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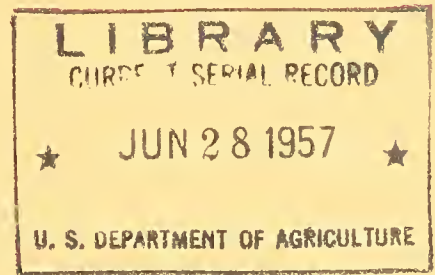
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**Manufacturers' and Topmakers' Views
on
some**

Wool Marketing Problems

By ²Walter L. Hodde (see p. 1)



^{7/2.1.} Farmer Cooperative Service, ^{see p. 1}
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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FARMER COOPERATIVE SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

JOSEPH G. KNAPP, ADMINISTRATOR

The Farmer Cooperative Service conducts research studies and service activities of assistance to farmers in connection with cooperatives engaged in marketing farm products, purchasing farm supplies, and supplying business services. The work of the Service relates to problems of management, organization, policies, merchandising, product quality, costs, efficiency, and membership.

The Service publishes the results of the studies; confers and advises with officials of farmer cooperatives; and works with educational agencies, cooperatives, and others in the dissemination of information relating to cooperative principles and practices.



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Summary

To help cooperatives and other handlers of domestic wool find out how they can better compete with foreign wool, Farmer Cooperative Service made a study of manufacturers and topmakers who buy grease wool. Results of this survey of 12 topmakers and 17 wool manufacturers are the basis of this report.

These topmakers and manufacturers presented views and suggestions that growers, their marketing cooperatives, and other marketers may use to improve their wool production, preparation and marketing methods.

A substantial number of the manufacturers and topmakers believed that the preparation of domestic wools should be improved. Some of these men severely criticized the methods used by growers in preparing domestic wool for market. Suggestions for improvement ranged from removing tags, eliminating black fiber contamination, and gate grading of sheep according to types of fleeces, on to and through the adoption of the Australian system of preparation. Others replying to the questionnaire were fairly well satisfied with present methods and thought that relatively few practical improvements could be made.

Generally, the topmakers and manufacturers approved of the preparation of imported wools. However, quite a few noted deterioration in the preparation of these wools.

In answering many of the questions, these wool buyers, either directly or indirectly, stressed the need for uniform standards in appraising and describing wool. These manufacturers and topmakers buy large quantities of domestic wool, and most imported types, on description. There is no standard system for describing domestic wool, but such a system is well developed for Australian, New Zealand and South African wools. Descriptions for domestic wools vary according to the traders and types of wool.

Topmakers and manufacturers carefully considered prices, conversion costs, and physical characteristics in deciding what kinds of wool to buy and use for making specific products. All domestic and foreign wools have certain virtues and faults. Some domestic wools are superior for certain purposes, foreign for others, and blends for still others. Manufacturers and topmakers made substitutions between wools, within limits, for making certain products, especially when there was a price incentive for doing so.

Topmakers, especially the large and versatile ones, have been buying more of their wool from large western growers and producing area warehousemen. During the past generation, topmakers have risen in importance in domestic wool marketing while speculative dealers have declined in importance.

Manufacturers, in the aggregate, bought about 80 percent of their wool for worsteds in the form of tops. Their major reasons for buying tops revolved primarily around price, credit, risk and inventory financing and turnover considerations. Their major reasons for starting with grease wool, instead of tops, were to more accurately control and maintain quality and because they were set up to make their own tops efficiently.

Woolen manufacturers bought most of their wool in the scoured form from dealers and the scoured wool departments of topmaking firms. However, papermaker felt manufacturers, a few exclusively woolen manufacturers, and the manufacturers of both woolens and worsteds who own scouring equipment bought some of their woolen types in the grease.

Most topmakers and manufacturers thought that they could sort wool to better advantage or that it would not be profitable for large marketing firms to sort wool and sell matchings. However,

several of these wool buyers thought that sorting operations could be profitably developed by marketing firms. There are a variety of difficult problems connected with sorting by marketing firms that may or may not be solved through experimentation and experience.

Manufacturers' and topmakers' views on core sampling of domestic wools varied from strong opposition to strong favor with most of them between the extremes. Their reasoning revolved primarily around accuracy and secondarily about costs.

Some topmakers and manufacturers would prefer to buy wool on a clean weight per lot basis. Some preferred the traditional method of paying on a grease weight invoice. Others thought it was immaterial.

About half these buyers thought that it would not be worthwhile for marketing firms to have scoured core samples analyzed for fineness, color, and black fiber content. Most of these buyers considered such tests as being unnecessary

or inaccurate. The others thought that, under some conditions, such tests might be worthwhile if accurate.

About half the manufacturers and topmakers thought that they could not get adequate indications of fineness, length, tip formation, and crimp from examining 100 to 200 randomly drawn staples from a lot of wool. A few thought that this would be satisfactory for fineness and length and the balance did not know.

Over half these men stated that they would be interested in buying wool for future delivery at a specified amount above or below a specified futures price, or "on basis." A bulk of the wool tops are sold "on basis."

Over three-fourths of these buyers stated that they would be interested in buying domestic wool at auctions or sealed bid sales. They mostly preferred auctions to sealed bid sales. However, it was not determined whether or not they preferred private treaty trading to either sealed bid sales or auctions.

Manufacturers' and Topmakers' Views on Some Wool Marketing Problems

Walter L. Hodde
Marketing Division

Wool manufacturers and topmakers have been buying and processing more imported apparel wools than domestic wools. Cooperatives and other domestic handlers wanted to know why wool produced in this country hasn't been competing as successfully as it might with foreign wool.

Differences in prices between domestic and foreign wool cannot be fully ex-

plained on the basis of superior quality or better preparation of imported wools. Thus, other factors must be involved.

The main objective of the study discussed in this publication was to help find answers to these and other problems by obtaining suggestions and opinions from wool manufacturers and topmakers that might be used in improving domestic production and marketing methods.

Background of Study

To get some ideas of improvements that could be made, Farmer Cooperative Service interviewed 29 topmakers and wool manufacturers -- knowing that they were in an excellent position to compare and evaluate domestic and foreign wools and the different wool preparation and marketing systems used in the world.

The 25 questions compiled for use in the interviews were designed primarily

for manufacturers and topmakers who buy grease wool.

The persons interviewed included wool buyers, vice presidents and presidents of their respective firms. The 12 topmakers¹ and 17 wool manufacturers² interviewed accounted for over 90 percent of the grease wool and 95 percent of the wool tops consumed in worsted manufacturing³ but a smaller percentage of the wool used in making woolens.⁴

Kinds of Wools Used and Buying Methods

Topmakers and manufacturers use both domestic and foreign wools. They buy domestic wool from marketing firms and from growers. They buy most foreign wools on description from brokers.

During 1956, topmakers produced about 80 percent of the wool tops consumed in worsted manufacturing. Worsted manufacturers bought only about 20 percent of their wool requirements in the greasy form. These manufacturers accounted for about 50 percent of the virgin wool processed in 1956.

Woolen manufacturers consumed about the same amount of virgin wool in 1956 as

¹Topmakers produce and merchandise combed wool, which is known as tops, for use by manufacturers in making worsted yarns and/or fabrics. Short fibers, removed by the combs and known as noils, plus carding and combing wastes are also produced and merchandised by topmakers.

²Wool manufacturers convert wool and/or wool tops into yarns and/or fabrics. Both woolen and worsted manufacturers are included in the term wool manufacturers.

³Worsted manufacturers convert tops into worsted yarns and/or fabrics. Some worsted manufacturers produce their own tops.

⁴Woolen manufacturers convert uncombed wool into yarns and/or fabrics in the woolen system of manufacturing.

Acknowledgments: The author expresses his appreciation to the manufacturers and topmakers who cooperated splendidly in this study. All of them went through the long and somewhat involved questionnaire, even though some of them did not answer all of the questions. Their contributions should be useful to the wool industry.

the worsted manufacturers. Most woolen manufacturers buy their wool in the scoured form. However, papermaker felt manufacturers, a few purely woolen manufacturers, and most firms that operate on both worsted and woolen systems buy at least part of their wool in the grease; that is, before it's cleaned or scoured.

The following questions covered the types of wool used and their buying methods.

Domestic Wools

Question 1. What kinds of domestic grease wools do you use in largest quantities and what products do you make from these wools?

The two largest topmaking firms used practically all kinds of domestic wool for making tops and also conducted sizeable businesses in scoured wool and noils.

Three of the smaller topmakers stated that they processed all kinds of domestic

wools. The other topmakers, although using many types, concentrated more of their business in fewer grades. Some of the smaller topmakers also processed and sold scoured wool.

Manufacturers bought about 80 percent of their requirements for worsteds in the form of tops. They bought the other 20 percent as domestic or foreign greasy shorn or pulled wool. The finer grades were used in lightweight and more costly high quality fabrics. Medium domestic wools were used for many purposes with Fleeces being especially desirable for knitting yarns.

Woolen manufacturers bought mostly scoured wool. Their qualities ranged from short and coarse to long and fine. They used some of the best length fine wools in flannels while the poorer qualities were blended with cheaper fibers to produce low cost fabrics.

Papermakerfelt manufacturers bought good quality coarser wools to make woven industrial fabrics on a specialized woolen system.



Shearing sheep in Montana. Manufacturers and topmakers suggested ways for improving the preparation of domestic wools at time of shearing.

Imported Wools

Question 2. What kinds of imported grease wools do you use in largest quantities and what products do you make from these wools?

Topmakers bought and converted nearly all kinds of foreign wools from 36's to 80's and finer. Seven topmakers stated that they bought mostly Australian and/or Cape wools in the finer grades.

Worsted manufacturers used a wide variety of foreign wools to make anything from fine fancy women's fabrics to heavy coarse overcoatings.

Woolen manufacturers bought mostly scoured foreign wools.

Papermaker felt manufacturers bought coarser foreign grease wools, but especially those from New Zealand.

