

This document will help you navigate the fiber guidelines for shearing, processing and sending to LFCNA (The CO-OP).

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- **Basic Requirements**

- Because of the overwhelming job of sorting hundreds of pounds of llama fiber we must set some basic guidelines for accepting fiber.

- **USABLE FIBER**

- We want all the usable fiber from your llama.
- We accept all fiber that is **NOT** matted, infested with lice or moths, dirty with dust, large debris and/or foreign material such as pine cones, wire, rocks, dung tags, sticks.
- Review the llama diagram below.

- **LENGTH:**

- The mills generally cannot use fiber shorter than 2 inches or longer than 6 inches
- However, we can accept good usable fiber that is less than 2 inches for our felted insoles or dog beds (Grade #4) and good usable fiber over 6 inches for rugs (Grade #3).

- **QUALITY: (Samples are supplied for you if you are not going to a Fiber Sort)**
 - Grade 1: Best fiber that will be used for product next to their skin. Products: Blankets, Hats, other knits
 - Grade 2: Fiber that has some fineness issues or softer Guard Hairs; Neither 1 or 3. Products: Socks and some Blankets
 - Grade 3: All other fibers that is determined to be to be too coarse for other products. Some guard hair, over 6 inches, other defects. Products: Rugs, Dog Beds
 - Grade 4: Usable fiber that is < 2 inches long. All colors can be mixed together. Product: Felted Insoles.
 - When in Doubt, grade it down (except Grade 4). If it is between a 1 or 2, Grade 2. If between a 2 or 3, Grade 3.

- **COLOR CATEGORIES (Samples are supplied for you if you are not going to a Fiber Sort)**
 - **BLACK** (Only) - Black has no white, grey, brown or red.
 - **RED** (Only) – Red has *some* white. Has no other color mixed in.
 - **WHITE** (Only) – No other color present. Llama usually is not a ‘true’ white but no color should show.
 - **GREY** - Everything in the “Grey” tone that is not considered black or white. Grey has *no brown*.
 - **BROWN** - ‘The Catch All’ if it does not match the other colors it is Brown. Everything from ‘blonde’ to ‘dark blackish/brown’.
 - If multicolor like an Appy, put in the overall color (It may be helpful to squint your eyes and see what color is seen the most).
 - If Grade 4, all colors can go in one bag.

- **CLEAN AND UNDAMAGED:**
 - The CLEANER the llama is, the better! BLOWING OUT your llama(s) fiber before shearing makes a HUGE difference! Your blades will last longer and it will cost less to ship.
 - Please REMOVE any large debris and/or foreign material. Pine cones, wire, rocks, dung tags, sticks, etc.
 - PLEASE check for MOTH damage prior to sending. Look for the presence of dust-like droppings in the bottom of the bag, as well as the presence of larval tubes, thin silken tubes under ½” in length with a thicker middle. See pictures at www.ext.colostate.edu/PUBS/INSECT/05599.html
 - CHECK for LICE infestation, SEVERE dandruff or is heavily matted, please DO NOT send it to us.
 - If the llama fiber is wet, lay it out to dry fully before bagging it up.

▪ **BAGGING:**

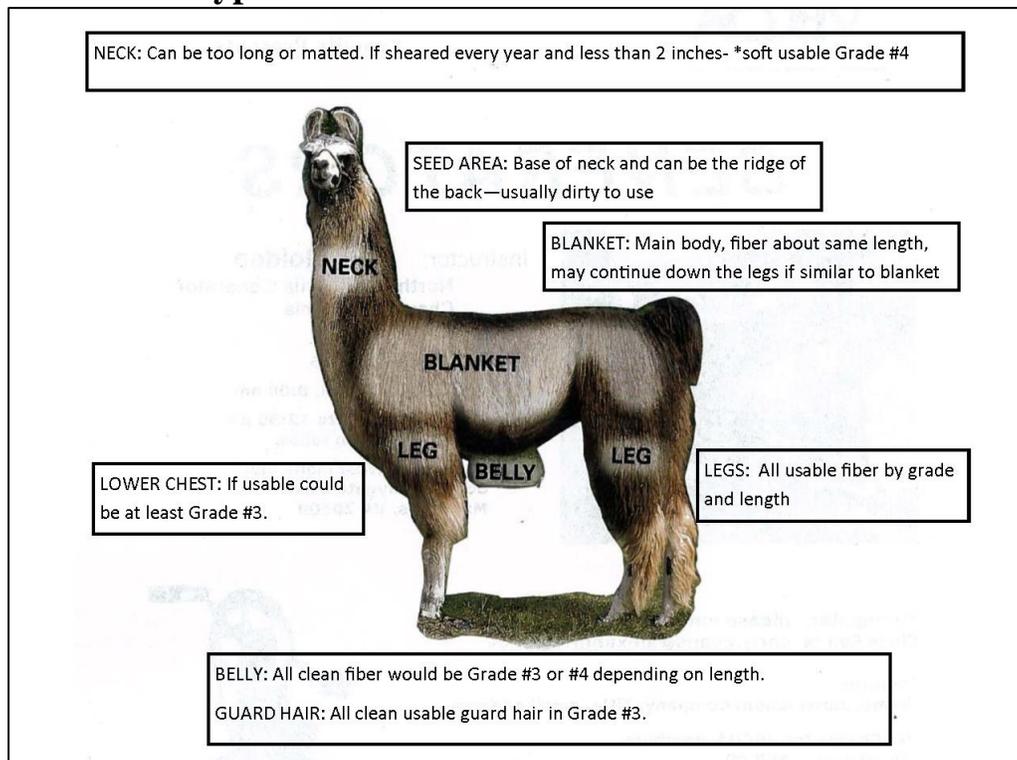
- Please **SHAKE OUT** your llama fiber to remove 2nd cuts* before putting in a **CLEAR, PLASTIC** bag. **DO NOT** close up the bags until the heat & moisture from the llama has left the fiber. If closed up immediately, the fiber can be damaged and breathing the molds can cause problems for the sorters.
- Please put each llama(s) fleece in a separate bag and **LABEL** (see samples at end). Clear bags in several sizes can be reasonably purchased at Costco. We prefer clear bags for the visibility of the fiber when we sort and to discourage moths, as they prefer dark places.

