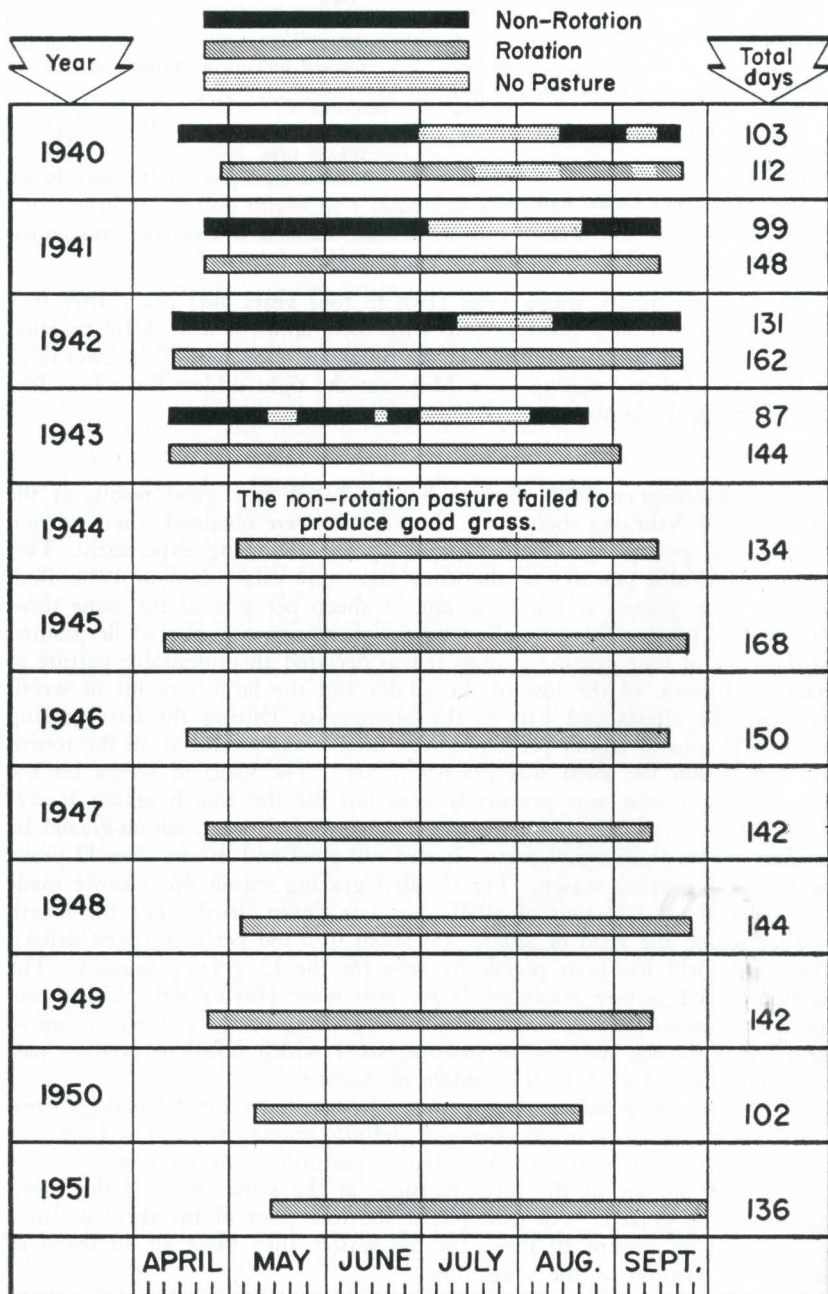
PASTURE FACTS

47. A brome-grass-alfalfa pasture has produced very good results at the University of Nebraska sheep farm. Best results were obtained when rotation grazing was practiced, as demonstrated by the following experiment. Two brome-grass-alfalfa pastures of the same size were established in 1940. Both pastures were grazed at the same rate of sheep per acre at the same time. Pasture No. 1 was grazed by allowing the sheep access to the whole pasture. At the close of four grazing seasons it was declared an undesirable pasture to maintain because of the loss of the alfalfa and the large amount of weeds replacing the alfalfa and part of the brome-grass. During the first grazing season 1.12 tons of alfalfa per acre (oven dried) was produced; in the fourth and last season the yield was practically zero. The yield of weeds for the first grazing season was practically zero but for the fourth season it was about 0.85 ton per acre (oven dried). Pasture No. 2 was rotation-grazed by dividing it into three equal parts. It was still good and in use, after 12 years, for the 1952 grazing season. For the first grazing season this pasture made a yield of about 1.25 tons of alfalfa per acre (oven dried). For the fourth grazing season the yield of alfalfa was about 0.75 ton per acre (oven dried). The weed yield has been practically zero for the 12 grazing seasons. The rotation-grazed pasture *produced 25 per cent more grazing days*. It also produced *continuous grazing days from the beginning of the grazing season to the close*. This was not true of pasture No. 1 which failed to produce pasture from about July 1 to the middle of August.

The success of rotation grazing depends upon very careful management, which means the strictest observance of definite grazing rules. The rules are:

- (a) There must be at least three fenced pastures in the rotation.
- (b) Place in one of the three pastures, at the same time, all the sheep that are to be grazed. For example, if the total area of the three pastures is calculated to pasture 40 sheep for the season, then place all 40 sheep in one of the pastures at the same time.

PATTERN OF GRAZING-DAYS FURNISHED



(c) Start grazing in the spring when the forage is 6 to 8 inches tall *but continue feeding dry roughage daily for about two weeks*. Taper off the grain allowance if it is being fed.

(d) Move from one pasture to the next when there is about 4 inches of good coverage left on the pasture being grazed.

(e) Don't worry when the third pasture to be grazed in the spring grows tall and is mashed down in some places by the sheep. This is not wasteful; it pays off in the future by helping to produce 25 per cent more grazing-days.

(f) The pasture to be grazed first the following season *must have 9 to 12 inches growth at the time of the first killing frost in the fall. This is essential if the alfalfa stand is to be saved*. This calls for careful observation and good planning.

A pattern of the grazing days furnished by the non-rotation and rotation grazing plans is shown and compared in Fig. 5 for the years 1940 to 1951 inclusive.

The following outline is an example of a rotation grazing plan covering four years for three pastures designated A, B, and C.

