

Wool – the natural fibre



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Australian Merino wool is a natural, **biodegradable** and **renewable** fibre.



Natural fibre

Natural fibres come from plants or animals.

Australian Merino wool is grown by more than 75 million Australian Merino sheep who graze on grass in paddocks across the country.

Australian wool producers use modern farming methods that protect the environment and keep sheep healthy.

Biodegradable fibre

Wool is totally biodegradable. Wool can decompose into soil in a matter of years, slowly releasing nutrients back into the earth.

Renewable fibre

Wool is a completely renewable resource. Every year, after **shearing**, sheep grow a new fleece, which can be shorn off again the following year.



Synthetic fibres

Fibres such as polyester, rayon and acrylics are synthetic fibres. Synthetic fibres are man-made fibres mostly

produced using **petrochemicals**. They are not natural, biodegradable or renewable.

Other natural fibres

The most common animal-based fibres include:

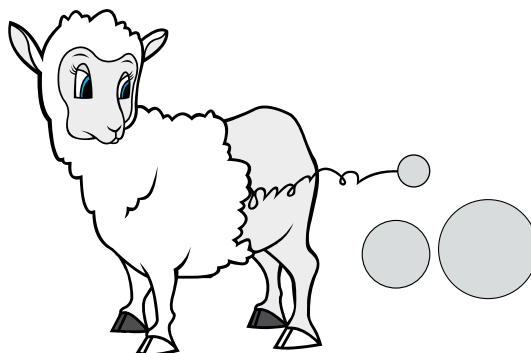
- wool (sheep)
- cashmere and mohair (goats)
- alpaca (alpacas)
- angora (rabbits)
- silk (silkworms)

The most common plant-based natural fibres include cotton, flax and hemp.

Did you know?

- Wool provides better protection from UV radiation than most synthetics and cotton.
- Wool is safe for babies and woollen bedding can even help them sleep better.
- Wool is naturally fire resistant, doesn't melt and stick to the skin, and even puts itself out when the source of the flame is removed.

- Primitive humans clothed themselves in the woolly skins of wild sheep.
- World War I increased the need for wool to clothe soldiers. England bought the entire Australian wool clip for the duration of the war.
- In 2011 the Australian mint produced two commemorative coins to celebrate the Australian wool industry. The one dollar coin featured a shearer hard at work and the 20c coin depicted a wheel illustrated with a series of images representing Australia's rich history of wool production.



Fun facts about fibres

Glossary

Biodegradable — a substance that will decompose naturally.

Petrochemicals — substances obtained from mining petroleum (oil) and natural gas.

Renewable — a resource that can be replenished or regrown after it has been used.

Shearing — removing the wool from the sheep using specially-designed handpieces.

More information

To find out more about natural fibres, take a look at:

- Beyond the Bale: beyondthebale.wool.com
- The Workboot Series: The Story of Wool
- www.samthelamb.com
- www.woolmark.com
- The fibre and fabric samples that came with the LEARN ABOUT WOOL kit.
- The USB that came with the LEARN ABOUT WOOL kit.



Australian Wool
Innovation Limited