

Wool marketing opportunities in the Hudson Valley

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Objectives

- What types of fleece and wool market opportunities exist in the Hudson Valley;
- Understanding possible direct-to-consumer and other models that have been successful for other sheep farmers.

What types of fleece and wool market opportunities exist in the Hudson Valley?

- Depends on breed of sheep;
- Depends on how involved you want to be with your fleece and wool.

About breeds of sheep and more

- Not all sheep make high quality fleece;
- Which matters more to sheep farmers in the Hudson Valley – micron count, marketing/messaging, or other factors?
- Not all wool-breeds of sheep do well (or do well, easily) in the Hudson Valley;
- Raising sheep for fleece success – feeding methods, coating, shearing schedule, and more

Overview of various fiber sheep breeds and characteristics of fleece

- Fine wool breeds
- Medium wool breeds
- Long wool breeds

Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook

Raising sheep for fleece success

- Feed and feeding methods
- Indoors vs outdoors
- To coat or not to coat – it's a big commitment
- Shearing schedule – before or after lambing? Depends on wool length, and other factors

“Wool production is a year round process. Environmental conditions including pasture management, facilities, feeding practices and animal health affect wool quality.” Preparation Steps for Wool Quality Improvement, American Sheep Industry Association, Inc.

Shearing day – what happens then can make or break your fleece quality



Shearing day

- Shearer skill and support
- Put down a piece of plywood
- Keep shearing area clean to ***avoid contamination***



Shearing day

- Skirt before bagging – tags, belly and top knots all come out!



Shearing day

- Packing and labelling can vary by marketing plans



After shearing – now what?

- How involved you want to be with your fleece and wool? Each option progressively brings you more money, but takes more work to prepare

Option 1 – Toss it (or use for mulch)

Option 2 – Sell it in bulk to a wool pool

Option 3 – Sell it fleece by fleece to a commercial buyer/mill

Option 4 – Sort ruthlessly and sell in the grease to hand spinners using advertisements, Etsy, festivals, farm gate and open houses/tours.

Prices vary – it
pays to shop
around



After shearing – now what?

Option 5 – Have yarn or roving made; and sell wholesale to general store, gift shop, yarn store, or indie dyer. Will need to label.

Option 6 – Have yarn or roving made; and sell retail direct to consumer on-line, on-farm; or at farmers markets and festivals. Will need labels, patterns, Instagram/Facebook, etc.

See Wing and A Prayer Farm



Festivals
are big!



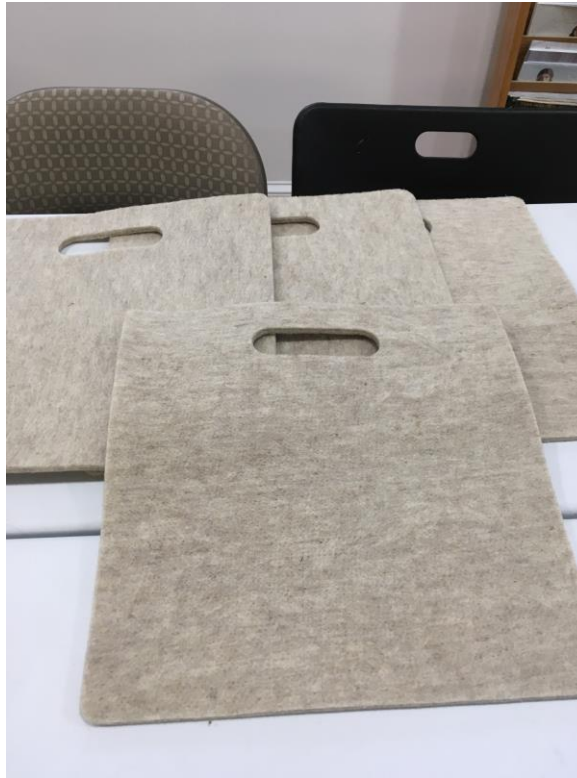
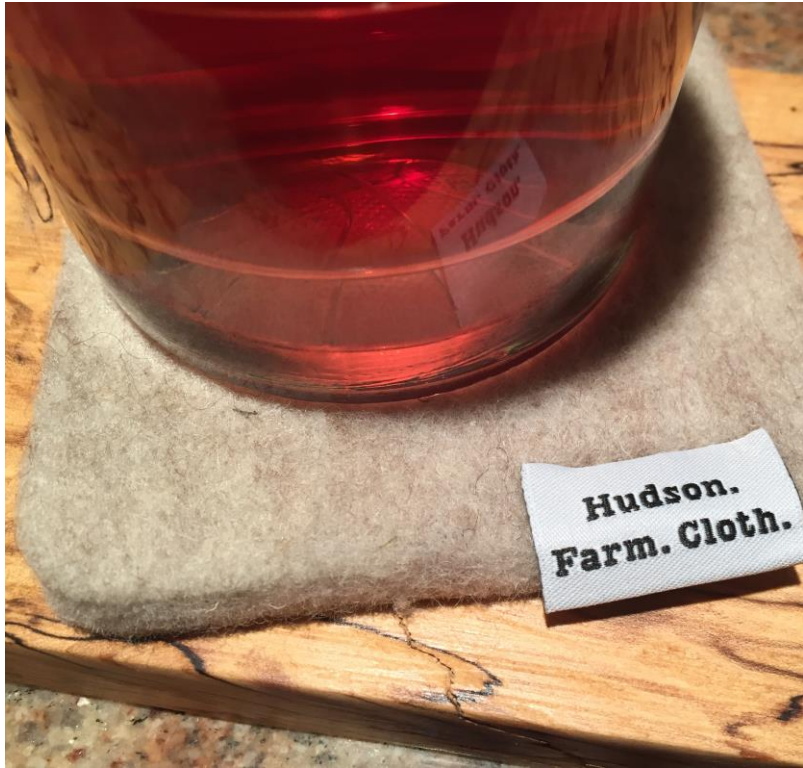
After shearing – now what?