For the Year	Management Plan
1951	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start the 1951 grazing on pasture A. 2. Move from A to B to C to A, etc., as the season permits. 3. Stop the 1951 grazing on pasture B.
1952	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start the 1952 grazing on pasture C. 2. Move from C to A, to B, to C, etc. 3. Stop the 1952 grazing on pasture A.
1953	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start the 1953 grazing on pasture B. 2. Move from B to C, to A, to B, etc. 3. Stop the 1953 grazing on pasture C. 4. This completes three-year grazing rotation.
1954	Start the 1954 grazing on pasture A and repeat the same order as outlined for the three years 1951, 1952, and 1953.

Do not set definite dates for moving from one pasture to another. Growing conditions will determine the time to move in the rotation plan. Always move while there is about 4 inches of forage left as a protective covering.

The amount of pasture necessary for a flock of sheep may be estimated by cow-pasture requirements. About 6 sheep or 12 lambs are equivalent to one cow in pasture requirements.



FIG. 5.—Two brome-grass-alfalfa pastures of equal size were used to compare non-rotation and rotation grazing plans with sheep. Note that the non-rotation pasture was worn out after 4 years of use. The rotation-grazed pasture was still in use in 1951.

The pattern for the 1951 grazing season is in the following outline (Fig. 6). Trace the shifts from pasture to pasture by following the arrows.

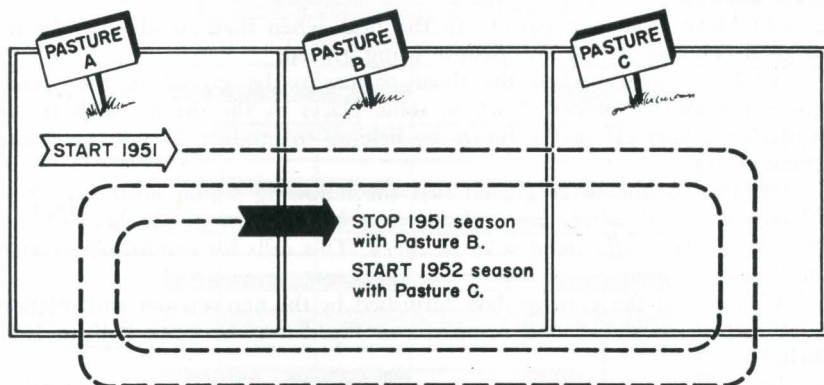


FIG. 6.—An example of the grazing pattern for one year. Follow the dotted line. Note that Pastures A and B were used three times during the grazing season.

THIRTEEN RAM FACTS

48. A short-necked, broad, deep-bodied, short-legged ram with a thick covering of natural flesh will sire the best market lambs.

49. A good purebred ram of the mutton (medium wool) breeds (Hampshire, Shropshire, Oxford, Southdown, Corriedale, Cheviot, etc.) is necessary to produce the right kind of market lambs.

50. An inferior purebred ram is as worthless as a scrub.

51. A ram contributes either his worth or worthlessness to each lamb in a flock unit. Select him to be the outstanding individual of the flock.

52. A well developed ram lamb may be used to breed 10 or 12 ewes.

53. A ram one to five years of age may be used to breed 30 to 45 ewes each season.

54. A ram retains his vigor and will breed the maximum number of ewes if he is with them only at night in a comparatively small lot.

55. A ram in show condition is a very uncertain breeder. He should be shorn and exercised to restore his fertility rapidly.

56. A ram with well-trimmed feet will breed the largest number of ewes.

57. An approximate breeding date record of the flock may be obtained by smearing a paste made from oil and lampblack between the forelegs of the ram. Such a record will help in estimating the lambing date and serve as a check on the fertility of the ram.

58. A small allowance of oats each day to condition the ram may be necessary a month before the breeding season opens. An alternative would be to feed one-half to one pound daily of one of the following grain mixtures.

MIXTURE I

Oats 30 lbs.
Wheat bran 10 lbs.

MIXTURE II

Corn 30 lbs.
Oats 30 lbs.
Linseed meal or a similar feed . 10 lbs.

MIXTURE III

Oats	30 lbs.
Corn	15 lbs.
Wheat bran	9 lbs.
Linseed meal or a similar feed..	6 lbs.

MIXTURE IV

Oats	30 lbs.
Wheat bran	15 lbs.
Linseed meal or a similar feed..	15 lbs.

59. A pound of grain a day is necessary for a ram in heavy service.

60. A winter ration of alfalfa, clover hay, or silage and a legume hay is sufficient for the ram.

THIRTY-ONE LAMB FACTS

61. See that the lamb nurses within 20 to 30 minutes after birth.

62. The lambs need protection from the wind and wet weather.

63. Chilled lambs may be warmed by rubbing dry and wrapping in a warm blanket.

64. All lambs that are thrifty and doing well should be docked when 10 to 15 days old. There are several ways to dock lambs.

(a) A pair of docking irons or a docking chisel, both heated to a dull red, will pinch off the tail without loss of blood. The wound will be slow in healing because of the burned tissue. Docking irons may be purchased from stockmen's supply houses or from wool marketing organizations (Figure 7, upper).

(b) A moderately sharp, sterilized knife may be used, but excessive bleeding may result unless the remaining stub is held firmly for about 30 seconds. A string or rubber band may be placed around the stub tail to stop severe bleeding, but it should be removed in about 30 minutes to prevent part of the stub from sloughing off.

(c) Patented docking pincers may be ordered from stockmen's supply houses or from wool marketing organizations.

(d) Patented rubber rings with a hand piece to apply them are available at supply houses or wool marketing organizations. This method is used extensively in the sheep countries and is well worth considering by the farm flock owner. There is no blood loss. The rubber ring does not remove the tail immediately but instead shuts off the circulation below the ring which causes that part of the tail to drop off some weeks later. The best procedure with the rubber ring method is to cut the tail off with a knife just below but next to the ring, about one day after the ring has been applied. This keeps the dangling tail from collecting filth.

(e) An emasculator may be used for docking (Figure 8).

The tail should be removed about 1 inch from the rump. Be clean with the operation and keep the lambs off filth by using an abundance of clean bedding. Dock early to avoid fly trouble and death loss. Avoid cold, wet, stormy days for the operation. Do not stretch or pull the tail during the operation. Try to push the skin toward the rump while performing the operation. This prevents bone exposure.

65. All male lambs to be sold for slaughter should be castrated when one to two weeks old. The sooner this is done the better as there will be smaller setback of the lamb. There are two general practices for castration.

