

National 4-H Skillathon Contest Study Guide: Wool Evaluation

Wool Judging Class: 35 points possible (based on standard 50 point scale)
Questions on class: 5 points each; 25 points possible

These example judging classes and questions are designed to help students acquire a base level of skills in wool evaluation and placing. Weight, yield, uniformity, fineness and other elements are used in ranking classes. When judging a class, youth will be able to examine the fleece from all angles and are allowed to handle the fleece as follows: lift the fleece to estimate weight and remove a lock of wool for close evaluation. To facilitate these examples, weights and estimated yields are provided. These will NOT be provided in the actual contest.

Quick Facts:

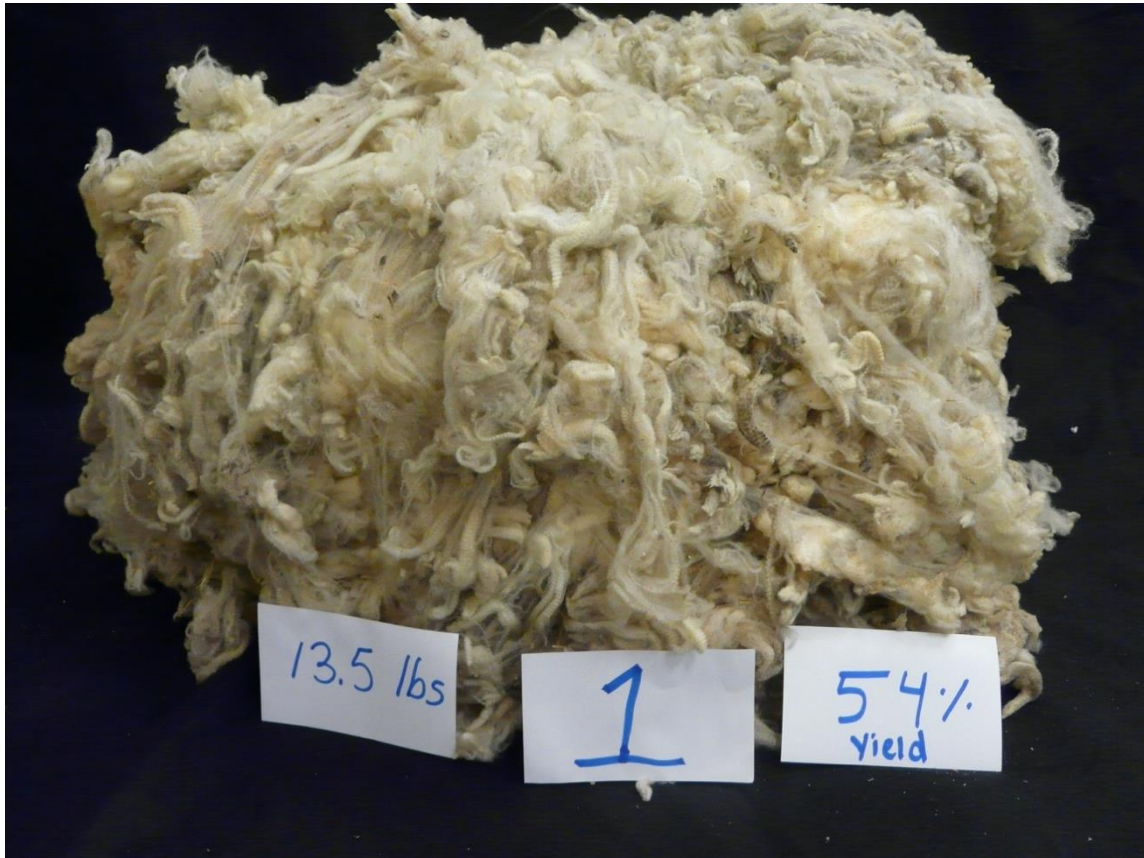
- For these class examples; acceptable staple will be considered to be 3-5 inches.
 - o Pictured ruler has each inch indicated by blue line.
 - o This length may not always be considered acceptable or ideal. Participants should be familiar with acceptable staple lengths for each grade of wool. (For example, 2 ¾ inches is considered full staple for fine wool; minimum acceptable length is longer for coarser wools.)
- Weight is an important characteristic. A heavy, high yielding grease fleece will yield a large amount of clean wool.
- Yield refers to the yield of clean wool, that is how much will remain after dirt, vegetable matter and lanolin is removed.
 - o Vegetable matter refers to the amount of dirt and debris in fleece.
- Length of staple is an important factors in ranking fleeces.
 - o Look for uniformity of length throughout the fleece.
 - o Fleeces should meet minimum staple length.
 - o Length can also be affected by soundness of the fleece – if a lock of fleece breaks when gently tugged on, the fleece will not maintain staple length during processing.
- Purity and character are two other traits to consider.
 - o Purity refers to freedom from black or pigmented fibers, hair and kemp.
 - o Character refers to the general appearance, including crimp, handle and color.
- Quality or fineness should be appropriate for the listed breed or type. For example, in a class of fine wool fleeces, all fleeces should exhibit fiber diameters characteristics of fine wool.
 - o Uniformity throughout the fleece is important.
- A wool judging scorecard, as used in wool/fleece shows, uses the following guidelines:

