



Sheep Lesson

Concept Objective: Sheep uses and care

Time: 40-45 minutes

Setting: Indoors

Activities: Discussion, wool carding and spinning, Sheep Sculptures

Materials Needed:

- Wool Samples
- Carders
- Drop Spindles
- Yarn for demo and starter
- One empty thread spool
- Chenille Stems
- Glue bottles
- Googlie eyes
- Sheep Pictures
- Magnifiers



Procedure:

1. Discuss sheep, history, products, uses and care.
2. Pass out a sample of wool, discuss the Characteristics of Wool (see handout).
3. Show the students the sample yarn.
4. Demonstrate drop spindle (see instruction pages)
5. Then make sheep sculptures. (see instructions)

Background:

The sheep is an animal which has a thick coat of fleece on its body. The female sheep is called an ewe. The young are called lambs and the male is called the ram. Do you know what kind of sound the sheep makes ? Yes, it says "baa-baa" or bleat.. Can you make the same sound too? The average life-span of a

sheep is about 7 years. Sheep have a hoof that is divided into two toes. The horn of the ram is usually curved outward. Not all rams have horns. There are hornless breeds too. In some breeds, even the ewes have horns. Some live longer.

Sheep are hardy animals. This means that it can survive in tough climates, like the cold or dry climates and feed on different types of grass. Sheep move around in large groups called flocks. They graze on fresh grass. In the olden days, a shepherd and his dog will watch over the flock. However, in modern

Every Spring, the sheep are shorn. This means that their fleece is shaved off. Spring is chosen because it is no longer cold and therefore the sheep can do without its fleece which it needs to keep warm in winter. The fleece has to be removed in one single piece. This requires a very skilled person to do. The shearer must also be strong enough to hold the sheep in place while he is shearing it. A good shearer might take less than 5 minutes to do this. He can shear as many as 125 sheep a day !!

Most lambs are born in spring too. Ewes usually give birth to either one or two lambs at a time. She carries the lambs in her body for about 5 months before they are born. Ewes come into maturity to begin breeding at about 6 months old but they are not allowed to do so until they are about 1.5 years old. The lambs will stay with its mother until it is about 5 months old. At 6 months, they are considered fully grown. However, we still call them lambs if they are less than one year old. A lamb identifies or will know its mother by her bleat, which is the sound she makes.

The sheep is believed to be first domesticated in Asia during the Bronze Age. Primitive tribesmen kept the sheep for its wool to keep warm and the meat as food. The sheep is still important to us today. They provide us with both food, leather, clothing and give us the raw materials for by-products, such as soap, lanolin, glue, tallow and catgut. Catgut is used in stringing tennis and badminton rackets.

Wool is a natural fibre grown from sheep. Clothes made from wool will not burn, they are fire-resistant. Lanolin is natural oil found in the sheep's fleece which is used to make cosmetics and candlewax. Today, modern sheep, through selective breeding are bred for either their good meat or quality wool. Examples of these are, the Australian Merino which is bred for its high quality wool. Woollen clothes also stay cool in summer and warm in winter. Different kinds of sheep will produce different kinds or quality of wool. Woolen clothes will stay cool in summer and warm in winter.

Although most sheep are raised for meat and wool, the East Friesian is a dairy sheep raised for production of milk in Germany. It has white wool and white faces, ears, and legs all clean of wool and a "rat-tail" that is thin and has no wool on it. In France, milk from Roquefort sheep is used to make Roquefort cheese. Sheep's milk is different from cow's milk. It contains more protein and has a higher fat content. Then there is the East Friesian Sheep that is bred for its milk.

The sheep have many natural enemies like the coyotes, the mountain lions, wolves and even the domestic dogs.