(a) The lower third of the scrotum may be severed with a knife or a

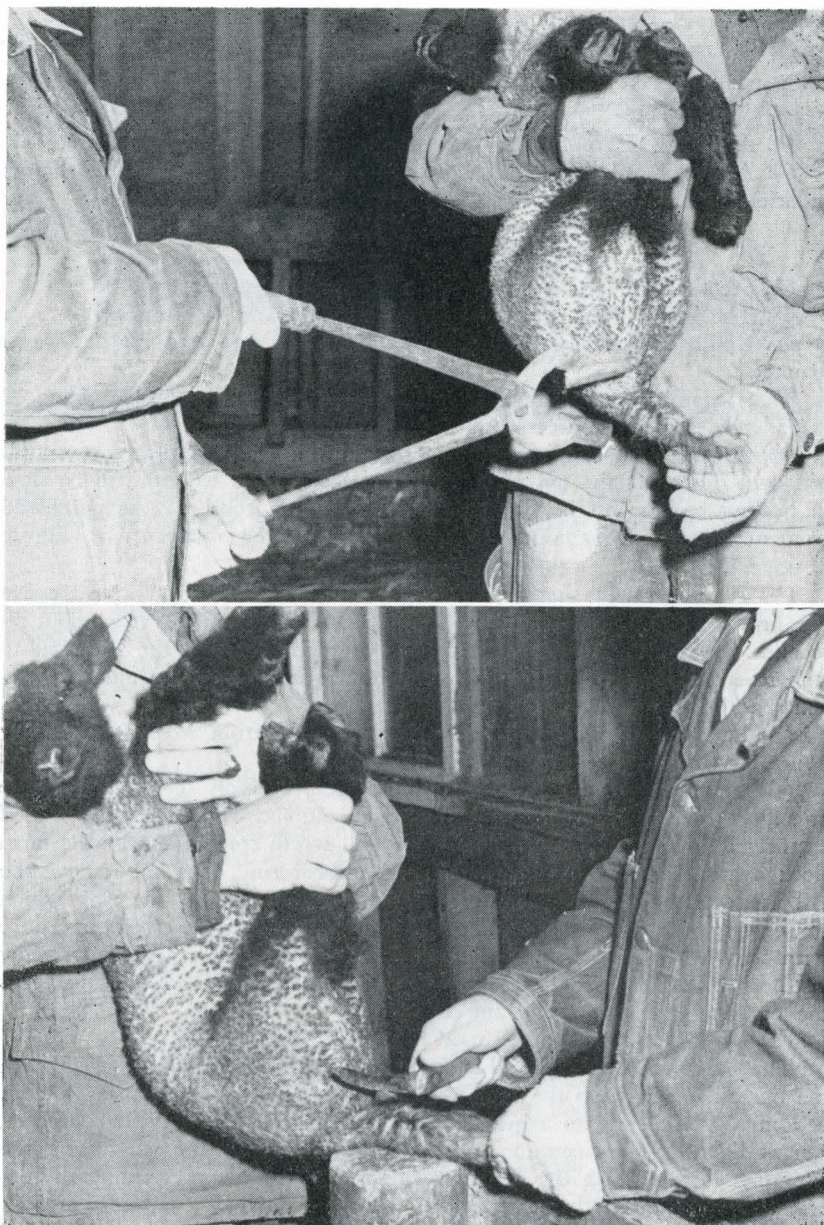


FIG. 7.—(Upper) Heat the pincers to a dull red. Cut the tail one inch from the body.
(Lower) A knife may be used for docking.

patented pincer with a cutting edge. The testicles when exposed may be pulled with the fingers or teeth, or with the tongs of the patented pincers. This same pincer has blades for docking. Extreme care must be taken to keep all instruments clean and disinfected. Fingers become soiled quickly from touching the lamb or the operator's clothing. Disinfect the instruments after each lamb operation. Any stringing tissue hanging from the wound should be severed.

(b) The rubber ring method of castration is used extensively. There is a hand instrument for expanding the ring and applying it to the scrotum. Be sure both testicles are below the ring when it is released. Do not place the ring against the belly of the sheep. The rings should not go above the two rudimentary teats at the top of the scrotum. With this practice there is no cutting. The bag drops off in a few weeks. The ring method must be used properly and on young lambs, one to two weeks old. The older the lamb the more chance there is for serious complications. The rings and applicator are available at stockmen's supply stores or at wool marketing centers. If the rubber ring should be removed because of improper location or the absence of both testicles below the ring, then release it by cutting the ring with a sharp knife.



FIG. 8.—Docking with an emasculator. After clamping the emasculator, cut off the tail on the inside of the jaws where the tail is pinched. Cut as close to the metal as possible. Leave the emasculator clamped for about 10 seconds to reduce bleeding.



(Courtesy of *Successful Farming Magazine*)



FIG. 10.—Cut off the lower third of the scrotum; then expose the testicles by pushing the skin back.

66. Strong lambs may be docked and castrated at the same time. If the two operations are performed at the same time, do the castrating first; otherwise the docking is done first.

67. Dock and castrate the lamb on a clear warm day and place him in a clean, dry, well-bedded pen. Never allow the castrated or docked lamb to become wet, cold, or muddy or to lie on the damp, bare ground or on a manure pile until the wounds are well healed.

68. Orphan lambs may be raised on cow's milk fed in a bottle. This practice is more likely to be successful if the lamb has first had colostrum milk from its mother or another ewe that has not been in milk for over a week. The cow's milk should be *whole, fresh and warm and be fed from thoroughly clean utensils*. A pop bottle and nipple are good equipment. Wrap a flannel cloth around the bottle to maintain the temperature near 100 degrees or body temperature. When the lamb is 10 to 15 days old start feeding cracked corn, bran, and linseed or soybean meal. Pick out the bright green flakes of alfalfa leaves for the lambs. Feed the stems to the ewes with the refused leaves.



FIG. 9.—(Upper) Docking a lamb by using a patented rubber ring. (Lower) Docking a lamb with a patented hand pincer also used for castration. Push the hide toward the rump before cutting so the bone will not protrude.

