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NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

## Shearing cashmere goats

Agfact A7.8.12, First Edition 2004\*

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\* Replaces Agfact A7.8.2 *Shearing goats—the go-down technique.*

The shearing technique for harvesting a mixed fleece of down (cashmere) and hair was developed by NSW Agriculture. The technique involves the animal being shorn in a standing position, requiring less skill by the shearer than in conventional shering. This is possible because cashmere bearing goats do not produce useable amounts of fibre below the leg joints, on the belly or head or inside the breech. The small amount of fibre produced in these areas will eventually be shed.

### RESTRAINT

Several satisfactory bail heads are commercially available, in which the animal stands comfortably with its head restrained by a rope that passes behind the horns. With the goat's head restrained at the correct height, the shearer can position and control the animal by holding its tail and resting its body against his legs.

Unlike conventional shearing set-ups where the animal is rotated, the present technique requires a handpiece with a flexible connection and some method of cooling. Goats have little grease content in their fleece so that a handpiece at normal speed will be uncomfortably hot on the goat. The speed needs to be reduced.

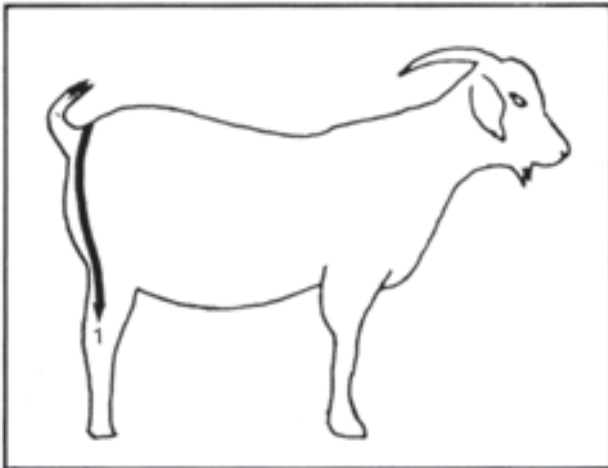


**An example of a suitable bail head. They are usually bolted to the floor.**

**Note:** During shearing some of the fine fibre will circulate in the air and may be inhaled. A mask will avoid irritation.

## TECHNIQUE

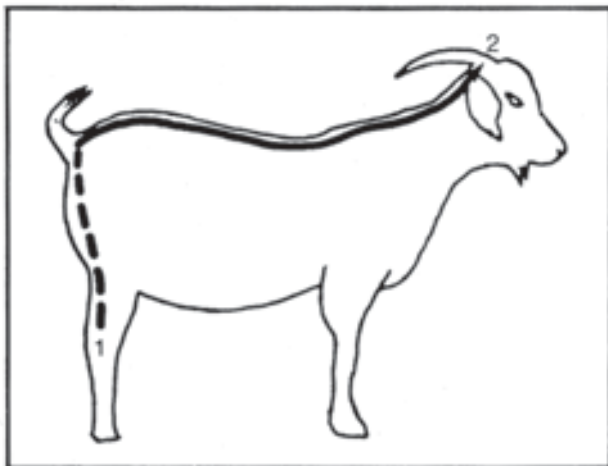
### The first side



**SHEARING BLOW 1:** The opening blow is made from the base of the tail, down the breech, over the outside of the rear leg, ending at the outside of the hock. Turn the handpiece so as to avoid the hamstring.

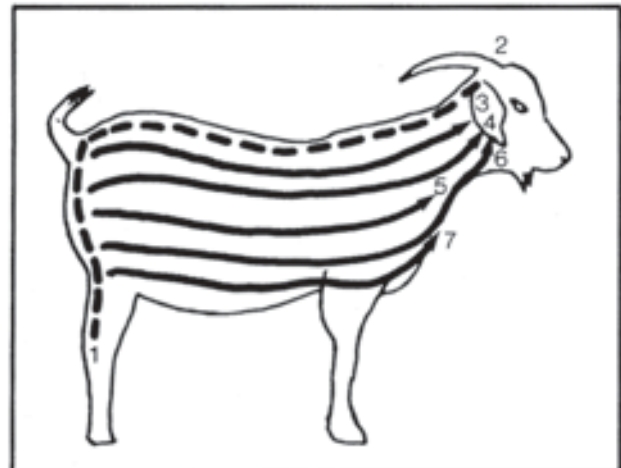


**POSITIONING:** The shearer stands on the goat's left side with his left leg/knee against the goat's mid-side. The tail is held with the left hand to pull the goat against the shearer's left leg.

