

The key to successful shearing and maintaining wool quality is planning and communication.

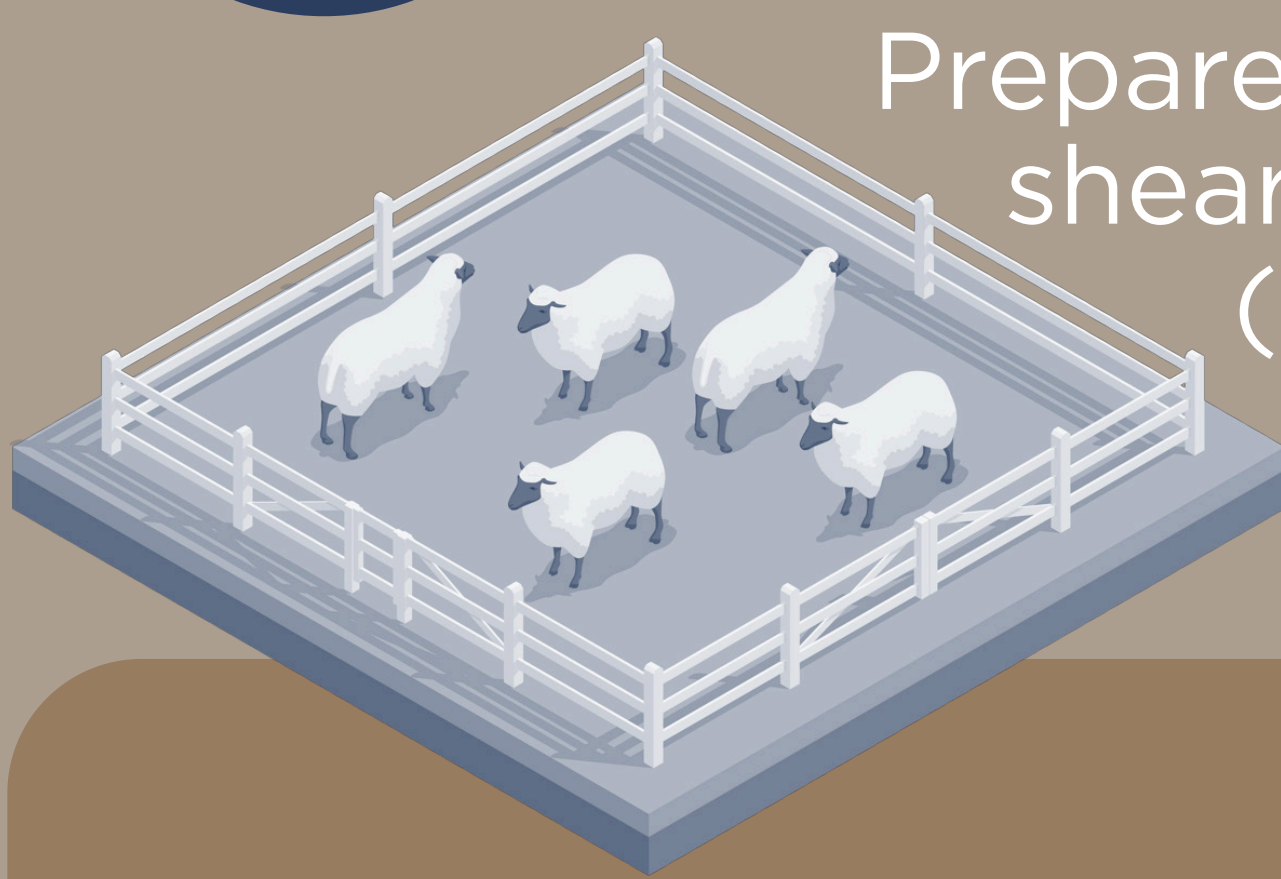
The overall goal is to complete shearing with minimal stress on the sheep, working help, and shearing crew– all are achievable as producers consider and prepare for various factors such as weather, wool quality, and shearer well-being.



## TIMING & PREPARATION



**Schedule shearing during the breeding season**, ideally a month before lambing. **Coordinate with the shearer** regarding facilities, labor, and daily sheep quota.



Prepare **clean, contamination-free pens** for sheep the day before shearing. **Withhold feed and water for at least six hour** (preferably 12 hours) prior to shearing to prevent fecal and urine contamination. Ensure sheep are dry before shearing; wet wool should not be shorn.

### RECOMMENDED HOURS TO WITHHOLD FEED & WATER BEFORE SHEARING

	MIN. HOURS WITHOUT FEED	MAX. HOURS WITHOUT FEED	MIN. HOURS WITHOUT WATER	MAX. HOURS WITHOUT FEED	SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
Adult Sheep					
Rams, Non-pregnant, Non-lactating	20	32	12	24	●
Early-Mid Pregnancy	18	30	12	24	●
Late Pregnancy & Lactation	12	24	8	20	Where practical, unweaned lambs should remain with their mothers until ewes enter to be shorn.
Yearlings					
Non-pregnant, Non-lactating	18	30	12	24	Use special care when handling pregnant yearlings.
Pregnancy & Lactation	12	24	8	20	
Lambs					
Pre-weaned	6	24	6	20	●
Weaned	12	24	8	20	●

## SORTING & SHEARING

**Sort sheep in advance based on wool type, fiber diameter, and length.** The current market favors finer fleeces. Consider testing wool before shearing or sorting finer fleeces into separate lots.

### RECOMMENDED SHEARING ORDER:

1. WHITE FACE
2. CROSSBREDS
3. BLACK FACE
4. HAIR & CROSSES



## SHEARER CARE AND CONSIDERATIONS



**Provide meals** for shearers and their helpers.



**Use plastic scrapie tags** instead of metal tags, which can be dangerous to shearers.



To address shearing shortages, **consider alternative shearing times** and support shearer training programs to address the seasonal shortage.



**Communicate** effectively, plan carefully, and **foster a strong working relationship**.

## WOOL SKIRTING & QUALITY

**Reduce contamination:** Reduce contamination throughout the year to maintain wool quality. This includes avoiding poly, paint, and hair sheep or crosses.

**Skirt fleeces:** By removing crows' nest, tags, and other contaminants before bailing, producers can increase the value of wool clip.

**Quality:** The current wool market greatly favors finer fleeces (< 23 micron), with coarser fleeces (> 28 micron) possessing little value. Consider testing wool prior to shearing, or sorting finer fleeces into separate lots as a way of capitalizing in the current market.

**Branding:** If branding is necessary, use approved scourable marking fluids.