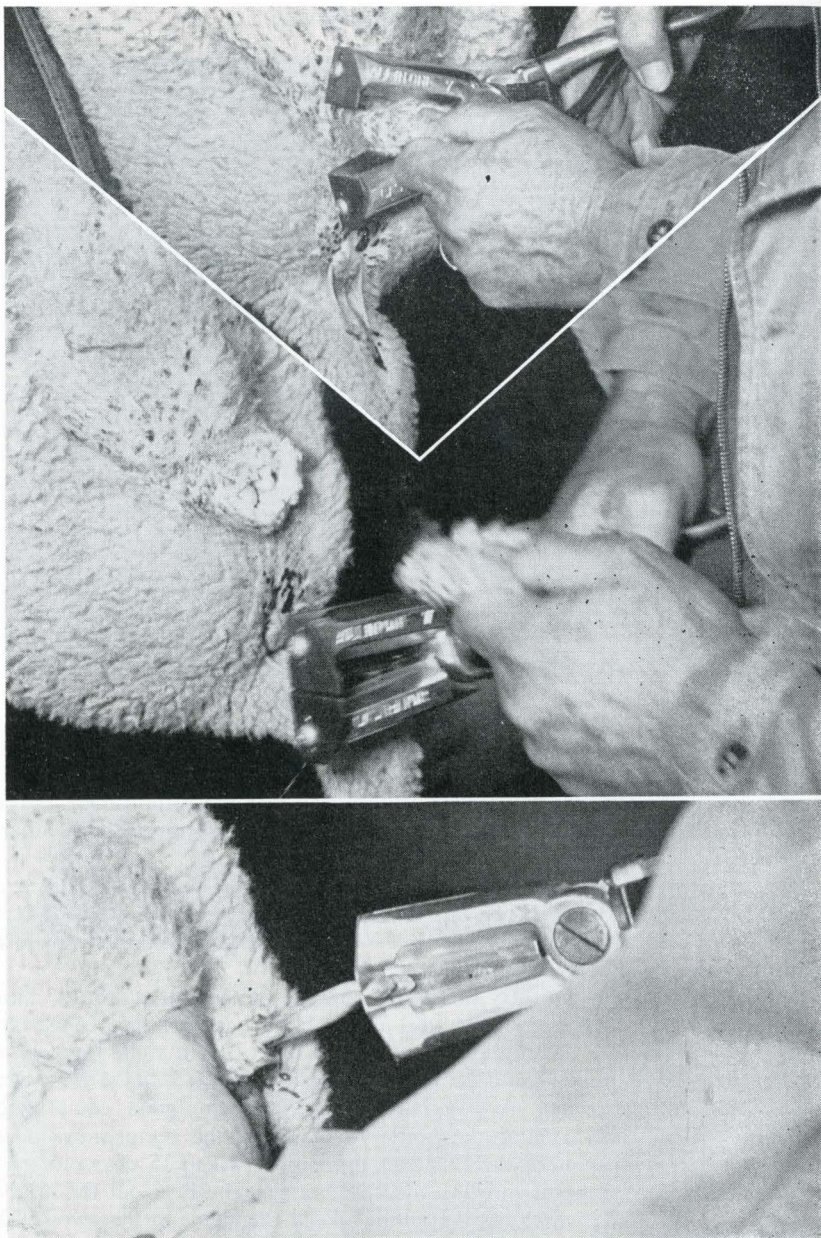


FIG. 11.—(Upper) Removing the lower third of the scrotum in preparation for castration with an instrument made for cutting and pulling. (Center) The lower third of the scrotum removed and the two testicles exposed. (Lower) The instrument has tongs on the end to pull the testicles. Any stringing tissue hanging below the wound after the pulling is completed should be cut off to reduce infection.

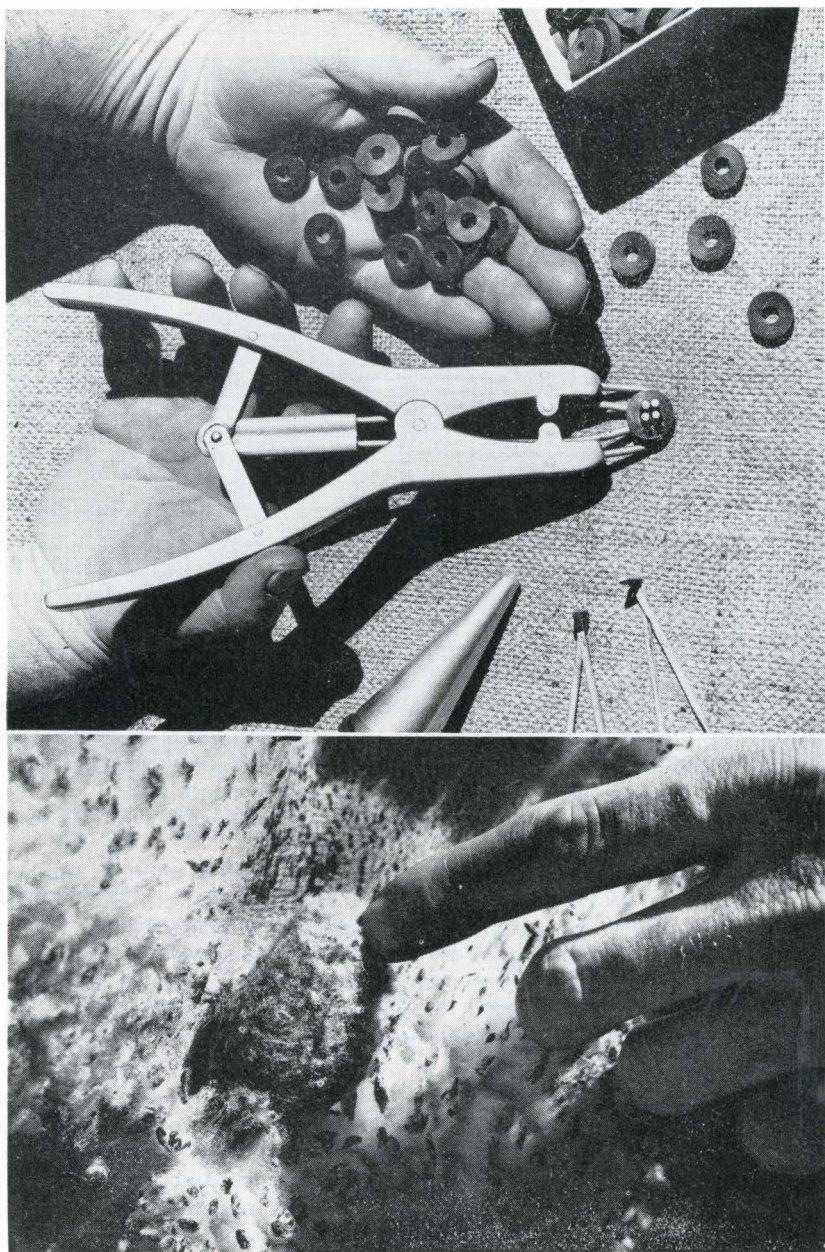


FIG. 12.—(Upper) Rubber rings and an instrument used to expand and apply the rings for castrating or docking lambs. (Lower) The scrotum or bag of a male lamb after the rubber ring for castration has been applied. The finger is pointing at the bottom of the scrotum if the lamb was standing. The rubber ring is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the finger.

