

Spring means sheep shearing to FFA'ers

By KENDACE BORRY
MANHEIM -- The equipment is given a final check, and then the green pickup roars into action and disappears down the road to another farm where sheep are waiting. Dale Martin and Dean Ziegler, partners of the D and D Sheep Service, are on their way again to shear sheep.

old, are involved in the practice of removing the fleeces from the woolled livestock for the second year in a row. Last Spring, they developed the idea of forming their business, and soon were busy on farms.

Both living near Manheim, they are members of the Manheim FFA chapter. Their vocational agriculture teacher, Jess

Erway, last year suggested to them that they take a sheep shearing course offered by the Extension Service and taught by Ben Morgan from Penn State. They took the course and then went into business for themselves.

After arriving at the farm where they plan to work, a carpet is pulled off the back of the truck and laid out.



Dean Ziegler shows his sheep shearing techniques as he trims the wool from the side of the sheep.

This is the area where the sheep will be sheared. Once again the clippers are checked, and the gasoline motor assembly put together. Then Dean and Dale are ready for their first sheep.

The wool on the sheep is first checked to make sure that it is dry. Then the sheep is flipped on its back, and the first cut is made.

Dean and Dale start shearing in front of the right

hind leg. Then they start to work on the sheep's stomach, and work their way around to cutting the wool on the sheep's back. Next they cut up towards the head and neck area, using special care around the legs and head. Working down the other side of the animal, they again finish up near the stomach area, with the fleece falling off in one large piece.

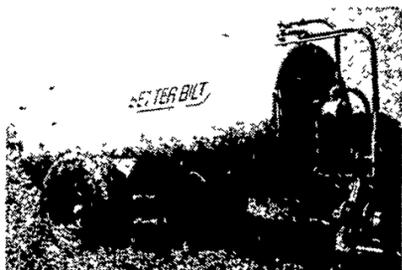
The shearers do their best to avoid nicks and cuts on the

sheep, and occasionally have to wait for an uncomfortable sheep to finally give up its struggle for freedom. While they're shearing, an occasional baa of protest can be heard, muffled through the fleece, but most of the animals patiently endure losing their Winter coats.

The wool is then stuffed in a burlap bag and set aside. After the sheep are all sheared, the wool is

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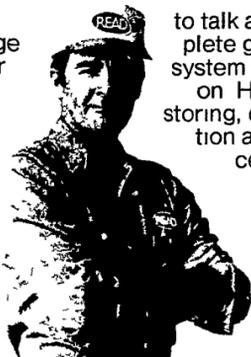
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