

Final Report for LEADER Wool Partnership



Clare Local Development Company
Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil an Chláir



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an Aontas Eorpach

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Ár dTodhchaí
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Future



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Business Consultancy & Advisory Services Ltd
Authored by: Tim Yeomans, Ngaire Takano,
Michael Noctor, Pat Byrne

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1. Background

This report is based on a request for tender published by the LEADER Wool Partnership; this partnership consists of LEADER organisations from Kilkenny, East Galway, West Galway, Clare, North Tipperary and North East West Kerry. This RFT specified the delivery of the following two top level foundations:

1. To work towards adding value to the existing sheep wool produce in a range of products which can use fleeces that are currently typically produced in Ireland
2. To support the development of a value chain from processors to production of yarn and garment for high-quality fabric wool fleece.

These top-level foundations are to be delivered through the following actions:

- To develop a pathway and various work packages in consultation with the Local Development Company partners, and other parties which the Wool Partnership indicates.
- To complete the desk research and the reasonable level of consultation with other parties and stakeholders necessary to allow the creation of a well-informed, viable and worthwhile plan. The desk study will have to advance/conclude on both strands.
- Actions should be specific, detailed and achievable within the constraint's available resources and current legislation constraints. They could include region specific or collective across the Wool Partnership.
- Responsibility on contracted party to work with the wool partnership in an iterative way to identify appropriate pathways on both strands.

2. Approach

The overall goal of this study was to identify tangible approaches that the LEADER Wool Partnership could take to definitively support wool growers across their jurisdictions. In this context feedback from sheep farmers for their interest in being involved with these initiatives was essential. The approach to this report was based on four top level actions:

- Survey of sheep farmers to assess their interest level and current state of play
- Review of sheep ecosystem to determine supply chain amount and quality
- Compilation of case studies to demonstrate wool product options
- Define tangible actions, activities and pilot programmes.

3. Sheep Farmer Survey

A key focus of this study was to achieve engagement with sheep farmers and to obtain their feedback on the current situation plus their interest in innovating with wool locally. An online form was created with a QR code that was circulated at in-person events, as well as through social media (LinkedIn) and e-mail communication (including Leader directed e-mail distribution). The following events were attended in person to collect responses and promote the survey:

- Sheep 2025 – Athenry
- Shearfest – Mountbellew
- West Kerry Agricultural Show

199 responses were collected, within the regions relevant to the Leader organisations, the following responses were collected:

- Galway East - 53
- Galway West – 32
- North Tipperary - 2
- North East West Kerry - 27
- Clare - 4
- Kilkenny – 21
- Rest of Ireland - 60

Graphical representations of the results of the survey are included in Appendix 2. For the purposes of data interpretation, only Galway East, Galway West, Kilkenny, and North East West Kerry reached an appropriate level of response for reliable data interpretation. The graphs in Appendix 2 include these four regions to facilitate local Leader Analysis and inter-area comparisons/contrasts.

In the context of the questionnaire, significant information gathered related to;

- Farmers’ interest in developing or adding value to wool;
- Whether they are currently doing anything with their wool and;
- What that is;

47% of respondents had an active interest or were highly motivated to do something with their wool and 18% of respondents are already utilising their wool for a productive application. This would indicate that there is the potential to achieve the critical mass of active businesses to make a meaningful impact on rural economies nationwide. Uses already being addressed include eco-use or land-based solutions (12), crafts or textile products (9) and tourism (5).

As part of the farmer survey, the option was provided for follow up communication, below outlines this process.

Contact was made by email and telephone calls to those who requested a follow-up having completed the questionnaire. General feedback by all participants was that there must be more work done to support the farmers, the industry of sheep farming, and future planning by enabling innovation and new processes for wool applications. It was mentioned that not all Irish wool that is available is ideal/appropriate for textile or clothing applications. Knowing what the best wool is for textile is important (with request for more R&D) and looking at new innovative applications in other industries. Farmers would like to see their own wool used in products that they could sell within the farm, or work collaboratively with other local farmers, designers, or product developers.