Buying Methods Used

Question 3. How do you go about buying the wool that you use?

All topmakers bought at least some domestic wool from Boston wool marketing firms. Three topmakers bought practically all their wool from Boston marketing firms. The largest topmakers bought substantial quantities direct from large western wool growers and local pools. Topmakers, as a group, were rather versatile in their buying methods. They bought both spot and for forward delivery.

Nearly all of the manufacturers who were interviewed bought some domestic grease wool for worsteds from Boston marketing firms. Five of these worsted manufacturers bought most of their wool from Boston wool marketing firms. Three of them bought substantial quantities of wool direct from Texas and New Mexico growers and warehousemen.

Woolen manufacturers bought scoured wool on the basis of small samples.

Topmakers and worsted manufacturers bought most of their foreign wools on description from brokers for forward delivery.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Buying Methods

Question 4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods

that are used by manufacturers in buying domestic wools?

Manufacturers and topmakers can buy domestic wool directly from growers or from or through marketing firms such as cooperatives, dealers, order buyers, brokers, or producing area warehousemen.

Their major motive or reason for buying direct from growers was to obtain wool at less cost. Another reason was that they might be able to process with more precision when they knew the history and origin of the wool.

Topmakers' and manufacturers' major problems or disadvantages in buying direct from growers varied between the firms, areas, and seasons. A few large firms that used many types of wool have established country buying organizations. One of these started buying direct because marketers failed to provide the wool that they wanted, when they wanted it, and at reasonable prices.

Many of the disadvantages or problems to buying direct from growers were implied in the advantages or reasons given by manufacturers or topmakers for buying from marketing firms.

Manufacturers and topmakers stated they could buy more wool with a smaller staff when they purchased their requirements from marketing firms instead of growers. The development of a competent and well organized staff for buying direct from growers is difficult and expensive.

Several manufacturers and topmakers referred to the importance of inventory and financing problems. They were able to control inventories, financing and inventory risks somewhat better when procuring their requirements from marketers. They were also able to inspect or appraise the wool and buy in the quantities needed on a clean basis.

Following are a few answers to this question:

"The advantages are wherever you can buy wool at the most reasonable price. The disadvantages are vice versa. Methods of merchandising have nothing to do with it - it is all a matter of price."

"Could write a book on this subject. To buy the cheapest is the best method or system. A buying organization must be maintained for buying from growers. Dealers are not serving their purpose of

having wool when we want it. The dealers are not serving. They do not have enough capital to hold the wool. Dealers have country buying organizations and do a lot of order buying but never hold much inventory." (Respondent traced history of decline of wool dealers.)

"That is pretty broad. He wouldn't have any trouble in buying from growers, but we can get the kinds we want better from dealers. We know what we are getting. Any claims or complaints have someone substantial (the marketers) to back them up. We can buy as cheap in Boston as in the West. We don't buy anything not needed from dealers. Dealers enter the financial picture, and to help finance is very important."

"In order to rigidly maintain quality and uniformity it has been our policy to buy as near the source as possible. The

advantage is that if you know what goes in you can control the uniformity of it. We are the only outfit buying direct all of the time since 1900. The industry is coming back to direct buying more and more."

"Country buying gives the advantage of buying direct from producer to consumer. The disadvantages are the pipeline inventory that has to be carried - and financing, which today is a major item. Buying on Summer Street has the advantage that stocks are spot and inventories are kept on a lower level."

"A lot depends on the market at any given time."

"If we tried to cover all our needs during the shearing season it would unduly force the market upward. This is debatable, however. If all big users stepped in it would bash everybody along."

Domestic Versus Foreign Wools

Respondents stated they consider prices, quality, and preparation as primary factors in determining whether to buy foreign or domestic wool.

Reasons for Using Domestic Wools

Question 5. What are the major reasons that you buy and use domestic wools?

The lower price of domestic wools was easily the most important reason given for using these wools. Twenty out of the 25 respondents to this question mentioned prices or costs. Prices of domestic wool were low relative to foreign at the time of the survey.

Some domestic wools have characteristics that are especially desirable in certain end products. Seven respondents mentioned that fleece wools, especially mediums, are lofty and springy and thus desirable for certain knit goods. The manufacturers and topmakers also listed such characteristics as fluffiness, springiness, crispness, bite in spinning, and felting characteristics of some domestic wools as being desirable for certain purposes.

Domestic wools are required in some military fabrics and several respondents gave this as a reason for using them.

Ready availability, along with its inventory and risk implications, was also mentioned by a few respondents as being a reason for using domestic wools.

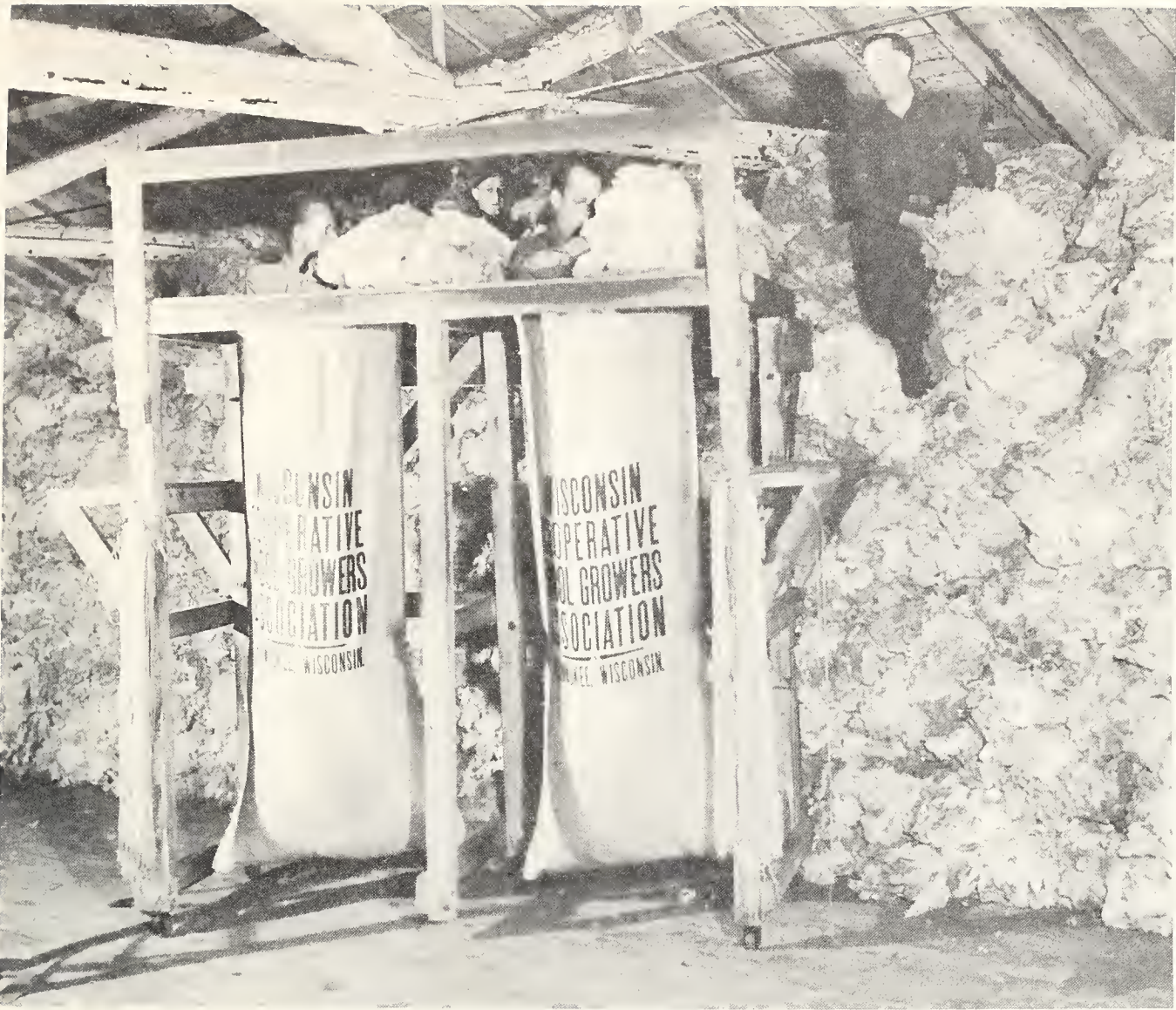
A high percentage of wool fabrics was sold on order for forward delivery on the basis of samples and specifications. A manufacturer will generally buy identical or nearly identical wool or tops to those used in the sample for orders and reorders for that fabric. Thus, the manufacturer will usually use domestic wool if the sample was made from domestic wool. This factor was mentioned indirectly only once as a reason for using domestic wools. Related to this factor is that of maintaining a standard. There are many processing advantages derived from using a standardized top or yarn. Thus a topmaker or manufacturer will tend to use the same types of wool for standardized items.

Following are a few quotations showing topmakers' and manufacturers' reasons for using domestic wools:

"In the topmaking business it is necessary to use domestic wools to transact business. Price - conversion costs are a part of price."

"They are cheaper than foreign."

"Sometimes customers want domestic wool tops that fit in their category. It is



Packaging graded wool in a cooperative warehouse. Handling and freight costs may be reduced by packaging in bales instead of bags.

an end-use proposition. The topmaker has his hands on the pulse of his customer. Various factors, particularly price, black fiber and handle, enter the picture."

"Our customers want and require domestic tops because of handle and feel. Many times domestic is less costly than foreign."

"Domestic wool goes quite a percentage for knitting. They have bulk or loft which is a distinct advantage in that field."

"Supply is nearer to mills, and in recent years the market has been lower. In most cases foreign wools will substitute when they are cheaper."

"The only reason we use domestics is because they are cheaper and we have to use them for Government fabrics. We wouldn't buy any domestic at the same price."

