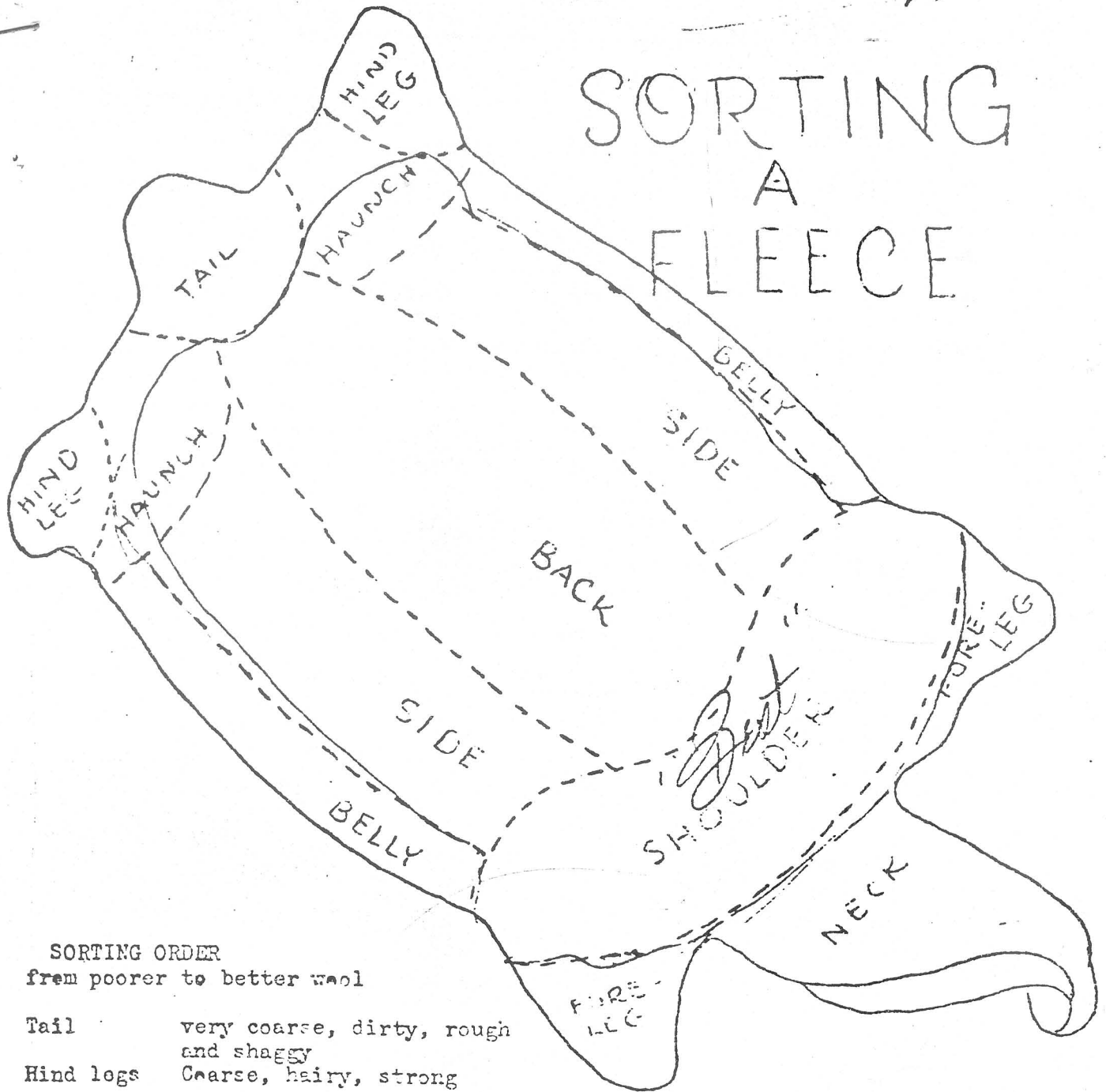


# SORTING A FLEECE



## SORTING ORDER

from poorer to better wool

Tail	very coarse, dirty, rough and shaggy
Hind legs	Coarse, hairy, strong
Forelegs	Short, irregular, poor
Haunches	Coarse, long, usually strong
Belly	Fine, short, tender, felted (soft weft)
Neck	fine, shorter than back, irregular
Sides	Not quite as fine or regular as back and shoulders
Back	Less strong and close than shoulder
Shoulder	Best quality

## IN A FLEECE, LOOK FOR:

1. Fineness
2. crimpiness
3. length
4. strength
5. lustre
6. soft or harsh
7. wiry or yielding

## Sorting

Paula Simmons (Suquamish, Wash.) says:

If your fleece is all in one piece, folded and tied, unroll it and spread it out flat like a rug.

The simplest way of removing the least desirable wool is to "skirt" it, that is, remove the outside several inches of wool. (about a 3" strip around the edge of the whole fleece.) This takes much of the dirtiest tags--the back leg wool, belly wool, front leg wool and neck wool.

Dirt, sand, and grease wash out fairly easily, but hay, straw, and seeds are more difficult to remove.

## Washing

This is Paula's formula for washing wool:

10 lbs dry wool

20 gallons quite hot water

6 cups mild detergent. (soap is harder to wash out)

Pull wool apart to drop out some of the seeds and dirt before putting it into the water.

Cover your tub and allow it to soak several hours. Remove wool from dirty water, a handful at a time. Squeeze dry or spin dry.

*in washing & spinning (only)*  
For your rinse, run water into tub, keeping the temp. the same as the cooled wash water. Add wool and allow to soak. Remove by handfuls and squeeze dry. Fluff it apart and spread it on a screen or wire rack or a sheet, away from direct heat or sunshine.

## Picking

Taking a small handful of wool at one time, gently open up any tight places. Fluff the dry wool, shaking out, or picking out any seeds or dirt that might be remaining. Do this over a large piece of paper on the floor before you. In this way you can see, and hear the seeds fall.

Put the fluffed wool on the floor to your right. After each fluffed handful is added to your pile of fluff, blend it into what you have fluffed before. The blending must be well done to insure a thorough mixing of long and short, soft and crisp wool fibers. If you're going to spin the entire fleece as one job-lot, or one "batch" of yarn, it must be done this way. Spray-picked wool, with Paula's spinning wool.

## Carding

Carding is the most important part of the fiber preparation process and is probably the chief factor in the success or failure of the spinning of a good yarn.

Take the bottom handcard in the left hand, handle away from you. Take up a small amount of fluffed wool in your right hand and stroke the fiber held in the right hand over the bottom card so that the fibers are pulled from the hand and are caught on the hooks of the card. In order for the carding to be done properly, the bottom card must be filled as evenly as possible.

Pass the top card (handle toward you) across the bottom card. Be sure you make a complete stroke each time. Each stroke results in the transfer of some fiber from the bottom card to the top card. Continue until the fiber content on the cards is balanced.