Characteristic	Points
- Estimated clean yield	35
- Length	25
- Quality or fineness	10
- Soundness (strength)	10
- Purity	10
- Character and color	10
Total Points	100

Class Example A: Fine wool (64's) fleeces:

Scenario: You are a commercial wool buyer looking for high quality fleeces used for making quality worsted wool. Rank the fleeces from most to least desirable based on elements that you deem important for purchasing.

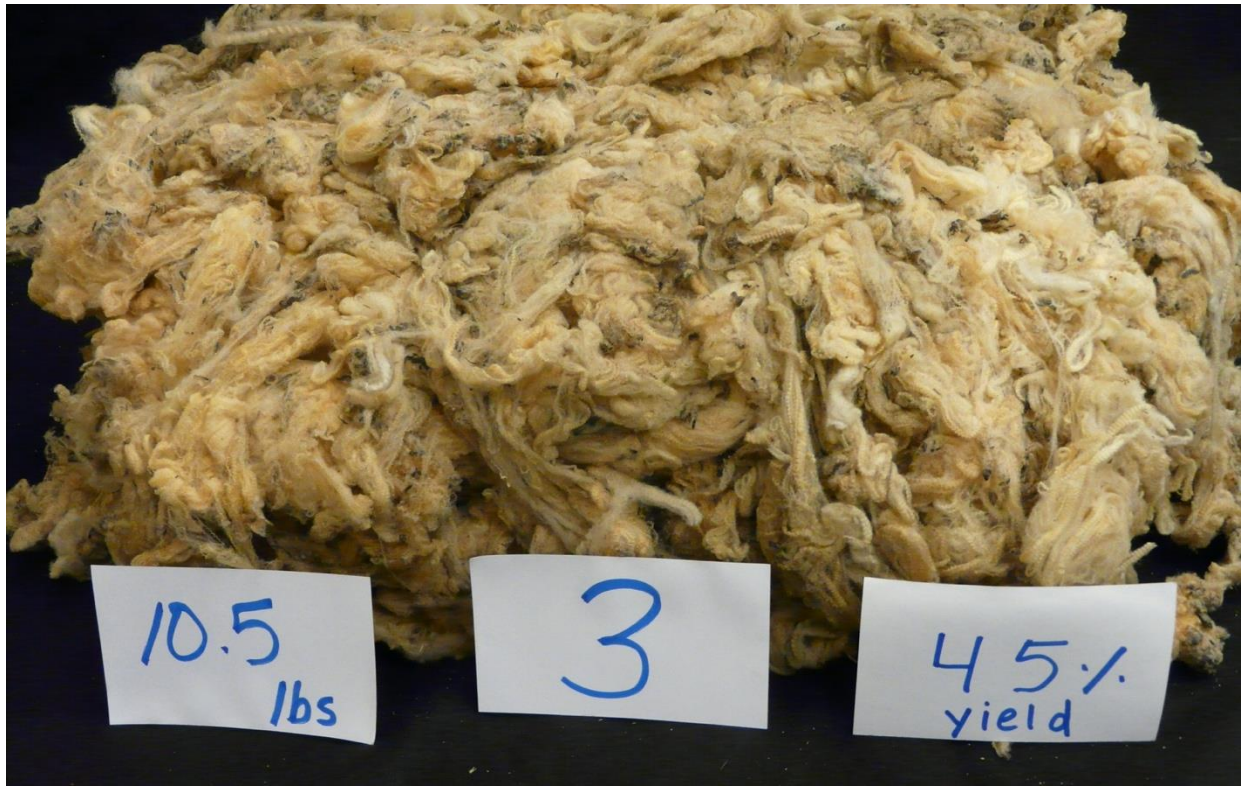


















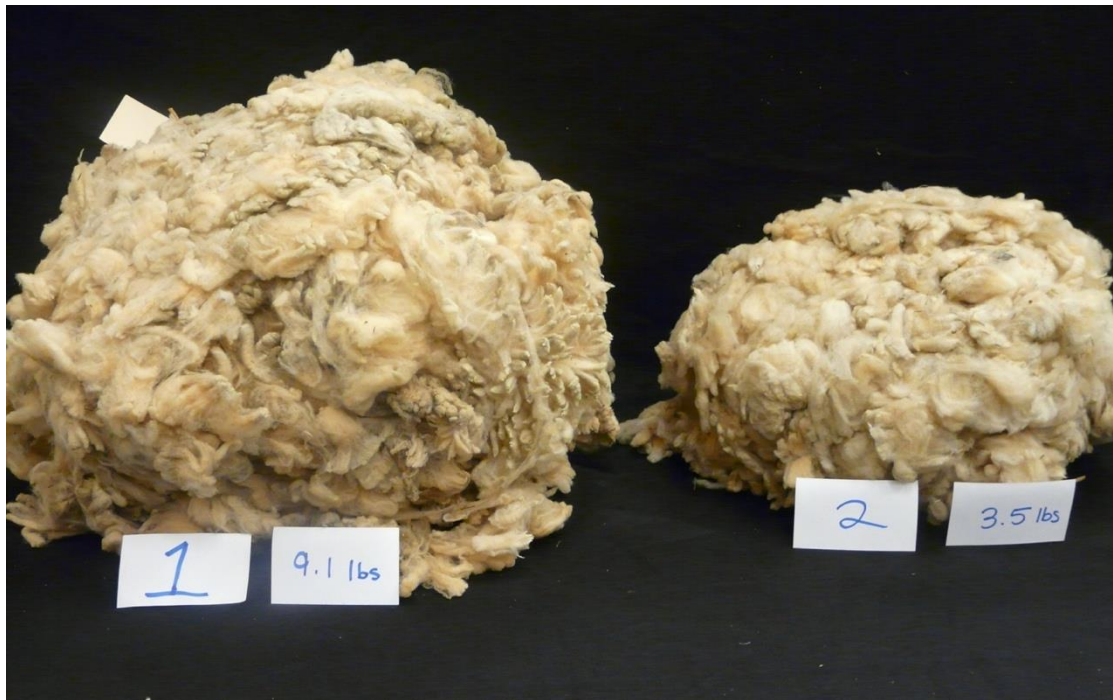
Questions:

