WOOL — FROM FARM TO FASHION
Wool — from farm to fashion

Wool production starts with sheep on the farm and finishes as woollen products used around the world.

Sheep — sheep grow wool, like we grow hair.

Shearing — shearsers remove the wool from the sheep using specially-designed handpieces.

Wool handling — woolhandlers skirt the fleece and the wool classer grades the fleece.

Baling and transport — wool of the same grade is pressed into bales, loaded onto trucks and taken to the warehouse for sale.

Auction — wool is sold to the highest bidder and sent for processing.

Scouring — fleeces are washed to remove dirt, dust, sweat and wool grease.

The carded wool is ready to process through one of two routes: woollen or worsted.

In the woollen process the carded wool is split into many strips, which are rubbed into slubbings (delicate yarn-like threads) ready for spinning into yarn.

The worsted process forms the carded web into a sliver of fibres, which is made into top.

Top-making — worsted processing turns the carded wool into a ‘top’ or ‘combed sliver’.

The final product of top-making is called a top.

Spinning — spinning twists the yarn so it can be knitted or woven.

Knitting and weaving — knitting machines join yarns together with interlocking loops to form knitted fabric.

Weaving looms interlace yarns, usually at right angles to each other to form woven fabric.

Making up — individual panels of garments are cut from flat fabric and joined together to make clothes.

Fabric finishing — woven fabrics and knitted fabrics go through many different processes to wash, flatten, reduce or increase hairiness, stretch, consolidate and stabilise fabrics for end use.

Ready for sale — after pressing, the garments are ticketed and labelled so consumers know how to care for their Merino wool garment.

Glossary

Bales — large bags of wool that have been pressed and ready for sale.

Grade — sort fleeces according to their quality.

Skirt — remove stained pieces from the fleece.

Sliver — A strip of loose untwisted wool fibres produced by carding.

Top — Stage of processing where wool is ready to be spun.

Woollen processing — uses shorter fibres, less stages and produces a thicker yarn than worsted processing.

Worsted processing — uses longer fibres, more stages and produces a finer higher-quality yarn than woollen processing.

More information

To find out more about wool processing, take a look at:

• learnaboutwool.com
• the posters, fibre, yarn and fabric samples in the hardcopy Learn About Wool Kit.