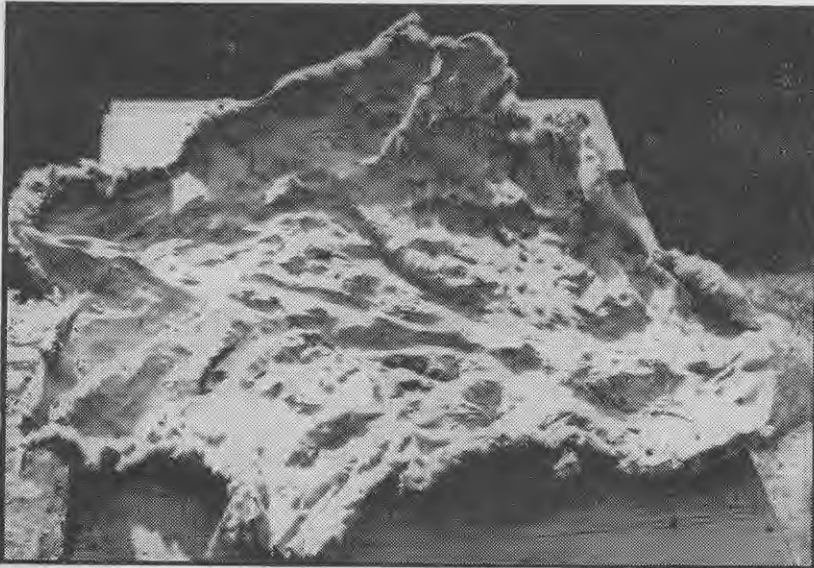


## CARE OF SHEEPSKINS



A skin which was overdried in direct sunlight.

may combine to renew bacterial activity, and bundles and loose skins are very subject to attacks from pests.

It is much more profitable to bundle a smaller number of skins often and send them to the broker than to let the dried skins accumulate. Bundle the skins squarely with no loose ends exposed, wool out, and tie them securely with rope or bale wire. Label the bundle clearly, and advise the broker when the skins have been consigned.

### Avoidable Faults

Following are some of the major faults in handling the skins which result in their being graded down:—

**Scored necks**, done when opening round the neck with a knife, particularly in country butchers' skins.

**Ruptured grain**, especially in lambskins, caused by punching too fiercely when thumbing up.

**Bad shapes**, caused by hanging over posts, wool presses, cart wheels, and farm implements.

**Faulty drying** through hanging skins on fences without attention, the north side usually getting all the sun and most of the wind. The result is an overdry pelt on the north and a decomposed pelt on the south side.

**Sweated edges**, particularly butts and necks, caused through these parts not being properly opened up during drying.

**Sweating** on the body of the pelt, caused through the flesh side of the

skin coming in contact with material such as a floor rail or implement, but particularly with another skin, during drying.

**Sweated necks** through blood-clotted wool not being opened up properly for drying.

**Rat, mouse, and weevil holes** through the skin being stored away too long before being marketed.

### Common Trade Terms

**Animal heat**: Residual heat in a skin after its removal from an animal.

**Basil**: An undyed, vegetable-tanned pelt.

**Broken skins**: Very badly-damaged skins, usually badly torn, rat eaten, or weevil damaged. These are sweated to remove the wool.

**Cockle**: Small, hard lumps which are found on the grain side of some pelts after the removal of the wool and which remain as a fault in the finished leather. This fault is found mainly in pelts from long-woolled skins.

### Points to Remember

**Dry sheepskins under cover in a current of air.**

**Stretch them neck to butt along two taut parallel wires 4in. apart.**

**Keep folding out the edges.**

**Despatch them to the broker as quickly as possible—before the skins become stale.**

**Dead skins**: Skins taken from animals which have died from natural causes. They are distinct from skins from sheep which have been butchered in that the blood has not been drained from the carcass. The wool will invariably pull from such skins and the pelts are of small value.

**Depilatory**: A preparation applied to the flesh side of sheepskins to free the wool; usually composed of lime and sodium sulphide.

**Fellmongery**: Works where wool is removed from sheepskins.

**Flaying**: Removal of skins from carcasses.

**Flesh side**: The surface of the pelt attached to the carcass before flaying.

**Fleshing machine**: A machine with rotating blunt knives, somewhat similar to those on a lawnmower, used in fellmongeries and tanneries. The flesh side of the pelt is brought into contact with these knives by a rubber roller so that flesh and fat are removed.

**Grain side**: The surface of the pelt previously covered with wool.

**Glue pieces**: Pieces of skin from which the wool has been separated by pieing. They are used by gluemakers.

**Green skin**: Fresh, moist sheepskin or lambskin.

**Pickled pelts**: Pelts, both sheep and lamb, which have had the wool removed and been treated and cured with salt and acid. They are usually casked and sold to tanners, local or overseas, in this form.

**Potting out**: Placing out skins (usually green) singly so that only the edges rest on the floor, the centre being raised like an inverted cup. This allows free circulation of air and will prevent heating and consequent damage for a short time.

**Rejects**: Pelts which are not considered worth working and are thrown out at some stage of fellmongering.

**Roan**: A finished sheepskin leather. The pelt is usually treated to give a moroccan or other grain.

**Skin pieces**: Neck and shank pieces cut from sheepskins or lambskins in trimming. Only the wool is of value, and it is removed by sweating or pieing.

**Slipe wool**: The wool pulled from the skin after treatment in the fellmongery. It is dried and baled ready for sale.

**Thumbing up**: The process of easing skin from the carcass by using the thumb. Used by butchers when taking the skin from sides and back.

### Acknowledgments

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