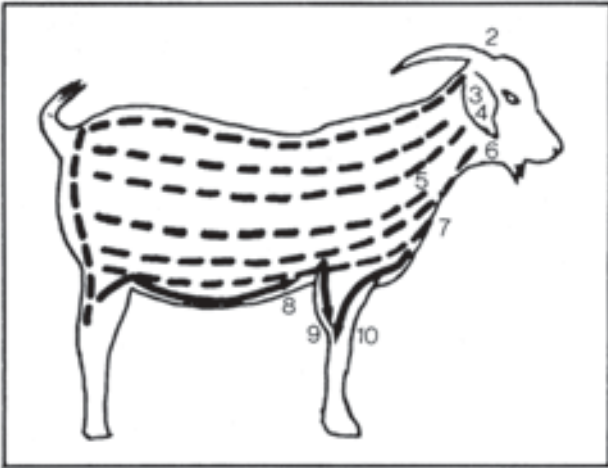


**SHEARING BLOW 2:** The blow begins at the base of the tail in the previously shorn opening and continues along the middle of the back-line up to the base of the horns. Care is necessary when shearing the area in front of the withers at the base of the neck, as the skin may have some wrinkling. The coarse dorsal hair may be left by commencing the blow slightly down from the mid-line.

**POSITIONING:** The shearer stands in the same position as for the first blow. He will need to twist his upper body and lean to his left as the blow nears the head. The goat is pulled onto the shearer's left leg while holding the tail with the shearer's left hand.



**SHEARING BLOWS 3-7:** Blows are made from the opening blow down the rear leg towards the head next to the previous blow. As each successive blow is made it finishes going up the neck.

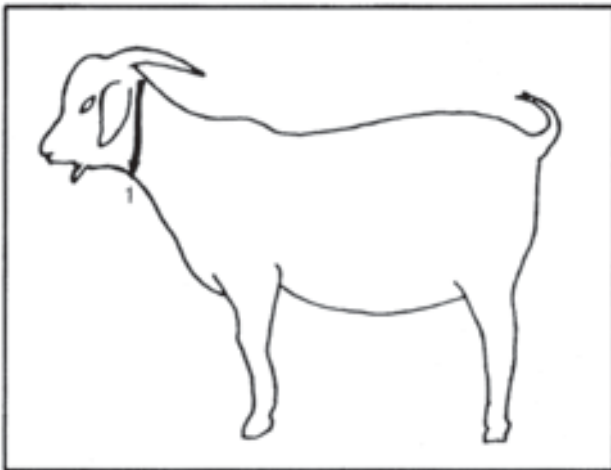


**SHEARING BLOWS 8–10:** The next blow begins low down on the back leg and goes up. The handpiece is turned forward when moving over the flank and travels down onto the side of the belly. Another short blow is made down the rear of the outside of the front leg, the handpiece turned around and brought up the front leg and turned forward over the shoulder and brisket. These blows clean up the opening side.