If colostrum milk is not available put about one-half teaspoon of castor oil in one of the milk feedings the first and third day. Below is a guide to the amounts and times of feeding per day for an orphan lamb.

<i>Age of lamb</i>	<i>Daily feedings</i>	<i>Amount at each feeding</i>
1 to 6 days	8 to 6 feedings	1 to 2 ounces
1 to 2 weeks	6 to 5 feedings	3 to 6 ounces
2 to 3 weeks	5 to 4 feedings	6 to 8 ounces
3 to 4 weeks	4 to 3 feedings	8 to 10 ounces
4 to 6 weeks	3 feedings	10 to 16 ounces
6 to 8 weeks	3 feedings	16 to 32 ounces

69. The pelt from a dead lamb may be removed and fitted over an orphan lamb to induce the mother of the dead lamb to adopt the orphan. Place the orphan and the ewe in a small pen by themselves.

70. The most profitable farm flock practice in Nebraska is generally the production of spring lambs.

71. A Nebraska standard spring lamb is docked, castrated if a male, fat when weighing 85 to 95 pounds, of compact mutton type, and marketed not later than the first of June.

72. Spring lambs should be born not later than January 1 and preferably by December 1.

73. Lambs born in November and December may be finished for the Easter market. They must be marketed at least a week or two before Easter to allow sufficient time for distribution.

74. Easter lambs and spring lambs are fed and managed alike.

75. Lambs will start to nibble grain and leafy alfalfa hay when 10 to 15 days old.

76. Build a creep which the lambs may go into at will to eat grain and hay.

77. The creep for early lambs should be located in a protected, sunny place where it will be dry and warm. A shady place is best for late lambs.

78. Lambs will eat more grain and grow faster if they are shut in the creep for two or three hours in the morning and for a similar period late in the afternoon.

79. Lambs prepared for the Easter market or for a later spring market will need a creep-feeding period of 120 to 150 days.

80. A good grain ration for starting lambs is a mixture of 12 pounds of cracked shelled corn, 3 pounds of linseed meal or similar feed, and 2 pounds of bran. This ration can usually be cheapened after three to four weeks by gradually working up to a mixture of one-half cracked corn and one-half crushed oats. After about six weeks of creep feeding the lambs will take whole corn and whole oats. At this time, the proportion of corn may be increased, because it is more fattening and usually cheaper.

A mixture of 20 pounds cracked yellow corn, 20 pounds oats crushed or whole, 10 pounds wheat bran, and 10 pounds of either soybean, linseed, or cottonseed meal is very useful in lamb feeding. It is doubtful whether the mixture is as important as the judgment needed to decide the **amount** of the



FIG. 13.—Feed lambs in a creep where ewes cannot enter. Note that spacers are rollers that turn, making it possible for the lamb to go through a smaller opening.

mixture for each feeding. Except for the first week or 10 days when the lambs are learning to eat grain, there should be no grain left in the trough after 20 minutes. If the lambs do not clean up the grain in 20 minutes the quantity should be reduced for the next feeding. Refused grain should be removed immediately and given to the ewes. A wise feeder tries to feed almost as much grain as the lambs will clean up. This takes a "master's eye," developed by keen observation and a love for livestock. *The best "tell-tale" of a poor lamb feeding job is to find grain in the trough and the lambs not eating.* From weaning time on it is possible to overfeed lambs. When they overeat they become so-called "hot-lambs". The back will become arched or humped over the loin. While the lamb is standing the hind legs will quiver. The weight is frequently shifted from one leg to the other. The lamb will not stand up long at one time. In some cases the lamb will go to the feed trough and eat while sitting up like a dog. There is no cure. The lamb may live if the grain is cut to half or less. Shear the lamb but watch for cut places and keep them covered with a fly repellent. Special repellents for this job are sold at supply stores.

When hot days arrive there is more danger of producing the so-called "hot-lamb." Reduce the grain allowance and leave the lambs a little more hungry during hot spells. Feed them earlier in the morning and later in the evening when it is cooler. Allow plenty of cross ventilation at the floor level.

The lambs may have all the bright green leafy alfalfa hay they will eat. A clean, fresh supply of water all the time is a "must."

At night during hot weather the lambs may be put on pasture that is *well protected from dogs*. Bring them in early in the morning. Develop a rigid drenching program for worms when pasture is used.

Lambs that are being fed for the state fair should be shorn the middle of May and smoothed up every three weeks. If the lambs scour wash the filth off with a brush and water so flies will not be attracted. It is this filth that makes it possible for maggots to get started.

81. Put a fresh supply of grain in the lamb creep at least twice a day. Clean out the refused feed and give it to the ewes.

82. Lambs getting a good supply of milk will eat more grain and make faster gains. No other feed is equal to ewe's milk for stimulating rapid growth.

83. Leafy, bright-green alfalfa hay (preferably third or fourth cutting) is necessary for best results. Keep a fresh supply of hay in the creep. The ewes will relish the stems left by the lambs.

84. Keep all troughs, racks, and pens fresh and clean. Lambs are very particular.

85. Approximately 85 pounds of corn, 75 pounds of alfalfa hay, 10 pounds of protein supplement, and 8 pounds of bran are required for a creep-fed lamb to gain 60 pounds. One-half of the corn may be replaced by oats, barley or wheat. For every 9 pounds of corn removed, 10 or 11 pounds of oats, barley, or wheat must be added.

86. Lambs for the early spring trade should never be turned on pasture or allowed to run in a field. A dry lot is best. The ewes may be turned out.

87. Lambs to be marketed the latter part of August will need grain while they are on pasture.

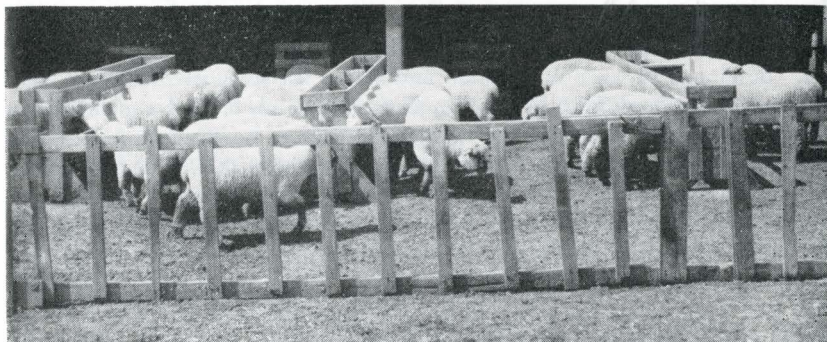


FIG. 14.—Well developed, weaned, creep-fed lambs.

