

SHEEP

Sheep are a type of livestock and are small, ruminant animals. This means they have a special stomach to help them digest food. While sheep are primarily raised for their wool, which is used to make clothes, blankets, and many other products, some are also raised for their meat, called lamb or mutton, and for their milk, which can be used to make cheese.

There are more than 200 different breeds of sheep in the world, and they come in all different sizes, shapes, and colors. In Georgia, there are about 10,000 sheep, and around 7.5 million sheep across the entire United States! Sheep help farmers by eating grass, which keeps the land healthy and improves soil through their grazing.



Shearing is the process of removing wool from sheep. The wool straight from the sheep is greasy and dirty and needs to be cleaned, or scoured, before it can be used for different products. For many years, sheep were sheared with hand shears that looked like big scissors. Today, electric shears are more popular because they are faster and reduce the chance of cutting the sheep's skin. On average, a sheep produces around 10 pounds of wool per year.



Different parts of a sheep's body produce wool with varying qualities, such as texture, curl, length, and strength. The thickness of the wool fibers plays a key role in determining both its quality and price. After the wool is sheared, cleaned, and dyed, it is spun into yarn, which is then used to make clothing and other fabric products. On average, one pound of wool can be made into about 10 miles of yarn. Did you know that it takes approximately half a mile of yarn to knit a sweater for a child?

CHOOSE THE ANSWER!

1. A sheep is a ruminant animal. **a.True b.False**
2. A sheep produces around ___ pounds of wool per year.
a.2 b.5 c.10 d.15
3. Heather Cabe and her family mostly raise what kind of sheep? **a. Dorper b.St. Croix c.Katahdin d.Suffolk**

4. There are more than ___ different breeds of sheep in the world. **a.100 b.200 c.300 d.500**
5. One pound of wool can be made into about ___ miles of yarn. **a.7 b.8 c.9 d.10**
6. At Rosemary and Thyme the sheep are milked once a day.
a.True b.False

Heather Cabe

Owner of **CABE Period**
Red Hill, GA
Franklin County

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FARM.

Our farm is a diversified farm, which means we raise many different kinds of animals instead of just one. On our farm, we take care of sheep, goats, chickens, and cattle. We are located in Northeast Georgia, where there are lots of hills, forests, and green grass for our animals to enjoy!

WHAT KIND OF SHEEP DO YOU RAISE AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THOSE BREEDS?

Our farm mostly raises Dorper sheep, along with a few Katahdin crosses and St. Croix sheep. We chose Dorper sheep because they are doing great in the show ring! They have an elegant look, strong muscles, and fun personalities, which make them special to us. Our son, Deacon, fell in love with his first Dorper sheep project in 2022-2023. He enjoyed it so much that we decided to buy her and the entire flock she came from. That's how we started our own Dorper flock here on our farm!

HOW DO YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR SHEEP?

Dorper sheep are a low-maintenance breed, which means they are pretty easy to take care of! Most of the time, they can stay healthy just by eating grass and a little grain. However, during breeding season and lambing season (when baby lambs are born), we give them extra grain and hay to keep them strong and healthy. This helps make sure the mama sheep have enough energy to take care of their babies!

WHAT DO YOU DO TO PREPARE TO SHOW YOUR SHEEP?

Getting a sheep ready for a show takes a lot of time and care—it's not just something we do the week before! First, we make sure our sheep have the right food and plenty of exercise to keep them strong and healthy. We also take special care of their skin and hair by washing, drying, and slick shearing them (which means trimming their hair really short). To make sure they look and feel their best for the judge, we use skin and hair conditioner so they stay soft and fresh during the show!



Scan to watch a video about CABE Period



Hannah Walker

CEO of **Rosemary and Thyme Creamery**
Head Cheesemaker
LaFayette, GA | Walker County

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN AGRIBUSINESS?

My business partner, Brent Smith, and I have owned and operated our farm in Georgia for 5 years. Before that, I spent 2 years working on a sheep dairy in Idaho and another 2 years at a farm education center. Altogether, I have been in agribusiness for about 9 years!

PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR JOB:

I am the head cheesemaker at Rosemary and Thyme Creamery and the co-farm manager with my business partner, Brent. From April to August, we milk our sheep twice a day. Along with feeding them, keeping their water troughs full, and cleaning the barn for a comfortable place to rest, we stay busy taking care of our sheep. Three days a week, after morning milking, I make cheese. Cheesemaking is precise and can take up to six hours, and it must be done in a clean environment—so we also become great dishwashers! We make fresh cheeses ready to eat right away, along with hard cheeses that age for at least five months in a cheese cave. During that time, we give them careful attention, flipping them often to make sure they dry evenly and turn out just right.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE WITH YOUR JOB?

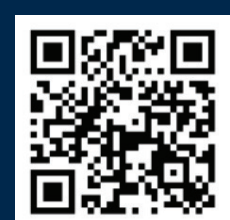
Our biggest challenge is finding workers. Since we're a seasonal business and not located in a very populated area, it can be hard to find people who are willing to work for us. Most people prefer steady jobs and don't want to commute too far..

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

My favorite part of working at a farmstead sheep dairy is definitely the sheep. They are so peaceful to watch as they graze or eat hay. It feels really good knowing they are happy and healthy. I also enjoy milking them and even trimming their hooves. Working with the sheep just makes me feel like life is good..

WHAT SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL HAVE HELPED YOU THE MOST AT YOUR BUSINESS?

I didn't get into farming until a few years after college, so I didn't focus on agriculture or business in school. However, a few subjects have been really helpful. Computer classes have been essential for record-keeping with the sheep, cheese, and business, and knowing how to use Word and Excel has come in handy. Cheesemaking is like a chemistry experiment, so science and basic math for measurements have been useful. I also took a sustainable agriculture class, which sparked my interest in grazing techniques and improving soil health—healthier soil grows better grass, which helps us raise high-quality sheep! I also took a sustainable agriculture class, which sparked my interest in grazing techniques and improving our soil health. Healthier soil grows better grass, which helps us raise high-quality sheep!



Scan to watch a video about Rosemary and Thyme.