Key points raised and further considerations (to note, the points raised below are transcribed from farmer engagement, the veracity of the comments are not validated):

- Training
 - Training for farmers and sheep carers in knowing what their own wool can be used for (interested to have wool tested to see the micron count so data is more up to date within IE)
 - Marketing - how to share the story of wool from origin to finished item (other than a jumper for example)
 - Carbon sequestration models for farmers and other possible initiatives for income for Farmers
 - Skilled individuals to assist ie knitting of Aran jumpers to earn an income and be skilled
 - Lack of labour and interest for sheep farming (from raising the sheep, shearing, processing to finished item) though also the loss of labour skills i.e. weavers, knitters, felters etc.
- Regulations
 - Mislabelling of Irish wool, from those who are selling products – better labelling, traceability to show the full route
 - Legislation of Category Waste 3: farmers facing challenges to comprehend the legislation; the restrictions placed by movement, use of wool and disposal of wool are confusing and not specifically clear. This can also act as a deterrent for farmers to continue farming. Options/opportunities relate to the valorisation and commercialisation of wool after certain necessary risk-mitigating treatments. Several derogations for more flexibility are provided for by the EU animal by-product rules for

the collection, transport, handling, and use of wool, under the discretion of the national competent authorities¹.

- Business Models/Processing
 - Pricing for the wool for the Farmers – better handling prior and during shearing needs to improve
 - Improvement of the sheep's breeds i.e. pure breeds, highlands, lowlands, local breeds or crossbreeds whether for wool focus or combination of meat, milk and wool
 - Lack of scouring facilities and so not able to scour wool in Ireland though also having to wait for scouring to be completed in the United Kingdom also takes time waiting over a year is not viable
 - Desire for a future for Irish wool from production to a textile or fabric product/s, development in use of wool, though care, wellbeing and better pricing
 - Farmers to receive better financials for their sheep: milk, meat and especially wool
- Other
 - Feeling of isolation and no help, or if help has been mentioned than no follow up from Government bodies
 - Welfare costs for the sheep - veterinary bills are costly
 - Want to create products though not necessarily aware of what can be made or application use. Desire to see their wool being used. Textile based products were interesting but staff to manufacture or organisations is needed. Other materials also.

4. Sheep Ecosystem

While sheep numbers increased on average from 2013 to recent times, since 2022 these numbers have begun to decline.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2024-002498-ASW_EN.html#def2

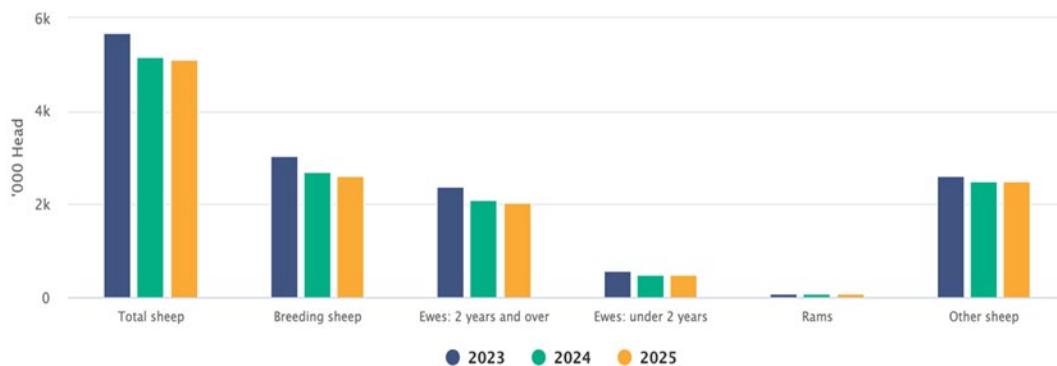


Figure 1. Sheep number comparisons 2013-2023².

Provisional data from 2024 indicates that this trend is continuing with an 8.8% drop in sheep number from June 2023 to June 2024³.

This decline is also reflected in December 2024 numbers, compared to the previous 12 months with a decrease in sheep numbers across ewes, rams and other (see Appendix 4 for detailed county numbers).

Figure 4 Number of Sheep 2023 - 2025



Source: CSO Ireland
Highcharts.com

Figure 2. Sheep comparison numbers by type, 2023-2025

² <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/publications/national-sheep-and-goat-census-report-2023/>

³ [https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-clsjf/cropsandlivestocksurveyfinalresultsjune2024/#:~:text=Key%20Findings,\(%2D5.1%25\)%20to%202%2C490%2C500](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-clsjf/cropsandlivestocksurveyfinalresultsjune2024/#:~:text=Key%20Findings,(%2D5.1%25)%20to%202%2C490%2C500)

Available Sheep Census data was from 2023 (National Sheep and Goat Census Report 2023, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine²). Data available in the census is county specific and so data analysed represents Galway, Clare, Kerry, Kilkenny and Tipperary.