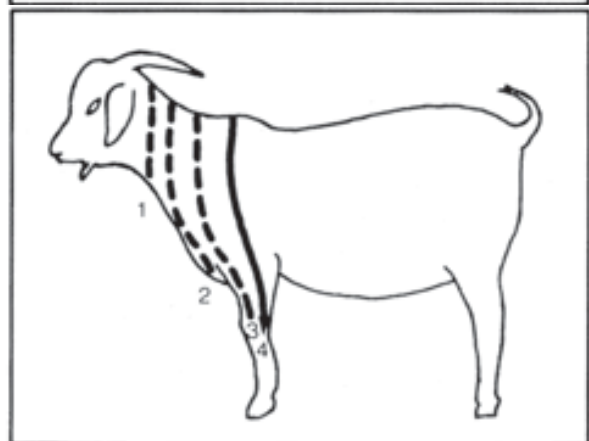
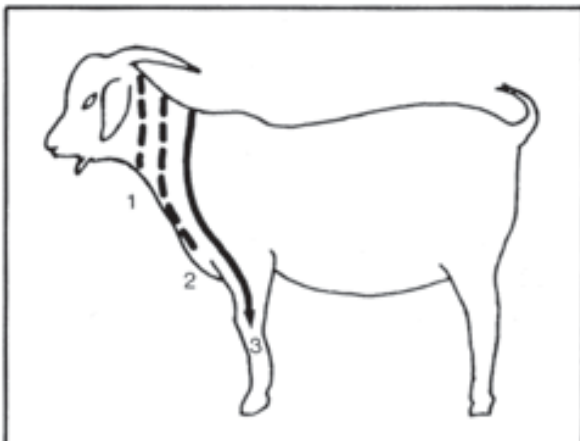
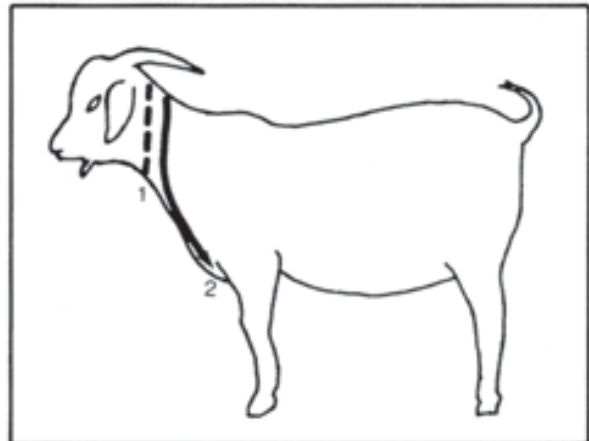
**POSITIONING:** Positioning of the animal is as for previous blows. Care is needed when shearing across the flank; so as to avoid cutting the flap of skin, keep the handpiece flat onto the skin. Care is also needed to avoid ‘spearing’ the goat behind the point of the shoulder when finishing this blow.

### The second side

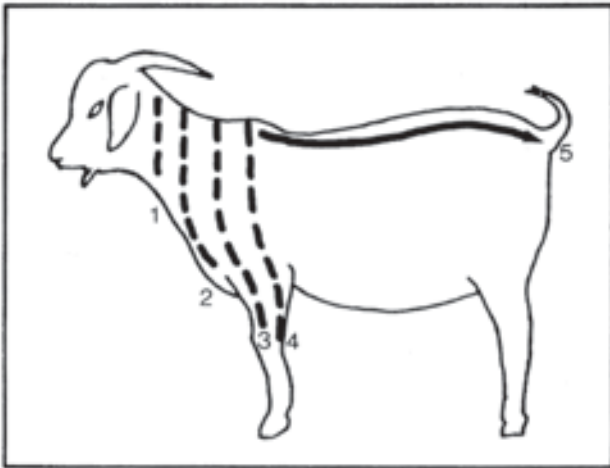


**SHEARING BLOW 1:** The blow begins at the base of the horns in the area previously shorn and goes down behind the ears and cheek, under the neck, to the top of the throat.

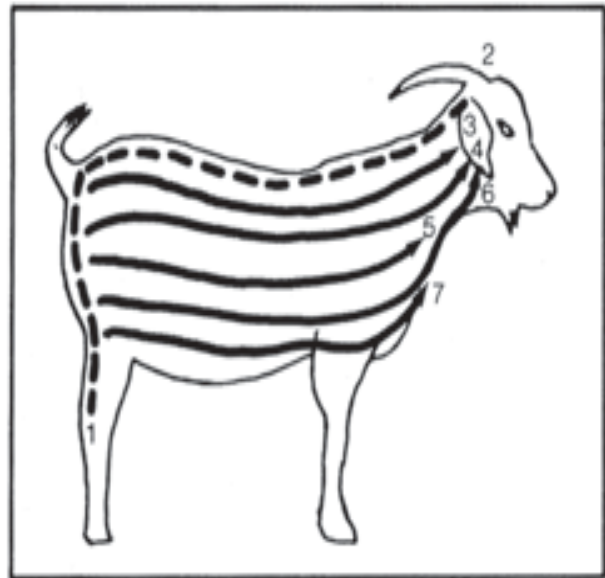
**POSITIONING:** The shearer straddles the rear of the goat facing the goat’s head. The goat is bent to present the outside of a curve on the unshorn side. This creates a smooth skin and an easier surface to shear. The handpiece is rolled over to follow the shape of the neck. The handpiece needs to be ‘led-in’ sharply, as shearing is in the direction of the hair.