"The main reason for using Texas is because there isn't as much offsort as in Territory or Ohio Delaine. We want fineness of grade. Price has something to do with it. If Australian were cheaper today, we would just use less Texas and more Australian."

"Price, that is paramount. Mills will always use the cheapest fiber and it really doesn't matter much where it comes from."

Reasons for Using Foreign Wools

Question 6. What are the major reasons why you buy and use foreign wools?

Most of the reasons for using foreign wools centered around quality characteristics and preparation. Other reasons dealt with availability throughout the year in grades and amounts needed and the ease of handling or lower costs of conversion.

Nineteen respondents stated that foreign wools were used for special purposes because of quality characteristics of the imported types. Among these quality characteristics were: Hand; feel; length; softness; spinnability; quality; to obtain sharp twill effect; felting of South African wools; and, no domestic wools similar to the imported types.

Thirteen respondents mentioned using foreign wools because of less black fiber and six mentioned better color. These are factors of special importance to the manufacturer of light shades or pastel colors. Black fiber content or yellow color are of no particular significance in dark colored products. However, for some purposes manufacturers and top-makers stated that they would pay significant premiums for white wools that are practically free of black fiber.

Eight respondents stated that foreign wools were cheaper to convert. A majority of the respondents referred to lower conversion costs during one or more times while covering the questionnaire. They used such terms as: use 100 percent into process; little sorting; no offsort problem; cleanliness; easier to handle; freedom from defect; uniformity; put up better; less noilage; and, we like and are prepared to cope with foreign wools.

One manufacturer stated that he had not used foreign wools for 3 years because they were priced too high. Another stated that he could not afford foreign wools.

Following are selected quotes to show reasons why manufacturers and top-makers use foreign wools:

"On occasion our customers demand use of foreign wools which generally are freer of black fiber and thus better for pastels."

"In our grades there are no domestic wools similar to them except in certain instances. They are easier to handle and cheaper to convert."

"(1) Color, both black hair and yellow. Texas wools from the same section won't come out the same color two years in a row. (2) Length. (3) Availability in grades and weights needed. (4) Regularity, the expense of grading is awful here now."

"To supplement domestic stocks and to achieve certain characteristics or qualities not so readily obtainable from domestics. Recently there has been a demand for softness and we practically have to use Australian or Capes. Also wools that are not produced here."

"They are more consistent in grade, character, color and shrinkage than comparable domestics. You can dump Australian. There is no further handling like grading and sorting. You can overlook while dumping. It depends on the packer."

"Availability and inventory - we can buy Australian all during the season. Have to cover yourselves on domestics quickly. Can't always buy domestic. Can play the foreign market better - it is an orderly marketing proposition. We like and are prepared to cope with foreign wools. We come up with a lot of stuff we don't want when we buy domestics. It costs money to sort. When we buy Australian we buy only what we need and can use almost 100 percent into process."

"Black hair is no problem to us. Ninety percent of our products are colored. If we used foreign it would have to be competitively priced."

Quality of Domestic and Foreign Wools

The answers to the following two questions are combined since they overlapped.

Question 7. What are your comments and criticisms of the quality of domestic wools as compared to foreign wools?

Question 8. What are your comments and criticisms of the quality of foreign wools?

Most respondents answered these questions together. They were asked on the basis, "Imagine or assume that the put-up or preparation of the foreign and

domestic wools were the same.” Quite a few respondents brought out preparation factors in spite of this requested assumed or imagined condition. It is difficult to imagine such a condition because preparation practices have an effect on such factors as uniformity and black fiber content.

Eight respondents pointed out that foreign wools, especially Australian, produce a lower percentage of noils on the average. Five stated that imported types contain fewer black fibers.

In the way of general comparisons, the manufacturers and topmakers pointed out:

“No difference.” “It is a matter of fiber facts.” “It depends on the foreign wools that you are comparing.” “Cannot generalize on this - it depends on what you want the wools for.” “I wouldn’t criticize, as a topmaker, the quality of domestic wools if they were put up the same.” “The end product may be better.” “It depends on what you want to make - all wools have certain virtues and faults.” “Domestics are equal to foreign for some uses, inferior for some, superior for others.” “We have some beautiful wools in the United States - you could put it up the same and people couldn’t tell the difference.” “Wool for wool, I don’t believe there is any difference between the two.” “The quality of domestic wool is equal to foreign except for black hairs.” “We have no preference or prejudice against either domestic or foreign wool.” “Foreign wools are mostly better.” “There is no perfect wool but foreign is much better than domestic.”

Following are some other answers to these questions:

“That is quite an assumption (that the preparation were the same). Foreigns cover quite a range. Montes are comparable in crispness of handle. Some Argentines are much whiter, and this is true of Australian, New Zealand and Cape. Australian and Cape wools have a softness and handle not found in domestics, and have better color and are required for certain pastels and bleached fabrics due to relative absence of black hairs.”

“We prefer domestic to the foreign. The main thing we have noticed is the

Australians are not keeping grades up to old standards - type 78 used to be good enough for us, but it now has to be 77.”

“Wool for wool I don’t believe there is any difference between the two. We have some beautiful wools in the United States and could put some up and people couldn’t tell them from Australian. There is nothing wrong with domestic quality. The average fellow in the trade has a fear of valuing domestics. They are not sure of domestics.”

“That is difficult. It depends on what you want to make. Texas is good for felting. If you want very good spinning quality, buy Oregon. All wools have certain virtues and faults. Ohio is the strongest and best spinning wool. On the other hand you wouldn’t use fine Ohio for knitting. Ohio Delaine is about the best wool. It depends on what you are trying to do.”

“The basic breeding of foreigners is ahead of domestics. We go more for lambs.”

“From the viewpoint of the topmaker, I wouldn’t criticize domestics if the put-up were the same. Australian is better prepared and has a lower cost of conversion. Therefore the price of domestic must be lower. The end product may be just as good as foreign, and sometimes better than foreign for some purposes.”

“That is hard to answer. The grower doesn’t get paid for doing a better job in the form of enough premium. Spinners largely determine the prices of domestic and foreign tops. Some are prejudiced. Foreign wools are longer. Southern mills are using longer wools and this will show up more in the future. We have had a good woolen market in the last few years, but when they go down there will be more premium for length. (Two leading firms named) and so on are wanting longer tops. Their machinery has to do with this. It pays to increase length. Foreign wools are priced out of the market at times. They fluctuate too much. They have an undesirable character for knitting. They have a different handle. Sometimes New York (garment makers) don’t want a slippery feel (from Australian and some other foreign wools) - it depends on styling.”

Preparation for Market

Principal criticisms of domestic wools prepared by growers and marketing firms were black fibers, the tag content, and branding paint. Most of these manufacturers and topmakers approved of the way foreign wools were put up, although several of them noted some deterioration in preparation since World War II. Nearly all respondents answered the following two questions together.

Domestic Wool

Question 9. What are your comments and criticisms of the way in which domestic wools are prepared for market?

Question 10. What do you think should be done by domestic growers in preparing their wool so that it would better meet your requirements?

Responses varied from satisfaction with present methods to suggestions that the Australian system of preparation be adopted in this country. Most topmakers and manufacturers were critical of black fibers and tag content. They were also concerned with the branding paint problem along with a variety of other preparation practices.

General comments included: "We are accustomed to present methods and have no desire to change them." "It is a matter of packaging, grading and handling for manufacturers needs." "Careless in general, but some are put up very well." "Buyers sometimes exaggerate limitations of domestic preparation." "A cleaned up clip is worth more, but not many buyers are willing to pay enough premium." "The put-up of domestic is poorly done." "Domestics all have to be sorted." "The grower may realize more nearly real value when dealing with a mill or topmaker." "It would be to the advantage of the small manufacturer to have wool put up by grade and staple."

Critical general comments included: "Some put-up is frightful. There are horseshoes and bricks in some fleeces." "There is carelessness in shearing, in packaging and put-up." "The poorest put-up I have seen."

Comments and suggestions for doing a more complete preparation job at shearing included: "The most inexpensive place to prepare wool is where it is sheared." "Prepare as in Australia or South America." "I don't know why they don't put up wool as in Australia." "Put up as in Australia." "Why can't we put up as in Australia?" "Skirt." "Crutch or skirt." "Don't skirt too heavy, processors sort wool anyway." "The put-up of foreigners is preferred."

Comments adverse to more complete preparation at shearing included: "The cost of preparing wool in the West is greater than for us. We are big enough to handle wools as they are presently put up." "We can use all kinds. Growers should do no skirting or sorting." "There should be no shearing shed grading."

Two respondents thought that it would be desirable to separate the sheep according to their grade of wool before shearing. Two stated that the major types of wool should be kept separate at shearing. Over half of the respondents to these questions referred to the branding paint problem as being of importance. Six of them recommended using less branding paint. Three recommended using scourable branding paint and one said that paint brands should be eliminated. One respondent was severely critical of branding paints that run during the scouring process. Two pointed to the severe damage caused by tar in fleeces. Other comments included suggestions that we follow the lead taken by Australia and New Zealand in coping with the branding paint problem.

Twelve respondents recommended that the black fiber problem be solved. This black fiber problem was also referred to at other times while going over the questionnaire.

Fifteen topmakers and manufacturers said that tags should be separated from the fleeces and packed separately.

Five respondents referred to properly tying fleeces with paper string and four said that growers used too much string. Other comments included an aversion to box tying and suggestions that fleeces



Grading wool in a large Wyoming shearing shed. Grading fine wools for length at shearing time is popular in parts of Texas.

not be tied at all. Tying fleeces with sisal, jute or cotton caused severe trouble.

Other suggestions included recommendations that growers shear dry, pack dry and be honest in their packaging and storage procedures. Excessive vegetable matter, especially straw and spiral burrs, were undesirable. Jute contamination from burlap packages caused some trouble to manufacturers especially in darker fabrics that were not carbonized. Some respondents thought that growers were improving preparation practices while others noted deterioration. Several respondents pointed to the importance of breeding and selection of sheep.