Jurisdiction	Sheep #	Flock #	Mountain	Mountain cross	Lowland	Lowland cross
Clare	26,437	791	1,060	2,329	10,197	13,051
Galway	407,338	4,814	103,041	31,989	123,914	148,444
Kerry	331,293	2,760	179,042	97,670	20,038	34,543
Kilkenny	58,866	556	3,639	7,124	21,069	27,034
Tipperary	109,818	1,106	32,443	14,242	27,956	35,177
National Highest	526,658	6,854	220,925	114,604	123,914	148,444
National Lowest	18,437	232	833	2,329	5,216	4,618

Based on an approximate yield of 2kg wool per animal, and a usage rate of 50%, 55%, 60% and 55% across Mountain, Mountain cross, Lowland and Lowland cross respectively, the potential wool biomass available per jurisdiction is as follows:

Jurisdiction	Tonnes wool potential			
	Mountain	Mountain cross	Lowland	Lowland cross
Micron	36	33	30	33
Clare	1.1	2.6	12.2	14.4
Galway	103	35.2	148.7	163.3
Kerry	179	107.4	24	38
Kilkenny	3.6	7.8	25.3	29.7
Tipperary	32.4	15.7	33.5	38.7

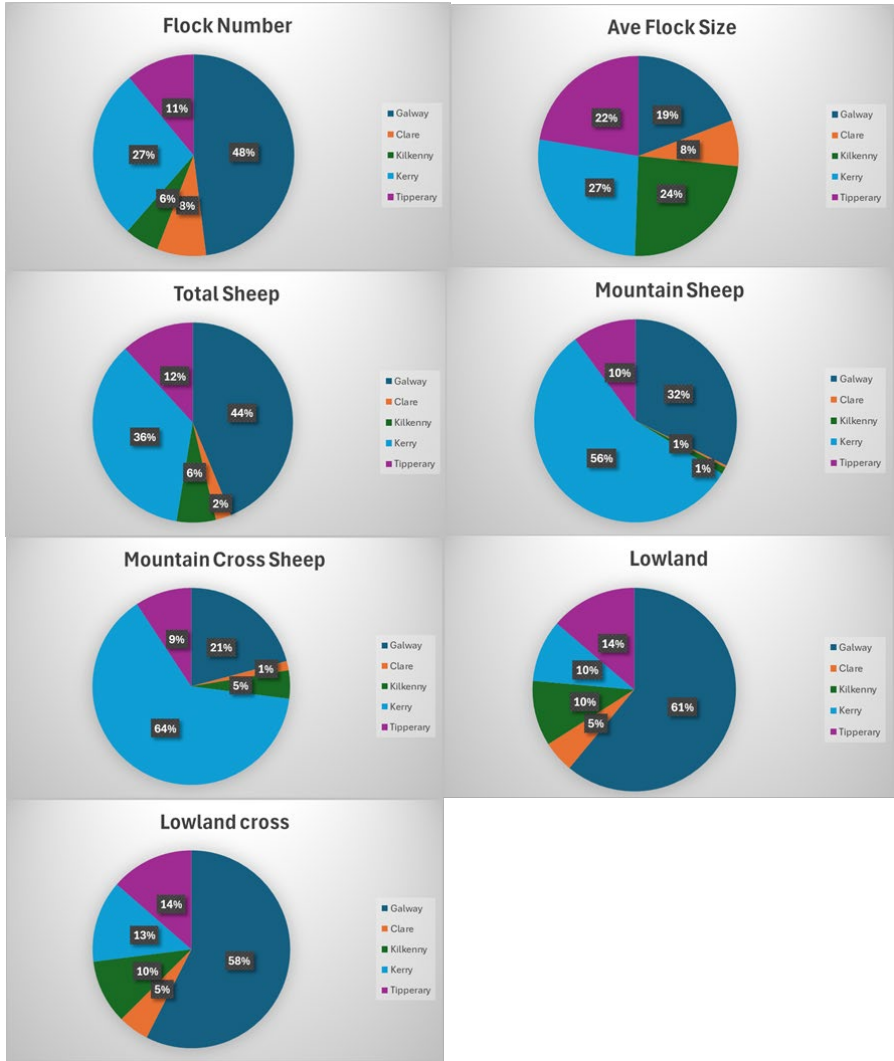


Figure 3. Graphical representation of sheep type across LEADER jurisdictions; data from 2023 Sheep census².