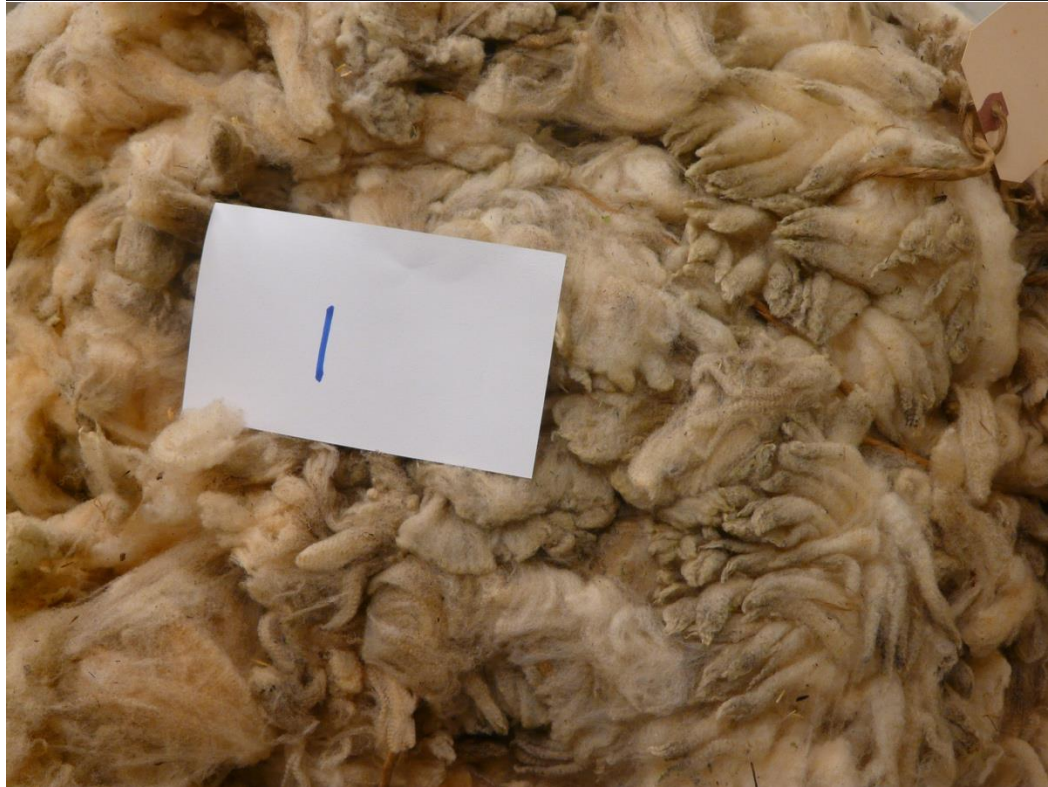
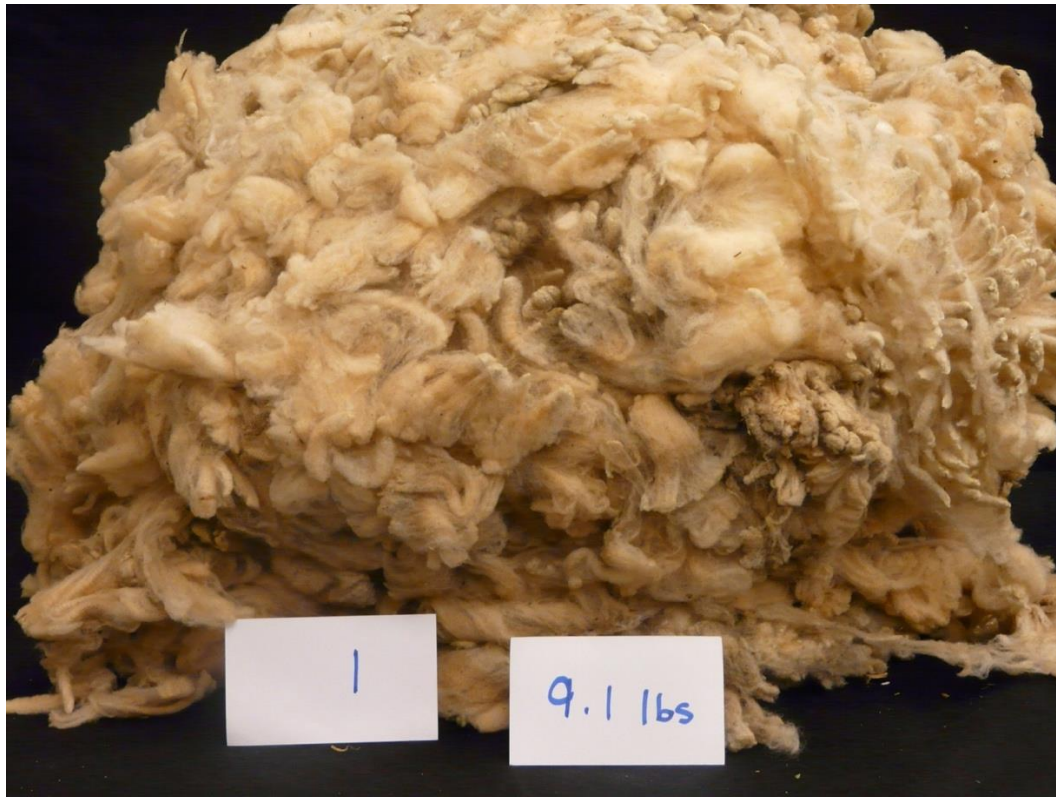
1. Which fleece would yield the fewest pounds of clean wool?
2. Which fleece has the most vegetable matter?
3. Excluding number 1, which fleece has the brightest color?
4. Which fleece appears to have the finest diameter?
5. Which fleece has the shortest and most inconsistent staple length?
6. Between fleeces 1 and 2, which fleece has the most desirable and uniform crimp?