Following are selected quotes that show the line of thinking of some respondents on the preparation of domestic wool by growers:

"We had an inquiry for tops free of black hair this morning. Domestic 1/4

blood would have filled the bill. Under present conditions we could maybe pay 10 cents clean above quoted prices for 1/4 blood free of black hairs. They are using paint here in the United States. South Africa has a law on brands. There is no excuse; growers have no conception of damage that is done; a small speck of paint causes a large blemish in the cloth; it bleeds and spreads out. It is extreme carelessness in putting up and disregard of the paint problem. It is a foolish waste of string to tie fleeces. We had ___ pounds of string in one lot or 1 percent, ___ pounds or 1 percent in another lot."

"Domestic is not as well prepared and packaged as foreign wool. You can depend on buying foreign wool on description, but that is not true of domestic. Foreign wool has always been exactly as expected over a 10-year period. You have a good picture. It is a matter of

packaging, grading and handling for the manufacture needs.”

“They can go a long way. They throw in everything except the kitchen sink. They are unmindful of black, of paint, of sweepings. No attempt is made to segregate long, short, fine, and coarse along with off-colored fleeces and corral sweepings, in a lot of cases. Some States are worse than others. Texas is probably best. So much could be said here.”

“The put-up of foreigners is preferred because they are skirted and tagged and generally typed according to grade, length, color, and so on. In domestics we don't like the idea of fleeces being tied. We don't like the large amount of paint particularly in territories. We would like to see some soluble brands used; this is very important. Can't we bale domestic wools? We like the system of baling five bags of Texas wool together. Domestic wools are not put up as well. They are unskirted and contain bellies.”

“I wouldn't criticize too much. The cost of doing it in the West is greater than for us. We use practically all grades. I would criticize tags, black, sisal and carelessness in packing and put-up. I don't think it will pay to do the same as in Australia, but it can be improved in those factors mentioned. Tags in the fleeces. It is distressing to see layers of sweepings and tags in original bags and see corral sweepings in fleeces.”

“That is a tough question. Buyers sometimes exaggerate the limitations of domestic preparation. Processors sort the wool anyways. The bands of sheep are varied in grade and condition of wool. There should be no shearing-shed grading. The best route for the grower to improve uniformity is through breeding and selection. Growers should keep out the black and tags and segregate the major types. We have noted improvement in preparation in recent years.”

“There is a lot to be desired. If they would prepare wool like the Australians or South Americans they could realize a much better price. If the wools, whether put up by the growers or whoever, could be graded and skirted, it would eliminate the added cost of sorting and so on.”

“It would help if domestics could be prepared with greater care - keep the

bellies and pieces out. But fundamentally, the marketing of domestics is done by private buyers as compared to world auctions. This does not provide incentive for the grower to be as careful in the put-up of his wools, as he often does not get enough premium to make it pay.”

Suggestions for Marketers

Question 11. What do you think should be done by domestic wool marketing firms to improve the preparation of their wool to better fit your requirements?

Eleven responses indicated satisfaction with the present methods used by marketing firms in grading and preparing their wool. Two topmakers indicated they preferred that marketing firms not prepare wool. Two manufacturers said that it would be desirable to prepare wool so that it could be sold more accurately according to description. Other responses referred to the need for uniform standards, closer grading, putting up for specific customers and grading according to shrinkage.

Following are some answers to this question:

“There is no doubt that if they were prepared so they could be bought on description, it would be a great help for both buyer and seller.”

“They do a pretty good job. The only thing I have to kick about is tags.”

“Most people are putting up their wool in good shape, but it could be segregated more for length and also for grade. Too many people have their own set of standards - 64's in one place is 62's in another - 70's in another.”

“They should be more careful in their buying, and penalize the farmers who do not put up wool in the right way. It depends on the demand for certain grades. They should keep closer check on put up for certain customers.”

“I don't care. I don't want marketing firms to do preparation work on wool. My stock in trade is to buy in the raw stage and make tops of all qualities. I am in the market for various types. Refer to question 9 (on preparation by growers) and put wool up in a cleaner manner. Keep out the black and tags and

generally put up a more honest pack. I will take care of the grading."

"I don't think they can do much more. Every mill is different. The fellow who buys would just as soon get a package wherein not too much has been done - they like some cream."

"In marketing, there is a distinct difference between shorn and pulled. Pullers do more nearly like the Australians. We can buy a more standard product from pullers - they break it down more than anyone in the country."

"_____ and _____ are the only big ones (wool marketing firms) left. They (wool marketing firms) are dying on the vine. It is evident that they should do something or other. We have always been quite pleased with their efforts and grades, but that is apparently not a service needed. The topmakers will sell you grease wool, matchings, scoured, tops or noils. They are more flexible; they are all futures experts."

"It would help if they could call it by the same name regardless - like staple, French and so on; if they could designate the wool more like the Australians do."

"These co-ops could put pressure on the growers to do a better job, and encourage and pay them to do it. They have a better chance than private dealers. Some brights could be handled like foreign wools."

"In general, most domestic wool marketing firms do an excellent job of grading and preparing wool for sale."

Foreign Wools

Question 12. What are your comments and criticisms of the preparation of foreign wools?

Manufacturers and topmakers indicated general satisfaction with the preparation of imported types. However, eight of them said that there had been some deterioration in the skirting of South American wools. Three respondents indicated that foreign wools were not put up as uniformly as formerly. Several respondents indicated that foreign packers or agents used somewhat different descriptions for equal wools.

Following are some answers to this question: -

"Some imported wools are not put up so good. It depends on the packer in South America. I suppose it is true in Australia that in classifying for type that some classify better than others. There is a variation in brokers. You can see variations in quotations that are not all for the same wool. There are 5 cent to 10 cent variations at a time. You have to know the broker. Some Montevideo exporters put up their wool longer and finer than others and call it the same thing. There is a big factor in reliability and confidence. You must know what you are doing."

"Foreign wools have always been prepared entirely satisfactorily for our purpose."

"Australian wool is not put up as good as it used to be. They have slipped. There is variation in the clips and diversion in the bales. There is no sorting to amount to anything and no offsort problem with foreign wools."

"Foreign wools are generally put up to our satisfaction. There has been some deterioration since World War II. Foreign wools can be readily bought from season to season according to a specific type. Australian and Cape wools are well put up, and all grades and lengths are available. The put-up of South American wools varies, depending on the shipper. They don't have control. Some are well put up and others are poorly put up."

"There is a time element of getting foreign wools to this country, 2 to 3 months from Australia, New Zealand up to 3 months. South Americans are faster. We have no particular criticism of the preparation of foreign wools. We can get by without sorting some wools, but we have to sort if the wool contains non-scourable brands."

"If you came anywhere near Australia it would be a big help. We don't like the Barracas (South American warehouses). I have been down there. You can't see the fleece."

"They have 19 percent moisture in Bradford - 13 percent moisture here. The higher moisture conditions in Great Britain make wools spin better over there than here. Wool that they would call a 60's in England would be a 58's in the United States."

Buying Wool Tops and Scoured Wool

Topmakers and worsted manufacturers who make their own tops buy grease wools rather than scoured wools. All of the worsted manufacturers buy some tops while woolen manufacturers buy mostly scoured wools. Answers to the following questions brought this out.

Wool Tops

Question 13. To what extent do you buy wool tops? (_____)
(FREQUENTLY) (OCCASIONALLY)

(_____) What are the major advantages and disadvantages for you to buy and use tops?
(NEVER)

Ten of the 12 topmakers said that they never or practically never bought tops. Two topmakers said that they bought tops on occasion when they might resell them at a profit.

All of the worsted manufacturers said that they bought tops. Six of them said they bought tops frequently, and the rest, occasionally. About 80 percent of the tops produced in this country were made by topmakers.

Worsted manufacturers' major reasons for buying tops, instead of grease wool, revolved primarily about financial and inventory turnover considerations. Nearly all of their responses included finance, turnover, or risk factors. Five manufacturers stated that they could buy tops at a lower price or cost than by making their own. They bought most of their tops on basis and thus obtained a measure of credit and frequently delayed fixing the price until they booked orders for fabrics or yarns. Other reasons revolved about getting nearly exactly what they wanted as to quality, quantity, and time. The rise of the topmaker has been one of the most significant trends in the wool industry during the past generation.

Manufacturers' disadvantages to buying tops revolved primarily about quality and quality control considerations. Only one respondent stated that he could produce tops at a lower cost than the price of purchased tops.

One topmaker answered this question as follows:

"We rarely buy wool tops; We (as topmakers) want a manufacturing profit, that is why."

Following are typical manufacturer's answers to this question:

"We buy tops frequently. The advantages are spot position and price. The disadvantage is the lack of continuity in quality. With Fleece wool we may keep a blend going of over a million pounds of some steady quality. When we buy tops we get a top-notch lot now, and a dog later on. There is lack of continuity in quality when buying tops."

"We buy tops occasionally. The only advantage we can see in the use of tops is one of finance, and lessened risk of inventory price fluctuation."

"We buy tops frequently. The advantages are that we can acquire a big inventory without financial involvement. We can use 100 percent of the tops. The inventory turns more rapidly. We have the opportunity of buying the basis and hedging. There is the advantage that you can buy for forward delivery and be assured of your product. There is no shrinkage problem, and you have laboratory tests to know what you are buying. There is a disadvantage in having no control over the stock in the product, but topmaking is so competitive that they can't put junk in like they used to."

"It has been true for years that we can buy tops cheaper than to start with greasy wool and convert. They (topmakers) more or less have to play with us because there are so few customers left. We buy 90 percent of our tops on basis. Top quotations don't mean a thing. They sometimes come down 10 cents a pound right now."

"We buy tops occasionally. The advantage is that you don't tie up money for so long. A disadvantage is that you lose control of the raw fiber. Never sure of what is in bought tops. However, some makers will tell you what is in them. We can take delivery on tops today and pay 3 months later. May go so far as to make the tops into cloth and sell the fabric before paying for the tops."