*2nd cuts happen when you are cutting previously cut areas. You will see them as 1/4-1 inch pieces. Blow or shake these out.

▪ **STORING:**

- Avoid storing your fiber for more than a year before getting it to the Fiber Coop. If you need to store for a long time, it will not attract moths as easily if it is in **CLEAR** bags in a light area and if it is not blown out right away. Seems moths are attracted to our blown out fiber more than if we leave it a bit dirty. Only washed fiber will be the most resistant to moths.

LLAMA PARTS: Typical fiber use



- **Before Shearing each Animal**

- Clean the area where you will be shearing. Bits of fiber do fall as you shear and you can scoop them up without them getting dirty. Clean the area between shearing different animals.
- Each animal will probably require at least 2-3 separate bags in order to separate the shear zones: **blanket, neck and leg fiber** (review the llama diagram). Additional bags may be needed if colors are separated within the 3 main shear zones.
- **Determine what will be Usable**
- **Determine staple Length**
- **Determine Quality**
- **Determine Color(s) if you are separating colors within the fleece**

- **Shearing**

Shears or blades are sharpened, animal is blown or brushed free of debris, clear bags are in hand and ID papers are ready to be filled out and placed in bags with fiber.

Basic shearing steps:

1. Cut top line from neck to tail and discard if full of vegetation.
2. Cut blanket zone fiber as far down the belly and back towards the tail until fiber becomes less soft. Separate colors as necessary. Fill out ID paper and add to bag.
3. Cut leg zone. Discard tangled fiber. Again, separate colors as necessary and fill out ID paper.
4. Cut neck zone. Discard 'seed area' or 'oat zone' fiber. Again, separate colors as necessary and fill out ID paper. (*less than 2" Grade #4*) (*longer than 6" Grade #3*)
5. Shear belly area and discard if matted otherwise grade it appropriately by softness and length.
6. Squeeze air out of bags, tie shut, and store out of the sun.

MEMBERS Taking fiber to a *FIBER SORT*

- **After Shearing** (those going to a Fiber Sort)
 - Keep bags dry and out of the sun but in the light (discourages moths).
 - Make sure labels are in the bag.
 - Shake out fiber to reduce amount of 2nd cuts. Blow out in a cage if possible.

USE THIS LABEL FOR MEMBERS GOING TO A FIBER SORT

FARM _____ / Name _____

Member Non member

Blown Out Not Blown Out

***** only fill in top half*****

Color: Red Brown White Black Grey

Grade: 1 2 3 4

Weight _____ oz.

**This link introduces you to the fun of a fiber sort and gives some added guidance:
(compliments of the Fiber Sort in Pennsylvania)**

<https://www.facebook.com/liyarnandfarm/videos/1124798257541135/>

MEMBERS Sending Fiber Directly to the CO-OP

• After Shearing

- Now that you have sorted and graded your fiber following the guidelines above, it is time to get it ready for shipping.
- Keep bags dry and out of the sun but in the light (discourages moths).
- Make sure labels are in the bag.
- Shake out fiber to reduce amount of 2nd cuts. Blow out in a cage if possible.
- When you are preparing your bags of fleece to ship to the main Coop warehouse in Oregon, squeeze as much air out of the bags as you can and really pack the fleeces in tightly into the shipping boxes to maximize the most fleece in a box you possibly can.
- **Contact LFCNA for instructions on shipping.**

USE A LABEL WITH THIS INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS SENDING THEIR OWN FIBER TO CO-OP.

LFCNA: FIBER COOP MEMBERS LABEL. One per bag	
FARM NAME _____	OWNER NAME _____
SHEARING DATE _____	ANIMAL NAME _____
FIBER ZONE: ___ Blanket ___ Neck ___ Leg	
STAPLE LENGTH _____ Ideal, 2 to 6 inches (Send to COOP)	
___ Less than 2 inches (Send as Grade #4 to COOP)	
___ Greater than 6 inches (Do not send to the COOP)	

Member of the LFCNA (Fiber Coop)? ___ Yes ___ No	
Was fiber blown out AFTER it was sheared from animal ___ Yes ___ No	
.....	
Circle color and Grade below:	
Color: Red Brown White Black Grey	Grade: 1 2 3 4
Weight: _____	

Thank you for participating in the llama fiber co-op!