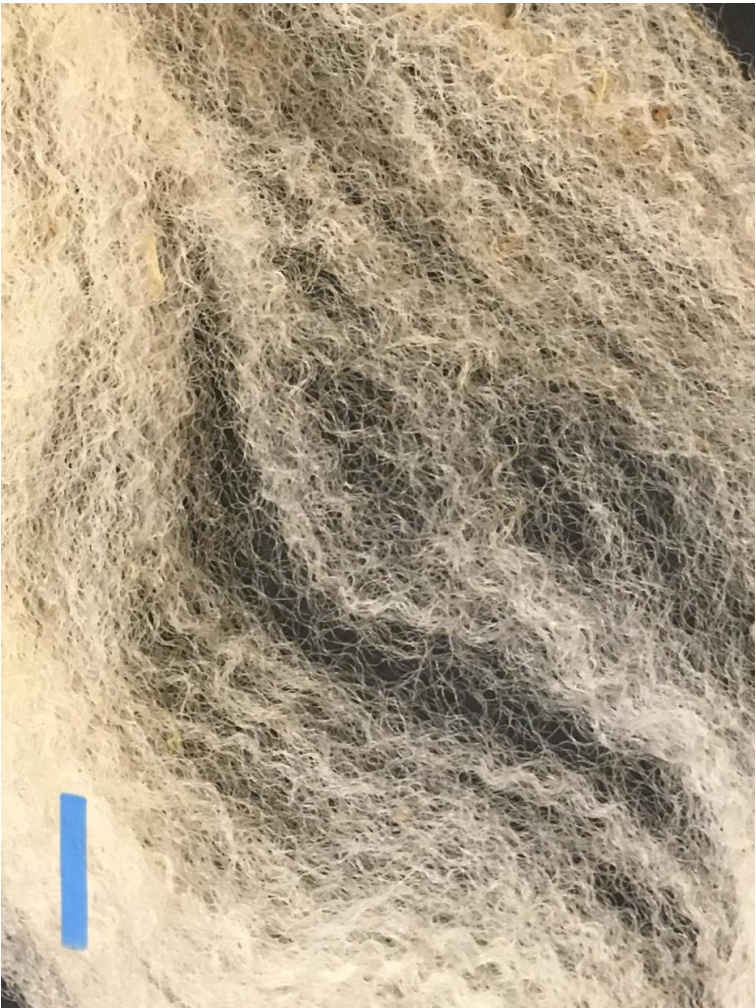
Placing: _____; _____; _____; _____

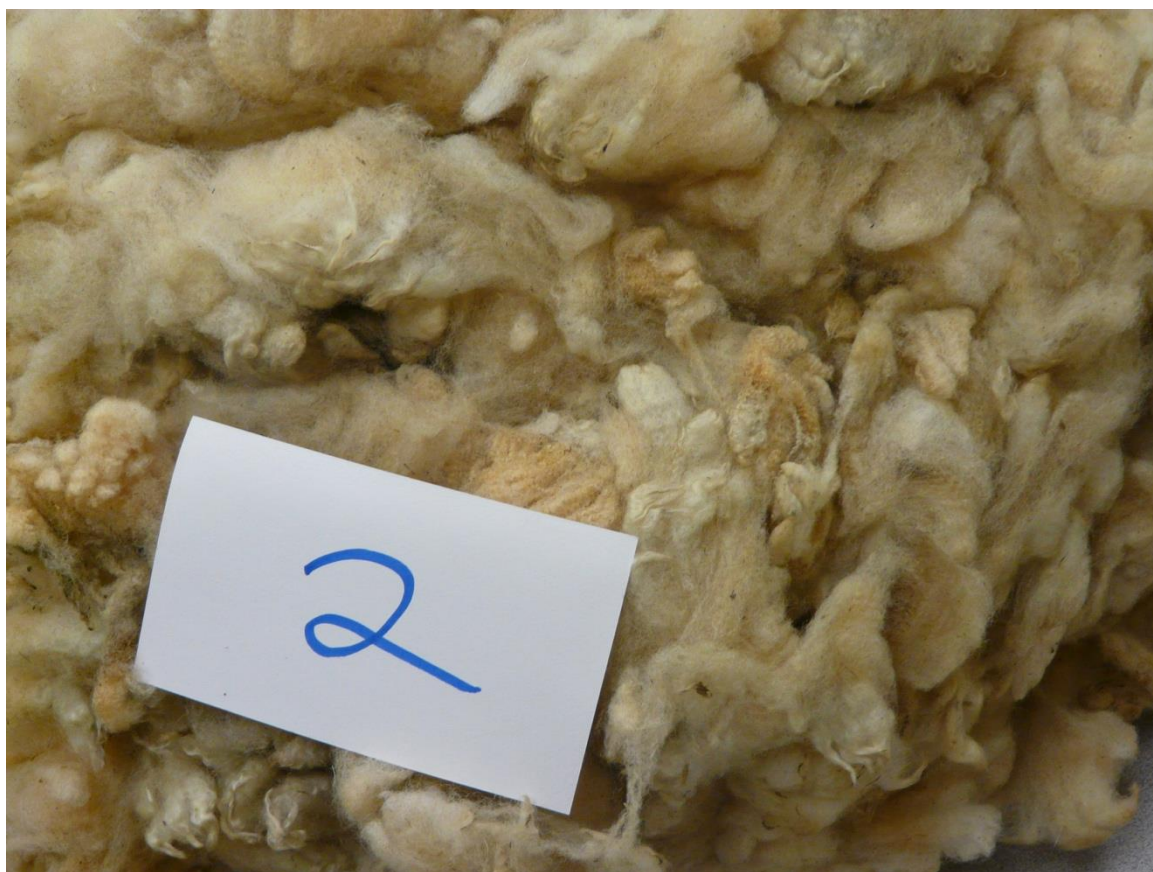
Class Example B: ½ Blood Commercial Fleeces

Scenario: You are a commercial sheep producer evaluating your own fleeces based on how much income they could add to your operation. All fleeces are from a similar growth period. Rank the fleeces on which would add the most value to your operation.