Warehouse and office buildings along Summer Street, Boston. The largest domestic wool market is in Boston.

“There is a slight price advantage. A disadvantage is that the average top-maker doesn’t sort carefully or closely enough.”

Scoured Wool

Question 14. To what extent do you buy scoured wool?

(FREQUENTLY) (OCCASIONALLY)

(NEVER) What are the major advantages and disadvantages for you to buy and use scoured wool?

Topmakers bought and used grease wool almost exclusively for making tops. However, several topmakers said they bought and converted scoured wool once in a while when it was very attractively priced. Several topmakers conducted sizeable scoured wool businesses and occasionally bought scoured wool for resale.

Following are some topmakers’ answers to this question:

“Practically never for combing. Occasionally for resale in the woolen department. Double scouring weakens wool.”

“Occasionally. We sometimes have to buy scoured wool when we run out of others.”

“We occasionally buy scoured wool if we think it is cheap, but that is a rather rare occasion. Once a wool is scoured, you never know actually what it is. They can work a lot of short stuff in and it takes an actual conversion to tops to show your mistake. Scoured wool is not sold on regain or moisture content - it is more liable to be against rather than with you.”

Manufacturers, like topmakers, bought minor quantities of scoured wool for making tops. Their reasons were quite similar to those of the topmakers. Following are three of their answers to this question:

“The only advantage would be price. The disadvantage would be an increase in cost of conversion - noils and wastes increase.”

“The cost of combing scoured wools is considerably higher than for the grease wools.”

“Worsted mills seldom buy scoured wool unless it is dirt cheap. You never know just what is in scoured wool.”

All of the exclusively woolen manufacturers who were interviewed bought practically all of their wool in the scoured form.

Several firms included in this survey operated both worsted and woolen

departments or mills. They bought mostly scoured wool but also scoured some of their own wools and used their noils and wastes on the woolen system.

Papermaker felt manufacturers generally bought grease wool.

Woolen mills averaged smaller in size and were more numerous than worsted mills.

One respondent stated that he did not know of a single exclusively woolen mill in New England that did its own sorting and scouring. However, a few woolen mills in other areas bought grease wool and did a complete job of manufacturing.

The major reasons for buying scoured wool instead of grease wool revolved about price and cost considerations and availability in the types and amounts needed.

Following are two answers to this question given by manufacturers who bought practically only scoured wool:

"Practically all scoured. When we buy scoured we know exactly what we are getting and don't have a risk on shrinkage. The wool must measure up to the sample."

"That is all we buy. We are big production people and I can't go to all of the scourers and follow the wool through. People in the trade put up wool to our requirements and I accept or reject. They can do it more efficiently. We don't have facilities to do the job."

Following are some answers given by manufacturers who operated on both worsted and woolen systems.

"Spot supplies are available. Because of the range of types we use it would be impractical to buy all wool in the grease. There is a fluctuation between the price of scoured and grease wool."

"Never for worsteds. A great deal for woolens."

"Most wool offered in woolen mills is scoured. Few small mills have scouring plants and it has gotten to be such a large percentage of the total that dealers practically have to be in that market (selling scoured wool) and manufacturers have to be in the market of scoured wools. Our scouring train does not have enough capacity for our needs (both worsted and woolen)."

Sorting

Seven out of 12 topmakers felt they could sort wools to better advantage than marketing firms. Of 13 manufacturers, only 3 favored sorting by these firms. When asked to describe what kind of matchings they would require, only three respondents gave definite descriptions. However, most of the rest made general comments. As for custom sorting of wool by a marketer, the majority of the topmakers and manufacturers either said, "No," or "Maybe."

Sorting by Marketing Firms

Question 15a. Do you think that you can sort domestic wools to better advantage than marketing firms?

Question 15b. Do you think it would be worthwhile or profitable for some of the larger domestic wool marketing firms to sort their wools and attempt to sell matchings to you?

Question 15b was asked verbally of most respondents who did not make

strongly definite answers to 15a. In a few cases question 15b was asked even though definite "Yes" answers were given to 15a. The answers to these two closely related questions were somewhat different in several cases. These are complicated questions and some of the respondents presented pro and con reasoning. Classification and interpretation of some of the answers were rather difficult.

Seven topmakers answered 15a and/or 15b in such terms that there was evidently little or no doubt in their minds that they could sort to better advantage, and that it would not be worthwhile for larger marketing firms to sort wool and attempt to sell matchings to them. Only one topmaker thought that it would be profitable for larger marketing firms to sort their wool and attempt to sell matchings to him. The other four topmakers discussed some of the pros and cons in answering these questions, but mostly were unfavorable to sorting by marketing firms.

Following are some topmakers' answers:

15a. "Definitely yes. We are tailor making our tops."

15a. "Yes. It is hard for a marketing firm to sort wool to fit individual mill requirements."

15a. "There is no comparison as far as topmaking goes. We have to sort for a particular top. We also know what our machines will do, and we are the only people who know that. There aren't two combers who can get the same results. All our combing is done on commission." 15b. "No."

15a. "Yes, to the extent that we sort wool to our requirements. The disadvantage is that we should know what types and kinds go into the matchings. Everybody doesn't sort wool alike for length or grade." 15b. "They would tend to make too many offsorts. Roswell (N. Mex.) started skirting and taking our 25 percent to 30 percent skirts and that would ruin anybody. Some topmakers make standard tops and if someone put up matchings for them it might be O.K. We must fit our blends to every particular lot of tops. They are tailor made for each customer. We have the order before starting."

"_____, _____, and _____ make standard tops. We are smaller and offer service to customers. They buy a piece of paper instead of tops. It is all done in labs that can be wrong."

15a. "Definitely yes." "Marketing firms don't sort wool." 15b. "Yes, I think it would be worthwhile for marketing firms to sort wool, but we may doubt the sorting if it wasn't done by a consignment house or co-op."

15a and b. "No. Customers change their specifications constantly. It wouldn't be practical. Yes, they (National Wool Marketing Corporation) could control it better than we could. They would have the problem of offsorts. There are no new sorters coming up; it is becoming a lost art. In general it should be encouraged to narrow down grades but that is very difficult to do. The grade of top is not in the topmaker's hand when domestic wool is sorted by marketing firms. But, it should trend that way."

They must standardize within a firm."

15a. "Sort? - definitely yes." 15b. "We don't want sorts or matchings. We must blend in foreigners. It is not a matter of cost but of blend requirements."

Thirteen manufacturers answered these questions. Six believed that they could sort to better advantage and/or that it would not be worthwhile for marketing firms to sort wool and attempt to sell matchings. Four were undecided, and three were favorable to sorting by marketing firms.

Some of their lines of reasoning are in the following answers:

15b. "It may not be profitable to them. A bulk of the trade would fail to recognize price improvement. That is, if the price of fleeces was \$1 and I offered \$1.05 for matchings, they wouldn't come out on it. If they could establish differentials, it would help. It would save on freight and we would only have a dumping proposition."

15a. "Of course - just like your wife can cook a better dinner than a restaurant can prepare to your own needs. It is hard to fit all customers' needs." 15b. "Have tried that in the Ballinger (Tex.) plant. It is the only way to take care of different segments. Have to sell offs at a discount. It is hard to sell to customers who don't want the wool manipulated, but matchings eventually will be the answer. There are many advantages for mills to buy matchings. Marketing firms could do as in South America. It is hard to educate buyers; it takes a long time. Try sorting in a small way. Spinners specialize. I am very enthusiastic; it has a good future 10 years from now."

15a. "I don't know. I would say this though - a consumer knows the product he wants better than the seller." 15b. "That would depend on what the markup was. If we think we can sort cheaper, naturally we would buy original. It is a matter of economics which is a key factor. A good wool buyer sees value in original wool. If wools in this country were put up in matchings with so many grades and staple types as in Australia or the Cape, and if this work could be done as cheaply as in the mill sorting rooms, it would be to the advantage of the consumer."

15a. "Yes - there is no doubt about it. We may cut corners. We can't sort any better technically. However, if we start with 64's original bag we may just pull out 58's and lower. They would have to sort closer." 15b. "No. We get calls on this. Topmakers offer us matchings. We have to pay more for _____ matchings - \$1.55 to \$1.60 as compared to \$1.40 from _____. Mills are suspicious of blends. My matchings wouldn't please another mill or vice versa. What is their idea of warp? What would they allow? Every mill has different requirements. Some may want the long out. We could criticize regardless of smoothness. It is very, very technical."



Piling graded wool in a Boston warehouse. Much of the domestic wool is now being graded and stored in producing area warehouses.

15b. "Some of them have attempted to sell matchings to us. For a small mill I think they can do it to better advantage."

15a. "Marketing firms really only grade wool." 15b. "I do, yes. They would receive a much better price."

15b. "We wouldn't ever buy matchings."

Description of Matchings

Question 16. If you could buy matchings to make the types of products that you usually produce in largest quantities, please describe the kind of matchings that you think would best fit your requirements as to fineness and uniformity of fineness, length and uniformity of length, and other characteristics when taking costs and prices into consideration.

Only one topmaker and two manufacturers described the types of matchings that they might be interested in buying. Several respondents repeated that they would not be interested in buying matchings. Others made general comments.

Following are a few answers:

"We wouldn't want to buy matchings. We can do it cheaper. We know how to do it to get what we want. We wouldn't pay the premium that they would require."

"We wouldn't buy matchings unless they were cheap enough."

"Matchings is a grade and length. It is very definite and a large order. It varies from time to time. There might have to be 85 percent 56's and then you have to specify length."

"That is not pertinent to the topmaker's problem. Topmakers wait until they get specifications for order sold tops before making matchings. Many Montes are basically matchings."