Data for 2025 is still presently being reviewed and being compiled, quoted by CIO and the Sheep Farming Association. Similarly for 2024 figures, data is collected from December 2024 and June 2025.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine highlighted the following for 2025:

- Donegal kept the highest sheep population of 524,853
- Limerick recorded the lowest number 17,287
- 1,762,664 of the population are classified as mountain and mountain cross breeds and 1,828,976 were lowland/lowland cross.
- Mayo has the largest number of mountain sheep of 222,050 and mountain cross of 119,299 were in Donegal

- Smallest number of mountain sheep was Clare 618 and Limerick mountain cross breeds at 2,301.
- Galway had the greatest number of lowland 113,341 and lowland cross 134,554.
- Smallest number of lowland sheep were in Dublin of 4,708 and lowland cross breeds of 4,090.
- Of the 33,805 flocks keeping sheep, average flock size is 106 versus the average flock size of 108 in 2023. A total of 69% of flocks 23,260 kept fewer than the national average of 106.

Contributions to Sheep numbers dropping:

- Farmers do not see the support – financial, processing, legislation and promises made by Government is not occurring thus Farmers stopping farming
- Food supplies, medicines etc. are increasing in costs for the welfare and care of sheep
- Markets in EU are also experiencing loss due to transportation, warehousing, processing costs have increased – scouring in particularly due to increase electricity, heating costs
- Older producers ie a large scouring plant in Portugal (closed down in September 2025) weaving mills in Germany (over 120 years old) and United Kingdom (over 100 years old) have recently closed thus losing skilled workers, locations and equipment
- The cost value of wool is decreasing, whilst the cost of shearing, transportation to local depots for collection is increasing (including petrol etc to travel there and back)
- Shearers are costly average cost in EU is anything from 3-6 euro per sheep
- Time management for Farmers has also had a contribution to reduction in numbers
- It has been highlighted by the IFA – Irelands Farming Association in their Sheep report from July 2025 that “It costs approx. €8 to present a 3kg fleece rolled and packed on a farm – costing farmers over €21m annually. Shearing costs must be directly supported to incentivise farmers carrying out this vital health and welfare measure and to ensure wool is presented in optimum condition for future added value use”⁴.
- Sheep numbers have also been impacted particularly Hill Sheep with ongoing and growing incidents of irresponsible dog ownership, dog attacks and livestock worrying (wellbeing, stress factors), the health of the soil and landscape (impacted by environmental changes throughout the year)⁵.

Sheep Breeders guide

⁴ <https://www.ifa.ie/policy-areas/sheep-council-report-july-2025/>

⁵ <https://www.ifa.ie/farm-sectors/meaningful-support-needed-in-budget-to-stop-decline-in-sheep-sector/>

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- Sheep Breeders guide: This can provide the differing sheep breeds that are readily available in Ireland and the number of these sheep. It is relevant to gather further data from here to correlate the number of sheep in Ireland⁶. Please refer to Appendix 6 for summary of sheep breeds in Ireland with associated micron count and general information.

⁶ <https://www.sheep.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Sheep-Ireland-Guide-Directory-2025-final.pdf>

5. Wool Use Case Studies

The review of case studies below outlines existing products and enterprises that have commercialised wool across a range of sectors. The description within the case studies is not intended to be exhaustive but to provide sufficient information to inform existing sheep farmers of options, as well as to support decision making for selection of actions, activities and pilot programmes. The information included had been adapted from company websites and any claims or functionalities should be considered in that context.

Industrial applications - Packaging

Wool Cool (United Kingdom)

Wool Cool was launched in 2009, it claims to be the only packaging company using a range of sheep's wool insulated packaging available on a commercial scale. They say that they use a patented technology to produce a high performing insulated packaging. The use of this material results in need for fewer ice packs and less material. It is natural, renewable, reusable, recyclable, compostable and returnable.



Woola (Estonia)

Woola uses what they describe as 'waste wool' to produce packaging. The packaging they produce includes padded envelopes, bottle sleeves, wool sheets and bubble wool. They use a small amount of polylactic acid as a binding agent in some products. PLA is synthesised from corn and is biodegradable. They operate a Reuse, Return, Recycle model.