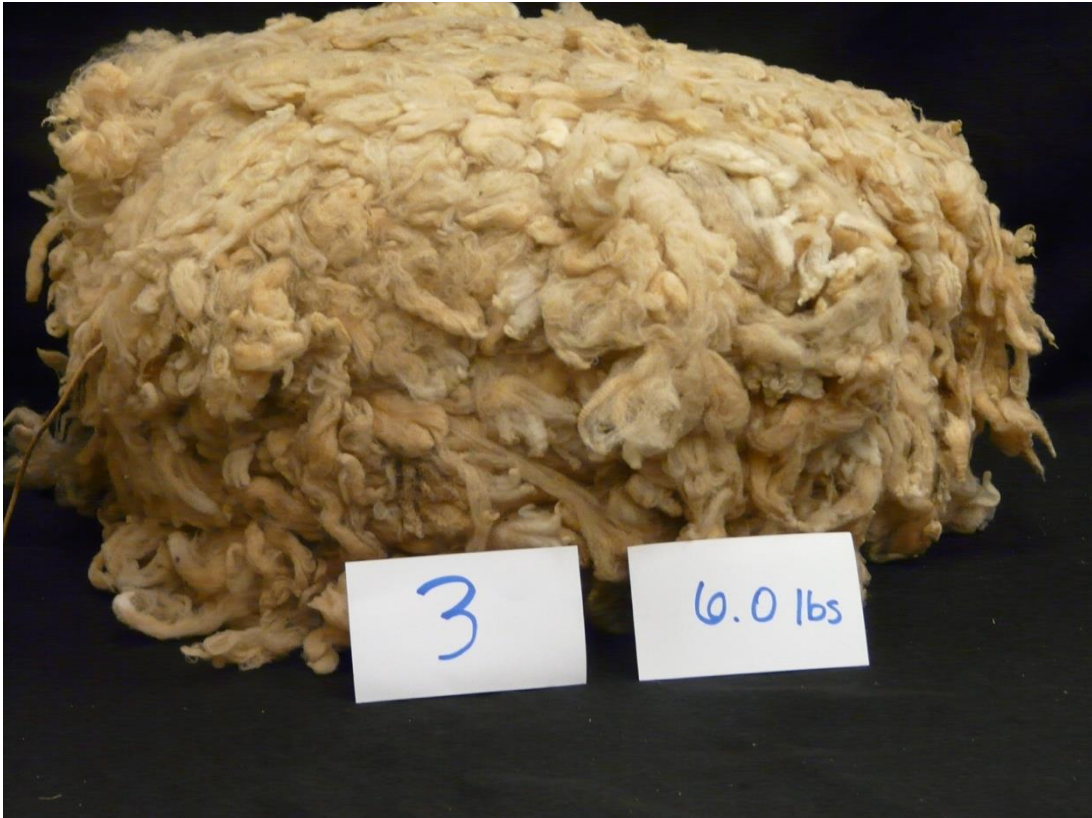




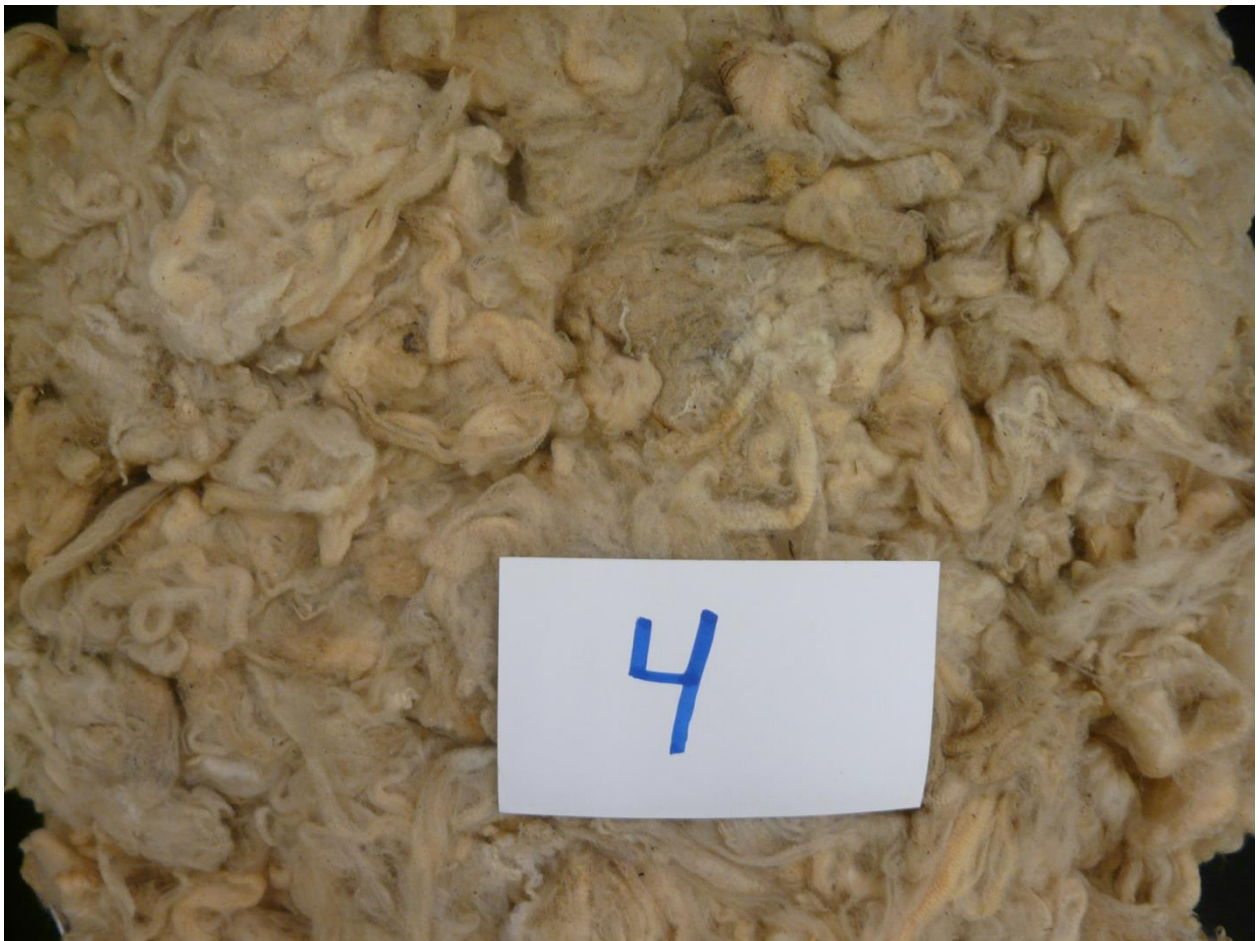
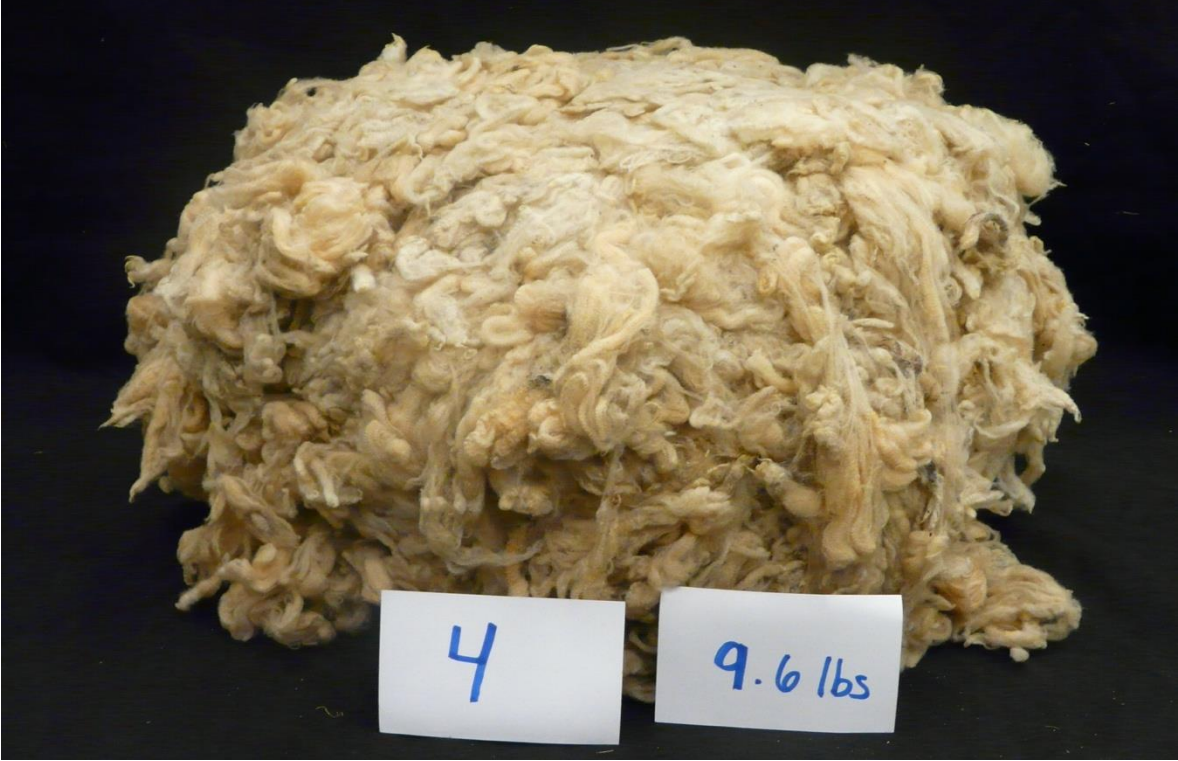














Questions:

1. Which fleece appears to be finer than a $\frac{1}{2}$ blood?
2. How many fleeces have acceptable staple length?
3. Between 1 and 4, which has less dirt and vegetable matter?
4. Which will yield the fewest pounds of clean wool?
5. Between 1 and 4, which fleece is more "tippy"?

Key:

A.

1. Which fleece would yield the fewest pounds of clean wool?
3
2. Which fleece has the most vegetable matter?
2
3. Excluding model one, which fleece has the brightest color?
4
4. Which fleece has the finest diameter?
3
5. Which fleece has the shortest and most inconsistent staple length?
3
6. Which model has the most desirable and uniform crimp?
1

Placing: __1__ ; __2__ ; __4__ ; __3__

Cuts: __3__ ; __2__ ; __4__

B.

1. Which fleece appears to be finer than a ½ blood?

4

2. How many fleeces have acceptable staple length?

2

3. Between 1 and 4, which has less dirt and vegetable matter?

4

4. Which will yield the fewest pounds of clean wool?

2

5. Between 1 and 4, which fleece is less “tippy”?

4

Placing: 4 ; 1 ; 3 ; 2

Cuts: 2 ; 6 ; 4