88. Three or four pounds may be added to the weight of lambs that are to be marketed the latter part of August by dry-lot feeding on corn and alfalfa after about July 4th. During hot weather half-fat lambs will not graze freely. They should nurse morning and evening until weaning time.

89. If the lambs are receiving a good supply of milk and are not to be marketed until after September, they will not need grain while on pasture. About four weeks before marketing they should be fed grain and alfalfa hay in a dry lot to produce the desired finish.

90. All lambs on pasture previously used by sheep will need to be drenched for stomach worms.

91. The lambs may be weaned when they are 90 to 110 days old. Those that have been creep-fed will wean more easily than those that have not been fed. Keep the ewes and lambs far apart during weaning time.

TWENTY SHEARING AND WOOL FACTS

92. Shearing time in Nebraska is usually between April 15 and May 15.

93. Less wool will become manure-stained if shearing takes place before the flock is turned on pasture for their entire daily ration.

94. Remove wet, dirty locks before shearing and pack them separately. It pays.

95. Shear all black sheep last. Pack their fleeces separately.

96. Burry, cotted, seedy, chaffy, dead, black, and gray fleeces are "rejects." Keep them separate from good clear wool.

97. The fleeces from yearling sheep are most valuable. Therefore pack them separate from aged-ewe and ram fleeces.

98. Shear close to the hide to get as long a staple as possible. Second clips may reduce the length enough to make the fleece fall into a lower-price class.

99. Machine shearing is more desirable than hand shearing because it produces a longer fiber and a heavier fleece. It may raise the market value from a low-price class (clothing) to a high-price class (combing).

100. Shear sheep only when the fleece is dry. Use a clean wood, concrete, or canvas surface for a shearing floor.

101. When shearing, use care to leave the fleece in an unbroken condition.

102. Spread the fleece on a clean surface, flesh side down, and fold in about 10 inches of each side and end; then, beginning at the tail, roll it into a bundle.

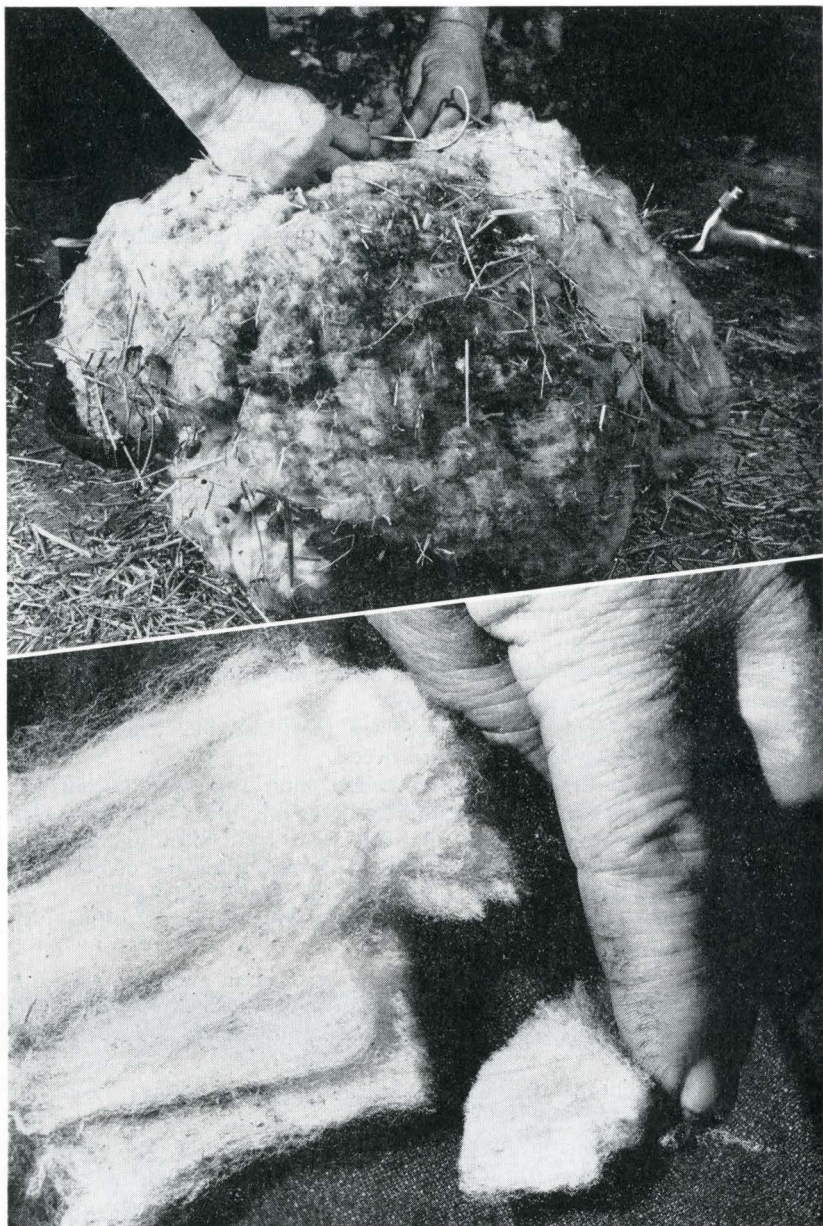
103. Do not roll the fleece too tight since lofty or springy fleeces are preferred.

104. Tie each fleece separately, using enough *paper twine* to hold it securely. One strand around the fleece and another at right angles to the first are sufficient.

105. Never use sisal, rough jute, hemp twines, or wire to tie a fleece. *Under no condition use anything but paper twine.*

106. Pack fleeces in regulation wool sacks. These sacks may be obtained from a wool marketing association.

107. Do not store or pile wool on the ground or in a damp place. It will be seriously damaged.



(Courtesy of *Successful Farming Magazine*)

FIG. 15.—(Upper) This fleece is reduced about one-fourth in value because of the foreign material picked up on the shearing floor. Keep shearing quarters clean and dry. (Lower) The finger is pointing at what is called a “second-cut” piece of wool. The shearer did not make the first cut next to the hide. It was necessary to go over the area a second time, producing the short fibers.



