



When Life Gives You Wool

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Cherie Langlois

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I don't want to give you the impression that sheep are stupid; they're definitely not.

But I wouldn't call them geniuses, either (there's a reason you don't see bumper stickers that say "My sheep is smarter than your honor student").

By the end of shearing day, my four Jacob ewes had toned down the BAAing a bit and stopped staring at one another as if they were sheep-shaped creatures from Mars.

Either each ewe realized that these other odd-smelling, silly-looking creatures were actually their old friends, deprived only of their wool, or else they'd quickly accepted the aliens into the flock.

Whatever their sheepy thought processes, everyone seemed happy enough the next day.

Now, about that fleece we stole ...

Back when I had a larger flock--and more bags of wool--I had to figure out what to do with this sudden super-abundance of fluff each year or suffocate in it.

Here are some ways I dealt with my wool surplus, in case you find yourself in the same predicament. Sold fleeces to hand spinners. To do this your fleeces need to be super clean and skirted extremely well (mine usually aren't, so I haven't sold many).

Sent wool to a woolen mill to be woven into blankets (www.macauslandswoolenmills.com/) These made beautiful gifts for the holidays.

Used the dirty skirtings to mulch around our fruit trees and shrubs.

Pooled it with a friend's wool to be made into yarn. I got some back to knit with, and she sold the rest through her yarn and rug-hooking business (take a look at www.littlehouserugs.com if you'd like to learn about rug-hooking, a great use for wool yarn, too).

Skirted, washed, and used it myself. I've had such great fun learning a little about spinning, weaving, knitting, felting, and rug-hooking with wool – and there's so much more I want to learn!

P.S. Four bags of wool are taking up space in our garage, and my husband would really like me to get them out of there, so I'd love to hear what you do with your flock's fleeces!

~ Cherie

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