

New York City College Of Technology

History Of Wool

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The story of wool started long ago. Man first clothed himself in the woolly skins, of the wild sheep he also killed it for food. He had discovered a very durable fabric which gave him the protection from the heat and cold and also from wind and rain. A versatile fabric which kept him cool from the heat and warm from cold, that also absorb moisture without feeling wet. Even before 10,000 BC wool cloth was being spun and woven by the tribes of northern Europe. To spin it they took the wool in one hand and drew it out, twisting it into a thread with the fingers of the other hand. The result was a thick uneven yarn. Later, a crude spindle was developed by

fitting a stone or clay ring to the end of a short wooden stick. The ring acted as a flywheel and enabled the drawn-out yarn to be wound on to the spindle. This method of spinning was used for thousands of years and is still used by peasant communities in various parts of the world. Wool comes from animals such as camels, goats, and sheep. Of these, sheep were the most common source for wool in medieval Europe. Raising sheep made sound financial sense because the animals were easy to care for and versatile.

Wool was a textile with numerous uses. It could be knitted into heavy blankets, capes, leggings, tunics, dresses, scarves and hats. More often, it could be woven into large pieces of cloth of varying grades from which all these things and more could be sewn. Carpets were woven from coarser wool; furnishings were covered with woolen and worsted fabrics; draperies were made from woven wool. Even underwear was occasionally made from wool by people in colder areas. Wool could also be felt without being woven or knitted first; this was done by beating the fibers while soaking them, preferably in warm liquid. Early felting was done by stomping on the fibers in a tub of water. The nomads of the steppes, such as the Mongols, produced felt cloth by placing woolen fibers under their saddles and riding on them all day. The Mongols used felt for garments, blankets, and even to make tents and yurts. In medieval Europe, less-exotically-produced felt was usually used to make hats and could be found in belts, scabbards, shoes and other accessories. The wool manufacturing industry thrived in the Middle Ages.

The first step in processing wool takes place on the farm or ranch with shearing, usually in the springtime. A skillful shearer, using electric hand clippers similar to enlarged barber's shears, uses long, smooth strokes close to the skin in order to preserve

the length of the fiber and hence the value of the fleece. The next step in the process is washing (scouring) the wool of impurities that can gather in the wool from the range, feedlot, or shearing floor.

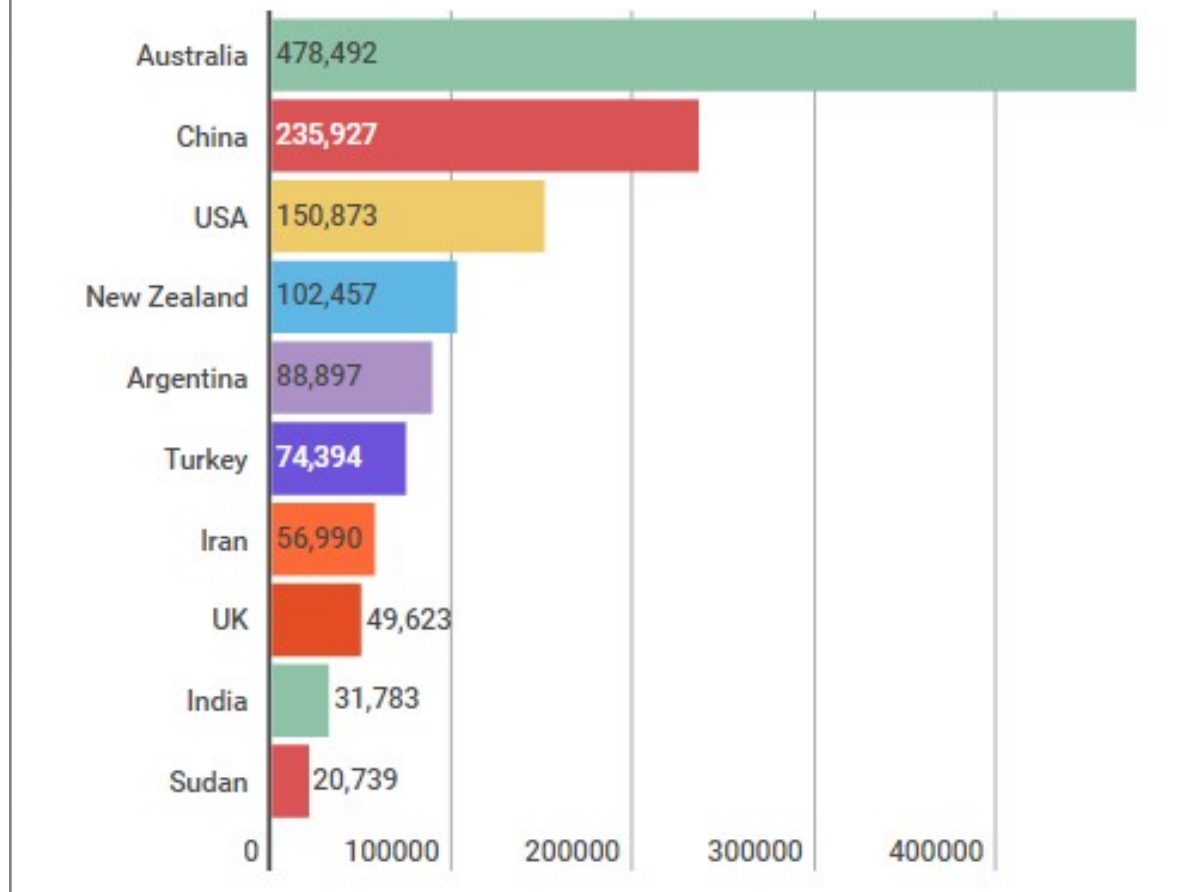
Next come the buyers. Many times they take core samples of wool in order to measure fiber in length and diameter. Fine and medium-fine wools of longer staple lengths (more than three inches) usually go to make lightweight worsted suit and dress fabrics. Coarser and shorter fibers, less than three inches long, usually go into bulky sweater and carpet yarns.

Wool is a natural fabric. The World's largest wool Producing Countries 2015 was produced in Australia which is mostly from merino sheep but has been eclipsed by china in terms of total weight. Than comes USA, New Zealand, Argentina, Turkey, Iran, UK, India, and Sudan largest producer of wool, and the largest producer of crossbred wool.

The most Common types of wool are lambswool (produce from the young sheep), Merino wool (produce from merino sheep), cashmere (produce from the goat), Mohair (produce from angora goat), Angora (produce from the angora rabbit).

My personal favorite wools are cashmere and merino wool. I find that cashmere wool is the warmest and softest sweater I own. But the only downside to cashmere it tents to pill a lot. What I like most about merino wool is, the fibers are finer, less Itchy and is able to conform to the shape of my body. My merino wool sweater is the most comfortable and durable sweaters I own.

World's Largest Wool Producing Countries 2015 (Tonnes)



Now when it comes to suiting, tweed being heavy and coarse, is best suited for cold winter. Flannel is a very soft woven that's brushed for super softness, is also go for cold climate. Than you have my favorite , Worsted Wool. It's a good choice because it's mid-weight and hardwearing. You can wear Worsted all year round. The yarns normally come in a 60-80 twist – the higher the twist, the finer and lighter the fabric. The highest twist fabric is Super 180. The

number relates to the number of threads per inch of fabric. High numbers mean high quality and higher prices.

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