(Courtesy of *Successful Farming Magazine*)

FIG. 16.—(Upper) The fleece has just been removed. The soiled tags and sweat locks with any black wool from the legs and head are removed and put in separate piles. Market black wool and tags separately. (Lower) Wool twine made of paper is used for tying fleeces. It does not damage the fleece. Never use a substitute. (Left) Binder twine and similar sisal strings damage the fleece from 5 to 10 cents a pound by shedding ravelings that may show up in a finished piece of cloth.

108. Never use a paint on sheep for identification that will not scour out.

109. When feeding sheep, do not let hay, straw, chaff, or grain fall into the wool. Any foreign material will reduce the value of the fleece.

110. Wintering quarters should protect the sheep from dirt-laden winds and thus insure cleaner and more valuable fleeces at shearing time.

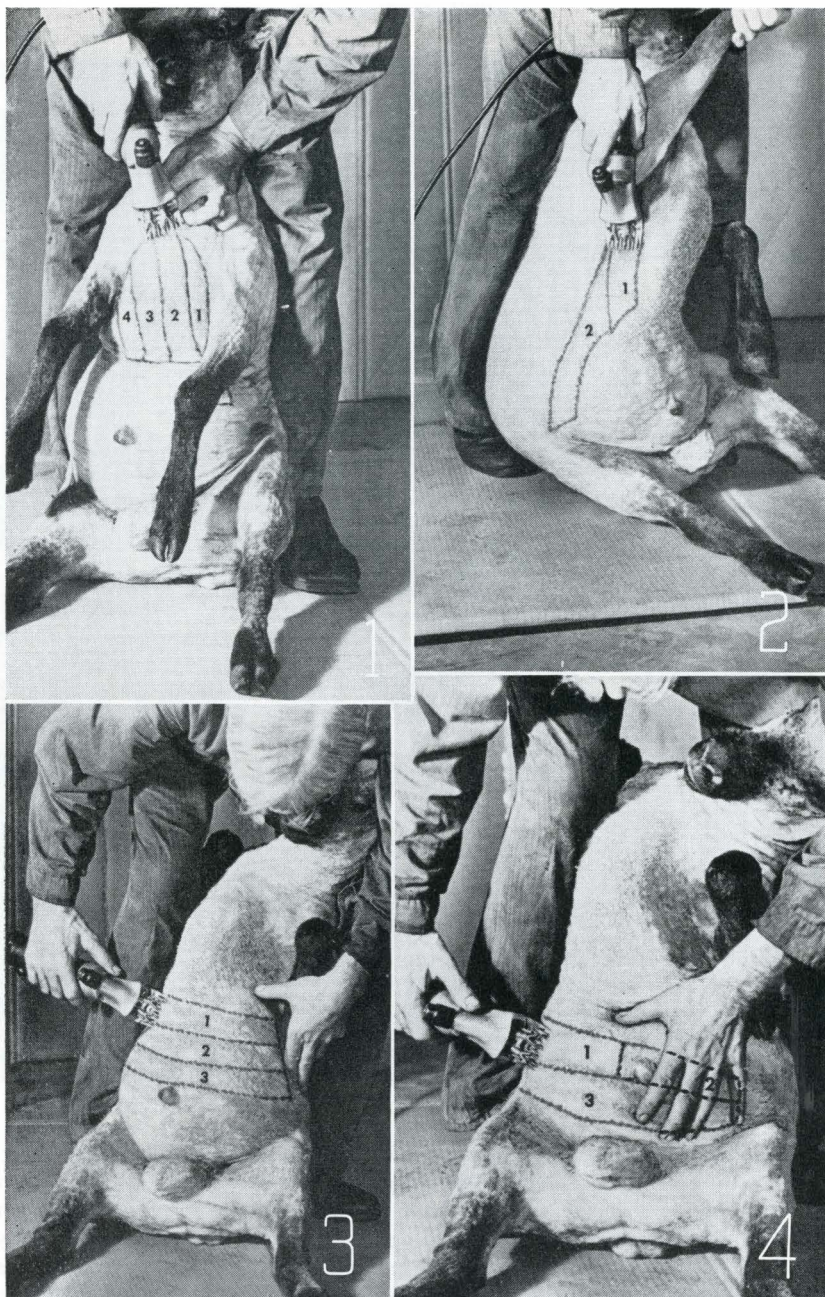
111. To shear set the sheep up squarely on its rump with your feet close to the sheep's body. Let the sheep balance between your knees. The positions of the shearer's legs, feet, and hands are very important. They change as he changes areas being shorn. A slight relaxing of the knees may be comfortable but bent knees produce early fatigue. A relatively straight position for the legs, with the body bending at the hips, is the least tiring for the shearer.

Start shearing at the brisket with down strokes (cut 1, Fig. 17). Pull the sheep's right foreleg up well and press in with your knee to curve the sheep's body so two strokes can be run down from the right foreflank to the right rear flank (cut 2). This opens the fleece for shearing the belly. Fold the right foreleg, hold it under your right knee, and lean the sheep farther back on its rump so the belly wool can be removed with strokes running nearly straight across (cut 3). Keep points of the comb pressed on the skin to prevent second cuts and to prevent cutting the sheep. Shear around the sheath and teats with care (cut 4). Place your fingers over the teats and they will not be damaged. The ewe is ruined when the teats are injured.

Turn the sheep a little to the right, holding its left foreleg under your arm, and shear the right hind leg from flank to foot (cut 5). Twist the skin a little and press firmly at the same time on the flank joint to keep the rear leg straight and stiff. Shear the inside of the right rear leg from foot to crotch (cut 6). This is very important to prevent injury. Complete the crotch (cut 7) and shear the left hind leg with strokes toward the hoof (cut 8). *Keep your left foot well under the sheep* with your knee in position so the sheep is balancing on it without a tendency to topple either way for the next position (cut 9). The sheep rests partly on its right side with the head bent to the left side. Now shear from hoof to flank to shear the outer part of the leg. Strokes curved down and ending near the backbone and above the tail will clean the hip.

