

# How to properly collect fleece for sorting when a sorter is not available for live sort.

This method can also be used if...

- The weather is inclement on shearing day and fleece needs to dry before being sorted.
- The sorter is behind at live shearing and need to keep fleeces organized until the sorter can catch up.

## Supplies needed

- 1) 55 gal. clear plastic bags (U-line sells them by the box)  
*Cut the bottom of the bag, and then cut down one side making a large flat piece of plastic.*

***You can also use plastic sheeting that can be obtained at most home improvement stores. Just cut the sheeting in 6' lengths.***

- 2) Small clear bags for neck fiber
- 3) 33 gallon clear size bags labeled with Owner ID, alpaca name and color.
- 4) Black marker

## Method

- 1) **Place the cut plastic 55 gal. bag under the alpaca before shearing begins.** *You can roll the alpaca slightly away from you and easily slip the bag under it. Once the shearer has the blanket on the plastic, slide the plastic out from under the alpaca, towards you. Wrap the top and bottom edges over the fleece so it meets in the middle, making sure the plastic covers the entire fleece. Fold in sides of plastic and gently roll fleece into tight "noodle". The roll can be secured with tape if needed to hold it's shape. Place the roll on the scale and record blanket weight. Place the rolled fleece in properly marked (Owner ID, alpaca name and color) clear 33 gallon size bag.*
- 2) **Use the small clear bags for neck fiber, making sure to not include any short cuts from lower jaw, and any areas (brisket/chest).**

**NOTE:** If you are not careful in collecting the neck fiber and inadvertently include all the garbage with it, the usable fiber will become contaminated resulting in higher loss.

- 3) **Weigh the neck fiber and put the small clear bag in the 33 gallon clear size bag with the rolled up blanket fleece.**

**It is very important to have the outside bag labeled with at least alpaca name and color.**

Ask your sorter for some sort records to have on hand for shearing day. Fill them out with farm info and alpaca names in the order your alpacas are sheared. As the alpaca is being shorn you need to record the weights of areas of fleece, (*blanket, neck, legs/belly/chest*). Place the record in the bag with the fleece and neck fiber. **DO NOT INCLUDE THE LEG, BELLY, AND CHEST** ("the 3rds", the rug fiber) **IN WITH THE FIBER TO BE SORTED, just record their weight on the individual sort record.**

Proper sheering and fleece collection is the key to maximizing your yearly harvest.

While good sheering will not improve the fleece of your alpaca, poor sheering can ruin it! It is very important that you work with the shearer and the shearer works with you, when gathering the fleece and cleaning up the sheering area.

It is very important to have the basic knowledge of what fiber needs to be collected verses just letting the youngest member of the farm grab your fleeces and throw them into a bag.

It's important to hire a shearer who is will to work with and for you or all your efforts will be wasted and you will be disappointed with the outcome of your harvest.



Ready to noodle



Slide fleece away from shearer



Fold one more time



Guide fleece onto plastic



Scrunch fleece to middle to avoid Contamination of edges on rest of fleece



Roll up fleece



Don't pull just guide



Make sure plastic meets in middle



Tape to keep tight