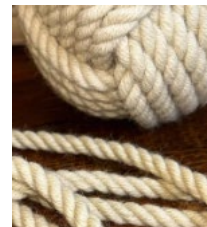
Puffin Packaging (United Kingdom)

Puffin Packaging produce liners for packaging, filled with wool. While the wool is contained in a polyethylene packaging, Puffin Packaging state that the materials they use are recyclable and biodegradable. The liners they produce are suitable for a range of box sizes and are certified as 100% British wool. They also produce pouches for shipping smaller items.



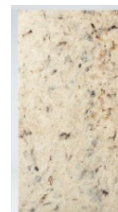
Sustainable Rope (United Kingdom)

Sustainable rope manufacture rope, braid, fabric and other products from wool from UK farms. Their manufacturing process happens within a 60 mile radius of their workshop. Their products have no plastic content, are biodegradable, renewable and sustainable. The rope retails for €7.95 for 5m of 6mm and all products have defined tensile strengths.



Solid Wool (United Kingdom)

Solid Wool have produced a composite material from wool, it is composed of 50% wool and 50% bioresin. The material is sold in sheets 1200mmX600mm with a thickness of 6-10mm (£325-510 per sheet). It can be used by laminating onto other structures such as wood, it can be milled, drilled and cut using mechanical, laser and water jet; uses include tabletops.



Personal Care Products

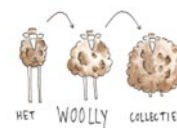
Wandelwol (Netherlands)

Wandelwol uses wool as an anti-pressure treatment and a prevention for a range of foot related issues including athlete's foot, chilblains, sore feet and irritation, across a range of sporting and other activities. The product retails at €7 to €19 (for 10-40g) with no specific treatments that are obvious, other than scouring. This is pro rata €700-€475 per kg washed wool.



Het Woolly Collectief (Belgium)

Het Woolly Collected are based in Belgium and produce a range of wool-based products including felted material to be used within footwear: hiking boots, ski boots, sports shoes that ensure that the feet keep warm. The same felted material can also be used as additional insulation for the hands as hand covers for cycling and handwarmers within gloves. Prices vary between €4.95 for 80g for loose wool or felted set of 4 pads €12.95.



Skeepe (Holland)

Skeepe are based in texel in Holland and produce a range of wool-based products including 'medical sheep wool'. They describe sheep's wool as having healing or pain-relieving effects in joint complaints, bedsores, skin problems and heel spurs. Generally the products are sheep skin blankets for sitting on to relieve pressure. There are additional products such as heel protectors. They also sell a similar product to Wandelwool (anti-pressure wool) - €12.95 for 50g.

Woolaid (New Zealand)

Woolaid describe their product as the first biodegradable merino wool bandage, and that it is patented. They describe merino wool as flexible, breathable, hypoallergenic, biodegradable and anti-microbial. The products sell for \$15 NZD (€7.50) for 15 bandages.



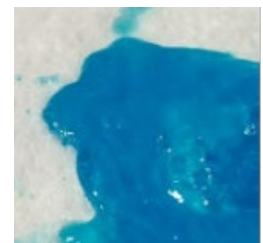
Holly Molly (Germany)



Holly Molly is a company that is based around the use of lanolin. The products that they produce include a range of cosmetics as well as a wool wash care product. Cosmetic products retail from €8.50 (lip balm) to €45 (Extreme Balm Sailors SOS).

Woolchemy (New Zealand)

Woolchemy have developed a highly absorbent wool product. According to their website wool in its natural state can hold 30% of its own weight in moisture. Woolchemy have engineered pure wool to increase this moisture holding capacity to absorb up 1000% of its own weight. This non-woven material is applicable to a range of reusable hygiene products (eg diapers) – the material is washable for up to 100 washes and the technology can be applied on wool from 15 micron to 35 micron. In addition to its moisture holding capacity, it can also absorb ammonia for odour control. The product technology is patented under patent WO2019222318A1.



Agriculture

Larkfield Pellets (Ireland)

Larkfield Pellets is a small company using a pelleting machine for a range of by-products to create nutrient dense pellets for fertiliser applications. In a Farmers Journal publication, they stated that they hope to pay farmers €1/kg for their wool⁷. There is also the potential to add value by mixing with other by-products (mushroom, biochar). While the owner has stated that the process can be applied to raw wool, there is no data to define that the pelleting process makes the wool 'safe'.