"We use different lengths and different wools for different end uses. One of our standard tops is 2.75 inches and another is 2.4 inches. In the Texas sorting project after World War II they set up the wool by types. We liked this wool very much but it was extremely expensive. It was O.K. for woollens. On worsted it was excellent but we didn't buy much. They didn't stay in very long. Evidently this was not accepted very cordially by mills."

"64's of 3 inches and over, 2 1/2 to 3 inches and 2 to 2 1/2 inches; 62's of 3 inches and over; 60's of 3 inches and over. We are the only people who sort, because they want a square top. Keep the short out of the long and take the paint sort out. Must have a reliable job done. We would blend with foreign - that can be done efficiently."

Custom Sorting by Marketers

Question 17. Would you be interested in having a marketer custom sort your wool to your specifications? Explain.

The answer to this question may be classified as follows:

Euyers	Total re-ponses	Yes	No	Maybe
Topmakers	12	1	7	4
Manufacturers	13	3	6	4

Following are a few explanations given by topmakers:

“No. The tops are microned every day. If the tops go off we take the story to the sorting room.”

“It is a question of expense and uniformity of sorting for us. Can apply better if you do your own sorting. There are no more commission sorting houses. The manufacturer doesn't want to fool around with offsorts. It depends on the versatility of the buyer. If he can use

all grades it is then to his advantage to do his own sorting.”

“I don't know. It depends on who was doing it.”

“No. The topmaker won't ever want sorts or matchings.”

Following are a few manufacturers' answers:

“That will be done more and more. Mills are neglecting sorting. They don't have enough work to keep their sorting rooms going. Mills buy tops and then don't have to sort. The marketing firm can work for them. The trend is in that direction.”

“I have never thought of that. I don't know. If marketing sources did sort wools which fit our types, we would be interested in buying.”

“No. We have our own sorting department and as long as we have, it is better to do our own sorting.”

“I would buy matchings and not fool around with custom sorting. I would like to buy like type 78 Australian.”

“No. We believe we can do it better at lower cost.”

“No. We would rather keep control ourselves.”

Determining Quantity and Quality

Preferences of topmakers and manufacturers for ways to determine wool shrinkage were rather evenly divided among core samples, personal estimates, and “immaterial or depends.” Respondents also did not show a strong preference for invoicing on clean instead of grease weight. About half of these topmakers and manufacturers did not think it would be worthwhile for a marketing firm to have scoured samples analyzed for fineness, black fiber contamination and color. In response to the question of whether randomly drawn staples of wool would be adequate for various tests, nearly all of the respondents answered either “no,” or “don't know, or depends.”

Core Sampling

Question 18. Do you prefer to buy wool where shrinkage has been determined

from core samples or on the basis of your estimate of shrinkage? Why?

The answers to this question may be classified as follows:

Euyers	Total re-ponses	Prefer core	Prefer estimate	Im-material or depends
Topmakers	12	4	3	5
Manufacturers	13	4	4	5

Topmakers' major reasons for liking the core were because of accuracy and for reducing arguments. Their major reasons for not liking the core were because of inaccuracies and expenses. Other reasoning was concerned with trading advantage and the type of wool to be cored. Several topmakers stated that they used the core yield when unable to agree with sellers on shrinkage.

Manufacturers' reasons for liking or disliking core sampling were similar to



Drawing core samples with a 3 inch tube for laboratory testing of clean yield. Smaller tubes are becoming more popular.

those of topmakers. Two manufacturers preferred to buy on the basis of mill output of an entire lot or a large sample.

Following are some topmakers' answers:

"We are satisfied to buy on the core. There are surprising variations, but I think the core is O.K."

"I prefer to buy on estimate when seller and buyer agree. Core only when we can't agree. The costs of coring and loss of wool are excessive and unnecessary."

"For the most part we prefer to buy on the core. We have made hundreds of tests on all kinds of wool and found the core to be accurate." (Respondent told of hypothetical case of taking trading advantage and not coring when seller overestimates shrinkage).

"It depends on the grade of wool. The core goes with you on some grades and against on others. There is no set rule. It is a matter of judgment."

"I prefer to buy where I have the advantage. I prefer the one that results in the lower price."

"I prefer the core. It eliminates arguments."

Following are some manufacturers' answers:

"I would rather buy on a clean basis subject to core if we could not agree. Save the coring charge. We have had no recores this year."

"I still like to buy on estimates. However, in the event of disagreement I would gladly have the difference settled on a core basis. On domestic coring we have found rather large variations and I

think this is due to coring unskirted wools. On Australian we have found the core very reliable, and it has compared favorably to our buyers' estimates of yields over the years."

"We wouldn't buy anything of domestics on a core shrink. Domestics can be off as much as 6 percent. It is O.K. on foreigners."

"We prefer to buy on the basis of core testing as we consider this method to be fairer for both buyer and seller."

"We are leaning toward coring now. We think it is more accurate than visual estimates. The experts are not as good as they make out."

Clean Weight Versus Grease Weight

Question 19. Would the clean weight be as satisfactory for the buying weight as the grease weight? _____ Why?

The answers to this question may be classified as follows:

Answer	Topmakers	Manufacturers
Total answers	12	14
Clean weight preferred	4	5
Grease weight preferred	3	1
Immaterial or depends	3	4
Other	2	4

Several respondents asked for an explanation of this question. The explanation given was that the clean weight would be calculated for the entire lot at the time of core sampling or estimating the yield. The reason for asking the question was explained, in a few cases, as being for the possible purpose of reducing accounting and weighing by marketing firms. The theory is that the weight of clean fibers present does not change unless some of the wool is lost, eaten, or stolen, whereas grease weight changes with fluctuations in humidity.

A high percentage of the respondents were not strongly for or against buying on a clean weight basis, even though their preferences can be roughly classified as shown in the table above.

Following are some answers given by manufacturers and topmakers:

"They have been billing on grease weight and that gets back to an estimated clean weight. I wouldn't care to change the present system."

"That is how I buy it. I tell them how many pounds of top and noil they will get. We never talk shrinkage. We prefer clean."

"In other words, invoice on the clean weight? I don't know why not. What difference does it make? It is satisfactory either way."

"If you buy on a grease weight you are not protected. I prefer the clean basis."

"Both weights are equivalent if the shrinkage is correctly determined."

"We would still rather have the grease weight because we maintain check on the core and grease weight. This might be lost sight of when making up blends."

"If an honest clean weight, yes. That is what we are interested in."

"Generally yes. When the market has gone up we get heavier wools and lighter when it has gone down. This is the reason why."

Quality Characteristics from Cores

Question 20. Do you think it would be worthwhile to you for a marketing firm to have scoured core samples analyzed for fineness, black fiber contamination, and color in order to have measures for these characteristics when buying wool?

The responses may be classified as shown in the following tabulation:

Buyers	Yes, if accurate	No	Don't know or depends
Fineness			
Topmakers	4	6	2
Manufacturers	1	6	7
Black fiber			
Topmakers	4	6	2
Manufacturers	2	6	6
Color			
Topmakers	4	6	2
Manufacturers	1	6	6

Some of the answers were difficult to classify. Some respondents did not answer the "Yes, no or depends" part of the subquestions but expressed an opinion. Others answered the "Yes, no, or depends" parts and then qualified their answers and gave explanations.

A high proportion of the explanations and reasoning was concerned with the accuracy of such possible tests. Sampling and testing for these factors is in the experimental and developmental stages. The major reasons for answering "No" were because of satisfactory judgment evaluations by present methods, lack of accuracy, and the expense of such sampling and testing.

Following are some topmakers' answers:

"Not practical."

"I don't know. Those are not accepted yet. It is too early. Wait and see the research. No firms are offering that way yet. It may have merit."

"I don't think the core can give any of these things."

(On fineness.) "No. It is too early to take _____ technique as being right. We can very well determine fineness by eye in the sorting process or during inspection of the wool. We want grease wool standards, but not in microns." (On black fiber.) "No. This is tough even in tops - most difficult." (Color.) "No . . . we are interested in a hundred lots going together, not just one lot. Do this when it is in tops, not in the grease wool state."

"Yes, to all three. The more you know about anything the better off you

are. If it can be done accurately, and if you get a low black fiber it would mean a lot. It has to be accurate."

Following are some manufacturers' answers:

"I don't know the background. I can't answer. I would need to know how satisfactory the Government's testing was."

"We, if uncertain, will have the analysis made ourselves."

Answered "Depends" to all three sub-questions. "I think we are coming to it. May come up with good answers. Start out in foreigners. I would like to see how they tie in."

"Would fineness be guaranteed? Or are these things just a guide for me?" ("As a possible guide," was the answer by interviewer.) - - - (On fineness.) "It wouldn't be as important. People who micron wool are interested in the final result not the micron input fineness" . . . (On black fiber.) "Yes." "That would be most helpful." (On color.) "No."

"We have no experience on which to value such tests but think they might be worthwhile."

Staple Samples

Question 21. Do you think that 100 to 200 random drawn staples about as big around as a pencil could be taken from a lot of wool and examined by you or your buyer to get adequate indications of fineness and fineness distribution, length and length distribution, tip formation crimp and other characteristics?

The following tabulation shows a broad classification of the answers.

Wool characteristic	Buyers	Total responses	Yes	No	Don't know or depends
Fineness	Topmakers	12	2	5	5
	Manufacturers	13	2	5	6
Length	Topmakers	12	3	5	4
	Manufacturers	13	2	5	6
Tip, crimp, and the like	Topmakers	11	0	6	5
	Manufacturers	13	0	6	7

The respondents who answered "Yes" to these questions qualified their answers. Some of the other answers were also qualified.

A method for drawing random staples of grease wool is in the experimental and developmental stages in the U. S. Department of Agriculture Wool Standards Laboratory at Denver.

The implications of this question have to do with selling on the basis of description and small sample.

Following are some topmakers' answers to this question:

"Until some scientist has done the work, I could only guess because I don't know. It would have to be tried out on a 100 or 1,000 lots. Then I could answer."

