

“SHEARING AND HIDE CARE”

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How and when you should shear or clip sheep/goats that are being fed for the show ring plays a big role in how the mature animal will handle at your county show/terminal major show. Ten truths about shearing/clipping you need to remember to avoid wrinkled hides when it counts the most.

1. Buy tight hided animals in the first place.
2. Learn to rough shear your sheep with 13 or 17 tooth wool heads using no water or soap. (Many times we just want to see where we’re at in terms of finish/muscle development. Soap and water dry the hides out and opens the door for ringworms)
3. Use medium cover coats for your jackpots and non-terminal fairs for your show goats (frequent clipping closely opens the door to skin fungus and hide stress.)
4. Weather permitting, always wash your sheep with a good quality anti-fungal soap after the show. Dry and put on clean blanket. (Show ring preparations and treatments can give fungus a foot hold if contamination occurred at the show.
5. Good hided black face sheep need two or three close shearings at jackpots/non-terminal fairs to get their hide accustomed to the stress. Coarse wooled blacks will have a distinct wool pattern that will disappear with multiple shearings.
6. Save that final close shave for the show you care about the most. Surgical blades for med wools and fine blades for all other breeds are a safe play for your last show.
7. Don’t use harsh soaps like dishwashing liquid for show animals. Use high quality livestock soap that moisturizes. Equine shampoos are generally safe for sheep.
8. Dry clip your show goat and use waterless shampoo for cleaning up.
9. A major show lamb/goat needs 3-4 shows to be hardened off and used to the stress. Ring experience is a must for children and animals as well. Personal preference is a summer jackpot/fair with an optional late show/early winter. Maybe that special one skips the county show and gets prepped for the big majors. Freshness/vitality are so important for the last show.
10. Even tight hided great ones have limits to the number of shearings they can handle!

Thanks, and good luck with your show stock!