Option 7 – Have yarn made; and then have finished goods made to sell retail or wholesale



After shearing – now what?

More products – felted items. EMERGING MARKETS!



Overview of steps in fiber processing

- Sort/open;
- Wash/scour and dry;
- Pick and card



Overview of steps in fiber processing

- WOOLEN OR WORSTED AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?
- Drafting



Overview of steps in fiber processing

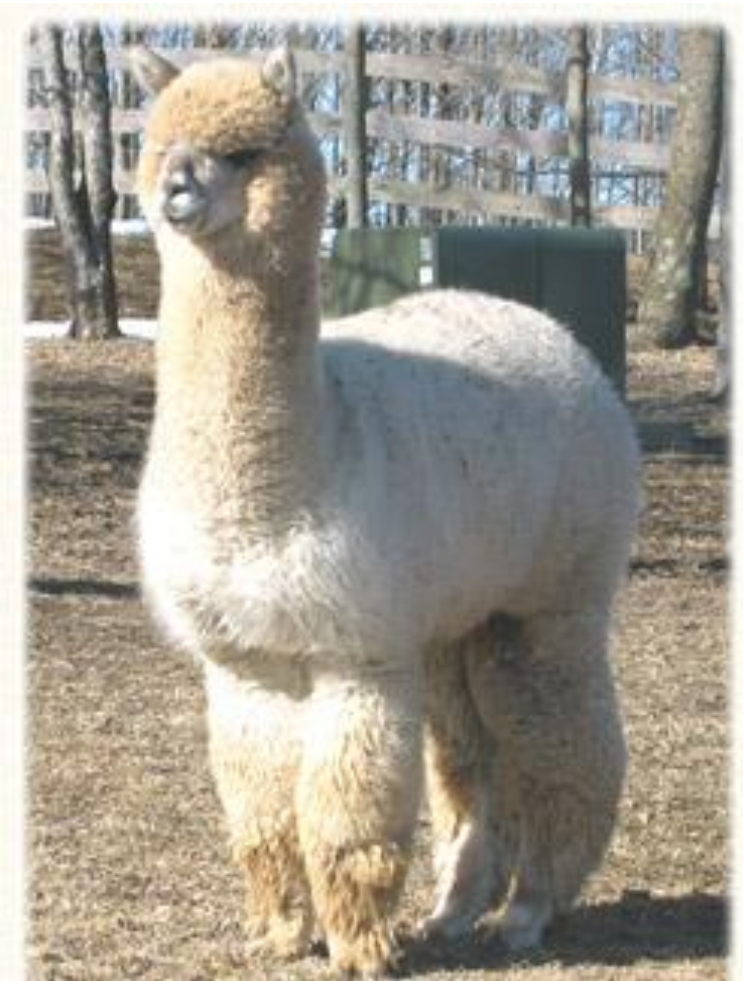
- Spinning
- Plying
- Winding



Cones or skeins?



Blending with other natural or synthetic fibers?



Dyed or natural? Dyeing options?



Branding, messaging, networking