"Buyers like to see wool in the bulk. Many things influence their thinking - type of defect, color, growing conditions. They would be at a loss looking at random drawn staples. They are prejudiced and there is a natural tendency to discount anything not in his training or history. Custom has a lot to do with it."

"It depends on the evenness of the lot of wool to start with. With a well bred lot, it may be possible to get a fairly accurate test."

Following are some manufacturers' answers:

"I couldn't answer. I don't know. Theoretically you could draw enough samples. Sounds like it is on the right track though."

(On fineness.) "No. It depends on background. I wouldn't do it with my background." (On length.) "Would get little better results for fineness providing the wool is properly prepared. No. for original bag or graded." (On tip formation, crimp and other characteristics.) "No. Would say no again but I think you would get into everything in the lot. When we look at wool we look at the belly and the back, which is dry and tender, to get an idea of noilage."

"I would like to try it. I have a feeling it could be done. I don't know."

"Wool sold in the fleece should be examined in the fleece."

Appraising and Describing

Question 22. Suppose a salesman presented the following description of a lot of wool: "Lot 123456: 1/2 Blood Territory French Combing Comingled Graded: Belle Fourche Area, S. D., Mont.,



A neat pile of graded wool. Such piles show the wool to advantage and give a good blend, but are expensive to build.

Wyo.: 128 bags: Net greasy Wt. 32,165:
Yield 51.5 UST core: Clean wt. 16,565:
25% 62s; 45% 60s; 15% 58s; 8% 56s; 7%
offs: 15% over 3"; 82% 2.5" to 3"; 3%
shorter: Good strength: White face
wool: Some black fiber: Branding paint
unknown: Average tying: Used bags:
Appraised by John Lamb and Ramsey
Ewing."

What should be added, deleted or
changed in the description to make it
acceptable as a basis for buying or
selling?

Would it help much to see sample
staples along with the description?

What could best be done by a mar-
keting firm to get reliable appraisals and
descriptions of their wool?

The answers to this question revealed a considerable array of opinions. The responses were not only relevant to a variety of wool marketing problems but also difficult to classify and analyze. A high percentage of the respondents were skeptical of the possibilities for making such a description accurate, even though many of them did not say so directly.

The factors of accuracy, reliability and confidence were considered quite important by most respondents. These factors are highly important in purchasing foreign wools, like Australian, which are mostly bought on the telephone in accordance with simple type descriptions.

The need for uniform standards for appraising and describing wool was brought up both directly and indirectly in answering this and other questions. It is axiomatic that standards are basic to the widespread development and use of a system for selling a commodity on description. Such standards are basic in marketing cotton, wheat and other commodities. They are used to a wide extent, in the form of microns for fineness and inches for length, in marketing wool tops.

Suggestions for additions to the description included: Types and amounts of vegetable and burr; style; noilage; that it was an estimate and not guaranteed; price; yield for each classification; degree of tenderness; and, stain.

Eleven respondents stated that they would want to see representative samples of the lot. Seven of these respondents

said that it would help to see sample staples but most of them preferred large samples.

Suggestions for obtaining reliable appraisals and descriptions revolved about the employment of competent wool men, having this done by the Wool Associates of the New York Cotton Exchange, and having laboratories do part of the work.

Most of the answers are quoted below because of the difficulty of classification, and to show the lines of reasoning and array of factors brought out by the top-makers and manufacturers.

"You have to look at the wool itself to know what it will make."

"I don't know that anything should be deleted, or added. It is a thorough description. But, we get back to who is John Lamb, and does his idea correspond with yours as to what is 58's and/or 56's and so on. Wool is a very funny commodity. It is not like anything else. It looks different at different times. Visual inspection works out O.K. on the average. But you have to know the men. If I had as much faith in the description as in our own buyers, you would have something. I would have to see a large sample. I would rather see oldtime samples of fleeces - good sized hunks of fleeces - to get an overall picture, the things you wouldn't get from individual staples. That is a tough question to tackle. I don't know quite what to say on how to get reliable descriptions. We have our own organization for that."

"Human element enters in this thing. You could make all kinds of technical tests. But, still in the long run we need to know what the description is based on - micrometer, stapling tests or on opinion. There is a great difference of opinion."

"Clean fibers present? or clean content? There is no price mentioned. I would want to see the wool in the bags - it is not customarily sold on samples. The terms that people call wool don't mean too much. I would have to examine to see what I thought the wool was. All wools have some black fibers. Are the percentages right? It would not help much (to see sample staples) on that lot of wool. I prefer to see the wool. It is

hard to answer (how to get reliable descriptions). Hire the best possible help. Fuller use of lab tests helps on some things."

"That is breaking it down altogether too far - making it too technical. I don't believe people will believe you. I have to see these things with my own requirements in mind."

"I don't know what else you could tell. But, I still wouldn't believe them. Unless a man knows exactly what I mean by 60's or so on, it wouldn't mean much. I report everything in microns; the boss wants it pinpointed, and the only one he will believe is me. The dealers still buy it by grade. We are interested in the percentage of offs and in what the rest will micron if it is all thrown together. No (it would not help much to see sample staples). The best thing a marketing firm can do is remain consistent in their grading so that customers will know what they are talking about," (when selling on description). (Referred to the changes in grading from early Commodity Credit Corporation support days to the present.)

"(The description is) very adequate. Yes it would help (to see sample staples). Buyers will have to see samples for a long time to come - they want to feel the wool. You have got to have standardized and supervised appraisal and description - must have control and identical methods. Identities as to location of production must be known - and laboratory tests without knowledge of the lab man as to the owner of the wool."

"The description if O.K. - mostly. I would go on the man who describes the wool. I must have faith in the man. Definitely yes, (it would help to see staples). Get the best wool men - they must have integrity - the ideal is for the man who puts up the wool not to be the salesman. I would want as much reliability as in my own man; that is what it amounts to. It is much easier on properly graded wools. Standard lines and grades develop confidence."

"In the first place this is original bag wool that should be graded or there is bag grading. The length of 2-1/2 to 3 is too broad. It should be broken down. Use



Grading wool in a Portland, Oreg., warehouse. A high degree of skill is required to properly grade domestic grease wools.

the Wool Exchange system for appraising and describing. Fifteen percent of 58's is too much. You should avoid any rough 60's in 1/2 blood and throw down for britch. They are very careful on Wool Exchange appraisals. That is a pip (wool as described); it requires regrading; it could be used for Army uniforms but you would have to take out 56's. Nothing (should be added to the description) except possibly tippiness, harsh, brashy, noilage. I don't believe much in samples but believe it would help (to show sample staples). I must trust the dealer who sells ahead on description. You know from experience what you are going to get when you buy on the phone - it has been developed over the years. It is a matter of who is John Lamb and Ramsay Ewing. Some outfits are buying wool in the West and submitting it to the Wool Exchange for appraisal, but don't deliver the wool."

"I have never run into anything like that (description). I don't buy much wool from marketing firms. I have never seen that. They never give clean weight as such. You have to know Lamb and Ewing. It is a very elaborate description; 62's to one may be 60's to another. However, that is the way I describe wool. (Respondent showed how he had appraised a lot of Texas as: 20% of 70's Good French at 37% yield; 60% of 64's Staple at 40% yield and so on. He had estimated the clean weight of each major sort that would be made from this lot of wool, and also estimated the noilage.) That could be described as bulk 60's with 25% 62's, and an edge of 58's and offs. They don't know what length is by fineness grades. It is getting pretty technical, too elaborate - would cause too much argument. No two people see wool the same - we often don't agree on fineness. (Respondent cited, as an example, an experience that he had that morning wherein he and a prospective seller called the wool different grades. He said that happens frequently, and, in this case, the seller said, "Well - there is the wool," - which means the wool, and not the description, is the controlling factor when wool is bought on inspection). There should be a yield on each classification. Yes (it would help to see sample staples

along with the description). I have seen 10 men, all good wool men, look at a lot of Utah wool and there would be 10 percent differences in their estimates of yield."

"It depends on who was selling it to you. It is a matter of confidence and reliability. Yes (it would help to see sample staples along with the description)."

"That is quite a description. If I could get this type of description - it is more than we are getting. It is about as complete a description as I have seen. It is a good way of describing. I would rather see samples of wool from which I would draw staples. A lot of them get appraisals by the Wool Exchange. You should get accurate and standard appraisals. Various people have various ideas."

"First, it depends on who the salesman is and the company he represents. Second, the description is good enough, but you don't have a description of the vegetable. I would like to know this. How burry? Chances are that he knows the wool anyway. I have bought on experience and history, always subject to my approval on delivery, and I can reject. I seldom buy, it is not our policy to buy, unless we have seen 10 percent of the wool. I would want a 5 pound bag (sample rather than sample staples). But, I don't put much faith in this (5 pound bag of samples). They should put up types for mills, for customers. I will look at the wool."

"This would be used purely as a guide and not as a basis for the sale?" (Yes.) "There is no mention of style, and that is particularly important in Texas. The degree of tender. Yolk, stain, vegetable fault; it is important if there are burrs and what kind, kind of vegetable. If I could put any degree of reliability in the description, they could sell grease wool on the telephone again. Yes (it would help to see sample staples) for tip, crimp and breeding. That is a good one, isn't it? (How to get reliable appraisals and descriptions). There are only about a half dozen men left on Summer Street that everybody will agree are really good wool men. _____ is now building faith and trust. Faith and trust are extremely important - they would be built up after I had gotten a couple of good deliveries. Take on a

good staff (that is how to get reliable appraisals and descriptions)."

"The main part of the whole deal is who are John Lamb and Ramsay Ewing. That is a good thorough description - it depends entirely on who presented it. Yes, definitely (it would help to see sample staples). I am old fashioned on coring. But, if somebody draws, and tries to get a good sample from all over the pile it might work all right. Spiral burrs are bad. We have to pull them out of the fabric with tweezers (indicating that description of vegetable fault should be included)."