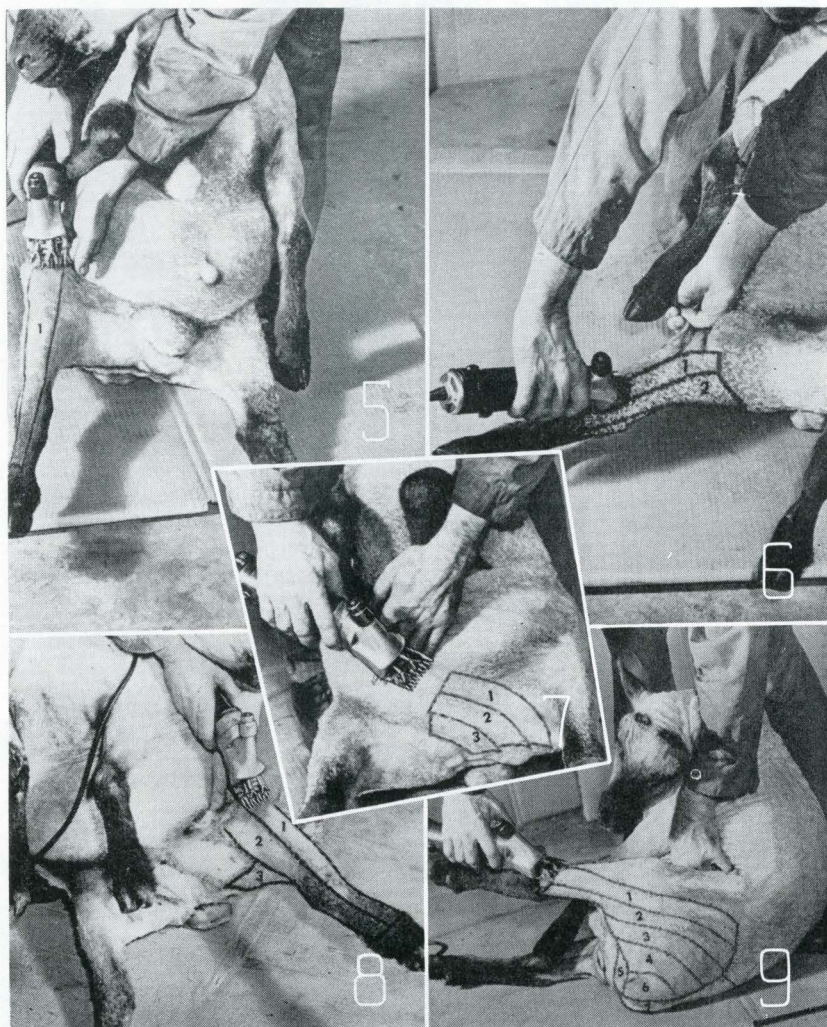
In cut 10 note the shearer's right foot between the sheep's hind legs, and the right knee pressed against the sheep's brisket. The left hand under the sheep's jaw pulls the head back and around the left knee so that strokes from the brisket to the jaw will open the neck and clean the right side of the neck. The head is rolled upward to shear the left side of the neck, the left jaw, and the top of the head (cuts 11 and 12). Watch for metal tags in the ears. Grab the ear and keep it covered with your hand.

The next position is difficult but very important. Keep your right toe under the left hip of the sheep. Your right foot is still between the rear legs of the sheep. Let the head and neck of the sheep go around your left leg and hold the head down with your left arm. Now shear the left shoulder and foreleg with strokes from the knee toward the backbone, and end near the backbone (cut 13). Be sure the points of the comb are on the skin when the stroke is started and finished or second cuts will result.



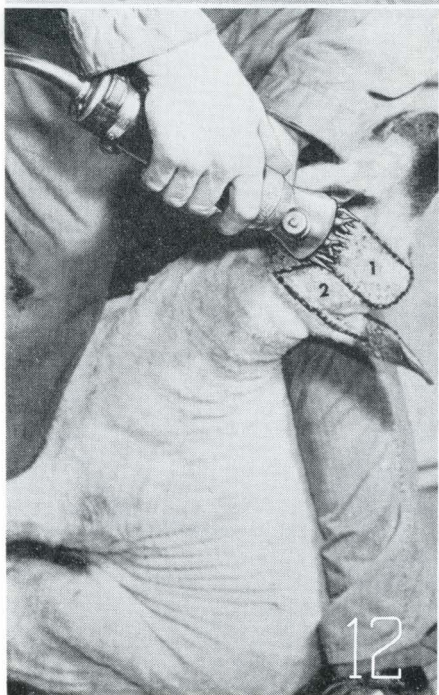
(Courtesy of Sunbeam Corporation)

FIG. 17.—Positions and strokes to be used when shearing sheep. Explanations are given in fact number 111. (See also pages 28, 29, 30 and 31.)

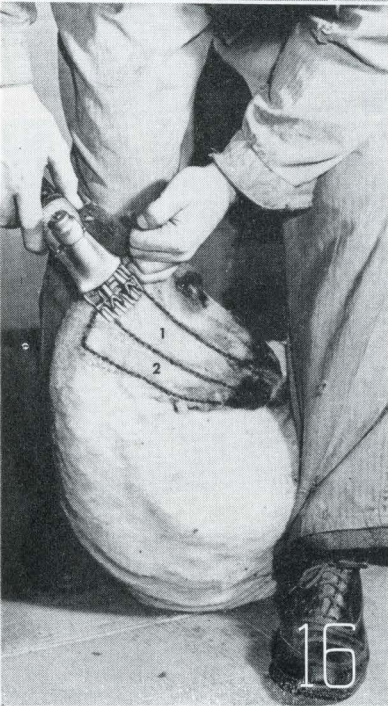
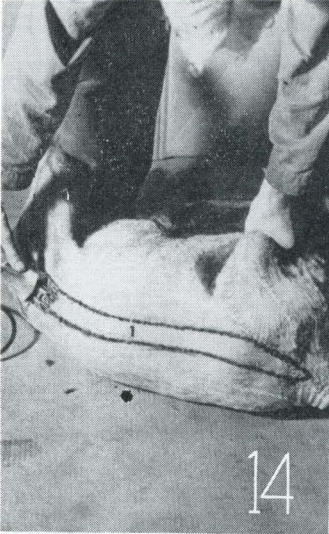


(Courtesy of Sunbeam Corporation)

The left side is shorn by moving the left foot forward and laying the sheep down almost on its back (cut 14). *Keep your left foot well under the right shoulder* of the sheep or you will have trouble with the sheep trying to get up. The sheep's left foreleg is pressed against its head, thus curving the body around your left leg. This is done by placing the thumb behind the sheep's leg and the fingers over the top of the sheep's head. Now change to the position in cut 15. Your right foot is behind both the hind legs of the sheep and your left leg is in front of the sheep's foreleg. Keep your left toe under the sheep. Use long strokes, the length of the sheep's back and neck.



(Courtesy of Sunbeam Corporation)



(Courtesy of Sunbeam Corporation)