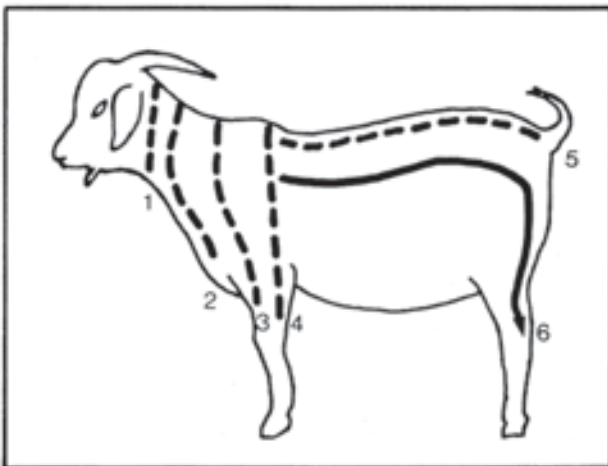
**SHEARING BLOWS 2–4:** Another three blows are made from the top of the neck to the underside next to the previous blow. These blows open up the second side back to a line from the point of the withers down the front leg.



**SHEARING BLOW 5:** This is again a long blow. It begins at the top of the shoulder and ends at the base of the tail, running next to the original blow made on the first side.



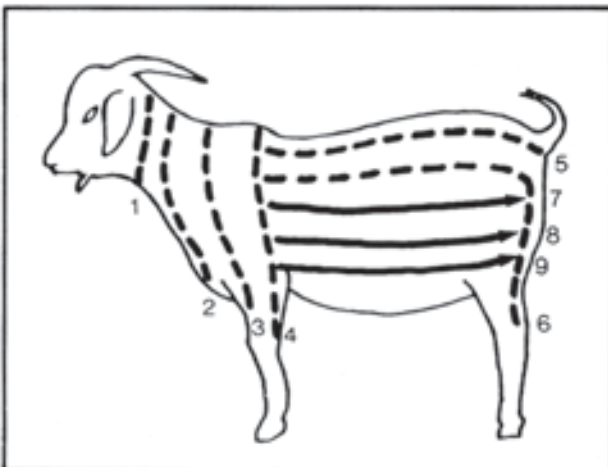
**POSITIONING FOR BLOW 5:** The shearer stands facing the goat on the goat's right side. Holding the goat's tail with his left hand, the shearer bends the goat slightly around his right leg. The shearer's left leg is used for balance.



**SHEARING BLOW 6:** This blow runs from the shoulder towards the tail next to the previous blow. Near the base of the tail, the handpiece is turned to run down the outside of the rear leg to end near the point of the hock. Do not run down the rear of the leg when nearing the hock as it is easy to cut the hamstring and cause lameness.

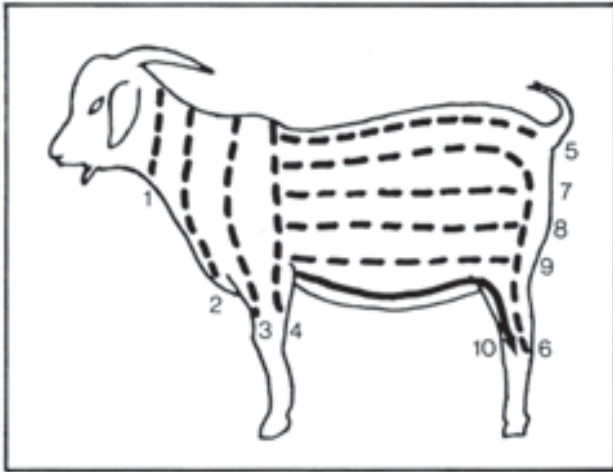


**POSITIONING:** The goat is held in a similar manner to the previous blow when going from the shoulder to the tail. When the blow is made down the back leg, the shearer will move closer to the goat's rear, keeping his right leg, in the goat's right flank and holding the tail with his left hand.



**SHEARING BLOWS 7-9:** These blows are made from the shoulder to the rear leg next to the previous blows. They begin in a shorn area and end in a shorn area so that second cuts and run outs are minimised.

**POSITIONING:** The goat is held in a similar manner to that shown in the first photo this page. That is, the shearer stands facing the goat on its right side. The goat's tail is held by the shearer's left hand against his left leg.



#### **DISCLAIMER**

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (July 2004.) However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the NSW Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

**SHEARING BLOW 10:** This final blow is started at the rear of the front leg along the side of the belly, down the outside of the flank and outside front of the rear leg. Care is needed to ensure that the loose skin in the flank is not cut.

**POSITIONING:** The goat is held in a similar manner to that shown in the second photo on page 4. That is, the shearer stands facing the goat on its right side. The goat's tail is held by the shearer's left hand, pulling the goat against the shearer's right leg.