"How much is Belle Fourche? How much Wyoming? Montana? It may be O.K. if the wool is very uniform but the buyer would question the description. Confidence and reliability are all important. I can't answer. It is very important as to how it is done and by whom."

"You should indicate that these are estimates and not by any stretch of the imagination guaranteed. It is always better to support a description with samples. I would go on John Lamb and Ramsay Ewing if I knew the men well. My confidence in the description is limited to my confidence in the ability of the two appraisers. I must know the ability of the men."

"That is not acceptable - it is just a lead. It may be hard on original bags. No (it would not help to see sample staples). Get _____ (a commercial laboratory) to do it."

"Who is going to do it? How can it be done? I can do it on foreign wools but not that close. I wouldn't want to put it (description) on a contract if I were the seller. You are carrying the description too fine. It is a matter of opinion as to what is 62's - my opinion may not be the same as Ewing's or Lamb's. Those are good things to know. I don't know that anything should be added. It is good - it is all a matter of reliability. Certainly it would help (to see sample staples along with the description). Get together with buyers and (we) look at the wool together to see that we have the same standard - look at the wool together

to build up confidence and ideas on grades. There are differences in idea of grade. They are different from one firm to another. I have made this type of description. Wool is a fantasy because it all depends on who looks at it - no two men are exactly the same."

"We often buy from the country that way, with yield subject to core test, and the buyers estimate of percentage of different qualities. We bought _____ (a large weight) out of _____ (a western town) on that type of set up this year. It would materially help to see samples but it is not mandatory. The average wool buyer has a good idea of the wool from experience - the big abnormal is shrinkage. Generally on Territories and Texas we buy through a variety of sources. Through experience we can evaluate and put confidence in the dealers. The mill has the protection of subject to approval on arrival. On the _____ pound _____ deal we knew the buyer, and he knew us, and we bought on that basis."

"We have bought few territory wools. I would like to see a sample of the wool rather than just staples. The core test would influence me too."

"The description, as outlined, would be helpful to a buyer in visualizing a lot of wool being offered. But, it would be highly desirable for the buyer to see a representative sample."

"A buyer estimates fineness and length distribution, and can handle the wool and estimate shrinkage by grade, and then arrive at a value. Most marketing firms have men who are supposedly reliable and capable to make up descriptions."

"We never buy wool that way. It may be all right for a dealer or worsted manufacturer."

"We wouldn't buy on any description like that. We do buy from one or two people without taking the wool up, because we have found them reliable and dependable."

"We doubt that anyone could accurately describe a lot of wool in such detail. No (on seeing sample staples). Employ competent appraisers (to get reliable descriptions)."

Deferred Pricing Formulas

Question 23. Would you be interested in buying wool from marketing firms for future delivery in accordance with contracts that would specify that the price you pay will be based on a deferred pricing formula based on premiums or discounts from quoted spot or futures prices?

(YES) (NO) (MAYBE) Why?

Responses to this question may be classified as shown in the following table.

Buyers	Total responses	Yes	Maybe	No
Topmakers	12	7	3	2
Manufacturers	13	5	3	5

Manufacturers' and topmakers' thinking on this subject was mostly about using futures prices instead of quoted spot prices as a base in such formulas. However, one topmaker indicated an interest in formulas using quoted spot prices as a base in the deferred pricing formula.

Topmakers sold most of their tops "on basis" which is essentially a deferred-pricing technique using futures as a base. Manufacturers buy most of their cotton "on call" which is practically synonymous to "on basis." Manufacturers' and topmakers' major reasons for purchasing wool in accordance with deferred pricing formulas were: Assured supply; reduced inventory working capital requirements; and, reduced risks.

Their major reasons for not wanting to purchase wool in accordance with deferred pricing formulas were: Complications of deriving and agreeing on formulas; lack of reliance on quality of deliveries; and, the necessity for dealing on the basis of description, rather than inspection in most cases.

Following are some topmakers' answers to this question:

"No. We are not interested. We do not use the futures. Our feeling is that the size of the market does not lend itself to successful futures operations. Futures operations (as brokers in futures) and actual operations by the same people should not be allowed. I feel that way strongly."

"Yes. That is the way we have to sell our tops. If we could buy wool the same way, it would take a good deal of risk out of it. We want a manufacturer profit."

"Yes, there will be more tendency for topmakers to buy wool for forward delivery. The topmaker wants continuity of supply, may pay better prices for assured supply."

"Yes. Sure if the supplier is reliable."

"We would buy on basis - not on quoted spot prices of a later date."

"Maybe, from time to time, on basis. Of course, it would be up to us when to fix the price, like our customers who buy 90 percent on basis. There is no good reason not to buy wool the same way. Customers are becoming more futures minded."

"Yes. We would definitely like to buy on basis. We would not be interested except in a limited way on spot, instead of futures, as a base."

Following are some manufacturers' answers:

"No. It is a matter of confidence and reliability again. I would rather take care of it myself with futures."

"We prefer to make our purchases at definite fixed prices based on our judgment of market conditions."

"We buy a lot of tops on basis. I don't think, for a small mill, there is much advantage to buy on formula using spot prices - that is a good way to get clipped."

"Yes, at times more than others. Today we would be booking orders. Now everybody wants to cover the future. A good many manufacturers want to make a profit on manufacturing and not on speculation. Speculators should be dealers."

"Yes. That is being done in tops and could very well be done in wool."

"Not at present on futures - it could be possible in the future."

"I am not prepared to answer. We haven't dealt in futures."

"Yes - definitely on futures - on basis if we could establish a proper basis, which



Showing wool before a California auction sale. Sealed bid and auction sales are sometimes held to attract more competition between buyers.

varies from time to time. You can't hedge all wools. We know the top end of the business but don't know about the

grease wool. We would have to have a history. Credit enters into this."

Auctions and Sealed Bid Sales

Question 24. Would you be interested in buying domestic wool at auctions or sealed bid sales?

(YES) (NO) (MAYBE)

Why?

The answers to this question may be classified as follows:

Buyers	Total responses	Yes	No	Maybe	Prefer auction to sealed bid
Topmakers	12	10	2	-	5
Manufacturers	14	8	5	1	6

The wording of this question was such that it was not determined whether the respondents preferred auctions or sealed bid sales to private treaty trading.

The degrees of interest in auctions varied from dislike to strong feeling in favor of auctions. Five of the respondents stated that auctions or sealed bids would probably bring higher prices than private treaty selling. None of the respondents stated that they prefer sealed bid sales to auctions. However, at a sealed bid sale in Minneapolis during

November 1956, several buyers for topmakers and manufacturers said that they preferred sealed bid sales to auctions.

Following are some topmakers' answers:

"Yes. At auction but not at sealed bid."

"I feel very strongly in favor of public auctions, - not sealed bids. Australian auctions show prices every day, and this is important in futures."

"We don't care. I have a slight feeling that we have to pay too much at auction or sealed bid. We have to shoot the works if we want to buy it."

"I prefer private treaty. The reason is that competitive bidding forces prices higher than people want to pay."

"I would like to see wool sold at auction. There have been too many withdrawals in the past."

Following are some manufacturers' answers:

"No. If auctions were held at scheduled times over the season as they are in Australia, we would have no objection.

In other words, we want wool available when we wish to buy."

"We do most of our buying through dealers. We would have to have a full time wool buyer for auctions. It may be O.K. if wool were put up by types and auctioned over a longer season. We have bought at sealed bid sales, but wouldn't want to buy very much that way."

". . . There is a psychological push-up at an auction but not in a sealed bid sale. Also you know who is operating and it is all honest."

"Yes. It seems like the tried, proven and eventual method would be by auction.

They have been successful in Australia and the Cape. They are trying to introduce auctions in Uruguay. I have been successful at sealed bids, but don't think it is the way to buy wool. Somebody makes a mistake and buys the wool. At auction you don't have to have an expert to buy wool. I think auctions are the coming thing."

"We are buying CCC wool at sealed bid sales. On auctions, I am open minded, haven't made up my mind for sure."

"We believe in auctions and open sales where everybody has an equal opportunity to compete."

Other Suggestions

Question 25. What other suggestions or ideas do you have for improving the marketing of domestic wools?

Eleven topmakers and seven manufacturers replied to this question.

Four topmakers and four manufacturers repeated suggestions for improving wool preparation, especially by growers. This is significant because this problem had been covered in previous questions.

Two respondents suggested baling wool; three talked about competition and two were favorable to auctions. Other comments and suggestions included: Growers should deal with reliable and competent marketing firms; produce more fine wool; and, describe wool by a system comparable to that used in Australia.

Following are some answers to this question:

"Better and more honest preparation of wool."

"The wool business hasn't progressed - many improvements could be made. We like baled wools if they are properly classed. It doesn't mess up sorting if domestic wools are baled. Auctions like in Australia or New Zealand could be an improvement, but would be difficult to establish except through co-ops that have no financial interest in the wool."

"There have been many changes in the marketing set-up of domestic wools over recent years. To come up with

intelligent suggestions now is not easy. The dealers who used to buy wool and bring it to Boston, and who in turn acted as banker to the manufacturer, is pretty well a thing of the past. - - - One of the largest obstacles to doing business with them has been the various Government programs that put artificial, and not market prices, on their wool."

"A strong campaign is needed to educate the farmer on the preparation of his wool. Buyers need to give more incentive."

"I would like to help the grower but not to my detriment. Vertical mills lost a lot on offsorts. The topmaker came in to fill the bill. The topmaker to survive had to have a long purse or let business shrink."

"There is an opportunity in futures for the cooperatives."

"The big thing is to get the grower to properly prepare wool, and breed for wool, but this conflicts with lamb."

"Elaborate on descriptions. Do like in Australia or the Cape, but don't go that far."

"I believe put-up can be improved as to grade, staple and cleanliness. This would automatically improve the marketing both for the grower and consumer. I think auctions and sealed bid sales would attract more buyers to one specific lot of wool, but this is not an advantage to the consumer."

