

A scenic view of a rural farm with rolling green hills, a forest, and a barn, with a flock of sheep in the foreground. The text "Wool Marketing" is overlaid in a green box.

Wool Marketing

FARMERS

Kathryn Ashley-Wright

Started Ewetopia in Viroqua, WI in 2007

Started Ewetopia Fiber Mill in La Farge in 2017

Runs a small flock of Cormo/fine wool cross sheep for fleece and meat - 50 head



Marketable Wool Breeds

- Wool Breeds - Targhee, Merino, Rambouillet, Cormo
- Dual Purpose Breeds - Columbia, Corriedale, Panama, Finnsheep, Polypay
- Meat Breeds (white face) - Cheviot, Dorset, Finnsheep, Polypay, Texel
- Meat Breeds (black face) - Clun Forest, Hampshire, Oxford, Shropshire, Southdown, Suffolk, Tunis
- Long Wool/Carpet Wool Breeds - Black Welsh Mountain, Bluefaced Leicester, Border Leicester, Leicester Longwool, Coopworth, Cotswold, Icelandic, Jacob, Karakul, Lincoln, Navajo Churro, Romney, Shetland, Scottish Blackface

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Artisan Wool Markets - typically Heritage/Long Wool

Direct Marketing individual fleeces, washed locks, or handspun yarns

Marketing/producing yarns, rovings or finished items from individual animals and marketing as such

Pros - natural colors are celebrated, dedicated customers who purchase annually, smaller flock size, breeding stock can be valuable

Cons - extra time/energy needed, higher prices to process individual fleeces, commercial market value is much lower for heritage breeds, commercial wool value is very low



Commercial Wool Market - Meat Breeds

Best sold in bulk to wool buyer or through a wool pool

Good wool for bedding companies/products, emerging market for wool fertilizer

Typically short stapled and coarse



Commercial Wool Markets - Fine Wool

Can be sold through a wool buyer, wool pool or artisan markets

Typically fine wool is something fiber mills are looking for

Prices depend on uniformity, micron count and contamination

Commercial prices per lb can vary from \$3.84 (<18.6 micron) - \$1.47 (23.6-25.9 micron) based on clean value according to the USDA December 2023 reports

Selling direct to fiber mills might get \$2-6/lb grease weight for skirted/classed wool

Direct to consumer - \$8-40/lb grease weight - a lot depends on quality and marketing

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Raising Marketable Wool

- Quality - genetics, breed characteristics
- Cleanliness and contamination
 - Poly, vegetable matter, colored sheep (in commercial flocks)
- Shearing
 - Shearing set up, professional shearers make all the difference



Feeding and Pasture Management for Fiber Production

- When possible feed on the ground
 - Round bales should be enclosed with panels
 - Overhead mangers should not be used
- Eradicate and be on the lookout for burdock, cockleburs, other hitchhiking seeds
 - Mowing and/or burning pastures occasionally
- Barn bedding
 - Do not put sheep on freshly bedding just before shearing, give at least a week for the fresh bedding to “calm down” and shake off the sheep prior to shearing
 - NO wood shavings!
 - Left over hay scraps is good bedding material

To coat, or not to coat

Pros

- Clean, pristine fiber
- Higher yields and profits with direct marketing

Cons

- Extra cost for coats (\$15-30 per coat)
- Extra Maintenance on sheep, changing coats, mending coats
- Coats can be hazardous to sheep



Wool Markets

- Direct Marketing raw fleeces to handspinners and fiber artists
 - Facebook groups such as Raw Wool for Sale
- Direct Marketing finished yarns or goods from your fiber
 - Farmers markets, local craft fairs, fiber festivals
- Selling to a fiber mill
 - Talk to your local mill to see if they have a need for fiber
- Contracting with a wool pool or wool warehouse buyer

Groenewold Fur and Wool Company - office@gfwco.com - www.gfwco.com

Center of the Nation Wool - larry.cnwool@midconenetwork.com

Monroe County Wool Pool - www.mcsheepproducers.com

Direct Marketing wool products

Products

- Raw Fleeces - \$5-40/lb (according to Livestock Conservancy)
- Yarn - \$15-32/4oz skein
- Roving - \$2-6/1oz
- Wool Pellet fertilizer - \$6-12/lb



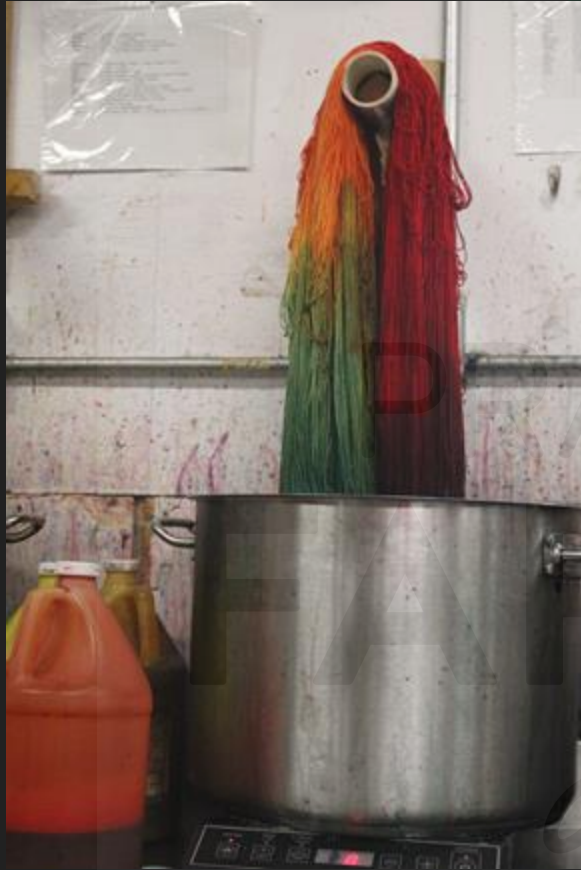
Markets

Find your local yarn store, talk to them about carrying local yarns from your and what specifically they can market the best BEFORE you get it processed!

Talk to your local green house or hardware store about wool fertilizer, are they interested in selling or purchasing wool pellets?

Fiber Festivals

- Estes Park Wool Market, Estes Park, CO
- Wisconsin Sheep and Wool Festival, Jefferson, WI
- Shepherds Harvest, Lake Elmo, MN
- Maryland Sheep and Wool, West Friendship, MD
- New York Sheep and Wool, Rhinebeck, NY









Sheep are Versatile!

- Meat
- Wool
- Pelts
- Fertilizer made from wool
- Land Management/Grazing
- Milk

Diversity in your products and time spent marketing those products will be your best bet in farming with sheep

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Adding sheep to your farm

- Create biodiversity with other livestock endeavors (pasturing cattle - sheep - chickens)
 - Studies have shown that when you add sheep to a cattle herd, you get 20 to 25% greater productivity and carrying capacity over cattle alone, and 8 to 9% greater productivity and carrying capacity over sheep alone (Walker, 1994). Walker, John. 1994. Multispecies grazing: The ecological advantage. Sheep Research Journal, Special Issue.

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Thank You!

Questions?



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