

WOOL PRODUCTION



Wool production



Woolgrowers need to juggle many activities throughout the year.

They need to manage their sheep and **pasture** to produce plenty of wool and keep their livestock and natural resources healthy.

Producers plan their jobs carefully to make sure they get them done at the right time.

Sheep need to be checked regularly to ensure they have enough **pasture**, water and shelter to stay healthy.

Producers bring sheep into the yards and **shearing** shed at different times for **drenching**, **vaccinating**, **marking**, **crutching** and **shearing**. Woolgrowers also need to manage **flystrike** and lice.

Ewes and rams need to be brought together for **joining** and then rams are removed again until the following year.

There is always fencing to be done, water troughs and pumps to be checked, cleaned and repaired and machinery to be maintained.

Many woolgrowers also grow crops and have other livestock, such as cattle. Crops need to be sown, cared for and harvested. Cattle need to be looked after just like sheep.

Running any business involves office work and wool producers need to spend time in the office. Most woolgrowers also go to workshops or courses on the latest production methods and technology.

Just like everyone else, woolgrowers also need time away from work and time with their families. Taking a break away from the farm allows producers to relax and forget about work for a while.

Did you know?

- Lamb **marking** is carried out when lambs are between two to eight weeks old.
- **Shearing** is usually carried out once a year.
- Sheep lice, like human headlice, make sheep itchy and affected sheep often rub against fences, trees or fallen logs to relieve the itching. This damages the wool.
- The female blowfly can lay up to 300 eggs every 4–8 days. When blowflies lay eggs in a sheep's fleece, the maggots that hatch from the eggs can burrow into the sheep's skin causing **flystrike**.

- Shearing and crutching doesn't hurt — it is just like having a haircut.
- Children on large sheep properties in remote areas are often homeschooled.

FUN FACTS ABOUT WOOL PRODUCTION



Glossary

Crutching — removing wool by shearing around a sheep's bottom to prevent flystrike.

Drenching — woolgrowers give sheep medicine to protect them from worms.

Flystrike — blowflies lay their eggs in wet or dirty wool, most commonly around a sheep's bottom. As the eggs hatch hundreds of blowfly maggots burrow into the flesh causing pain and death.

Joining — producers put rams in with the ewes for mating.

Marking — removing tails, applying ear tags and removing testicles from male lambs.

Pasture — plants that have been grown specifically to feed animals such as sheep and cattle.

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

Vaccinating — producers give sheep medicine to protect them against diseases like tetanus, cheesy gland, pulpy kidney, sheep measles, Ovine Johne's Disease and black leg.

More information

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

- learnaboutwool.com
- Beyond the Bale magazine: beyondthebale.wool.com