Opportunity: capital outlay is relatively expensive but subsequent processing is cheap. In order to scale this idea, data is required to validate that the wool is treated appropriately prior to sale, ie it is made safe.

⁷ <https://www.farmersjournal.ie/more/soil/sheep-s-wool-manure-reaching-10-6-nitrogen-740692>

Gusta Garden (Austria)

Organic cheap wool fertiliser (pellet form) made in Austria, promoted as being water-retaining and ideal as a starter for potatoes, strawberries, tomatoes, as well as other plants. It is sold as €5.99 for 400g, €19.99 for 1.6Kg (average €13.73/Kg). Gusta Garden say that their fertiliser is made from pure, untreated and sustainable sheep's wool products. Other attributes of their product are listed as being:



- root-strengthening: Thanks to its important nutrients such as nitrogen and potassium, this fertiliser strengthens the roots of your plants and allows them to grow strongly.
- water storage: The granules store up to 3.5 times their own weight in water. This helps the plants get through periods of drought.
- protection against acidification: The organic sheep's wool fertiliser counteracts soil acidification thanks to its high pH value.
- loosening the soil: Since the fertiliser swells by absorbing the water, it also loosens the soil.
- suitable for every plant stage: The fertiliser can be used in every phase of vegetation. Young plants also grow healthy and strong with organic sheep's wool fertiliser as starter fertiliser.

Het Woolly Collectief (Belgium)

Felted matting has been developed and is being used as a moisture retainer for both in the ground and on top of the soil.

- This has been trialled and tested for the past 18 months by a local city Council in Flanders and the results have proven better water management in planted areas for plants and tree bases. It has reduced flooding of plant beds during wet rainy periods and supported plants during dryer spells by ensuring moisture was retained within the matting and keeping the soil consistently moist
- Agricultural applications – piping for baby trees for protection against animals and reduction of plastic, wool rolls for peat restoration and land regeneration,
- On top of gardening for health treatments for plants
- Wastewater from scouring is suitable for alternative fertiliser
- Waste management is central to the business structure along with implementing circular practices. Waste at HWC is important to monitor and ensure there is little to no waste. Typically, up to 90% of the fleece can be used by looking at the breed of sheep, the quality and presentation of the wool upon receipt in the atelier, the micron count (which is also tested at the IWTA). It is knowing what the right wool for the right job is and that is not necessarily for textile or knitting use. All these factors play an important part of the wool.

Biowol (Austria)

Organic wool-based fertiliser pellets, made from untreated raw wool. They are described as having benefits such as:

- Ecological Long-Term Fertilizer: Ideal for organic farming.
- Water Retention: Pellets swell in the soil and retain up to 3.5 times their weight in water.
- Soil Improvement: Loosens the soil and enhances its structure.
- Slug Repellent: Natural protection against slugs.
- Nutrient-Rich: Contains essential elements such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.
- pH Value Optimization: Helps improve acidic soils.



800g bags are sold for €10.40 (€13/Kg).

Woollets (United States of America)

Using wool pellet machine to deal with waste wool in Wisconsin, promoting use of these pellets as a carbon sink. The benefits according to their website are:

- Water retention
- Fertilisation
- Aeration
- Slug and snail protection
- Peat alternative
- Rabbit and deer repellent



2.2Kg of pellets are sold for approximately €42 (€19/Kg).

Monpellets (Mongolia)

This is an organic fertiliser from raw sheep's wool, made using German pelleting machine. The advantages of sheep's wool pellets are listed as:

- Water storage
- Water absorbing
- Improves soil structure
- Long term effect

- No additives

Monpellets appear to be business to business seller (Mongolia has 30 million sheep) and so costings are not available.

Wool pots (UK)

Wool pots are a biodegradable plant pot, it is filled with compost and seeds of choice and planted outside when plant has matured sufficiently. A pack of 8 wool pots costs £8 (Stg) (€9.16). They are knitted from clean wool and can replace standard plant pots which can't be recycled (according to the website).



The Wool Bag (New Zealand)

Alongside other textile products The Wool Bag also sell wool pots. An advantage that they include is that growing plants in wool pots can help reduce transplant shock by allowing the roots to grow into the pot walls. They help keep plants hydrated for longer and are ideal for growing small to medium sized vegetable, herb and flower seedlings. A pack of 3 pots costs \$14.98 NZD (€7.40).



Natural Dales Wool Products (United Kingdom)

This organisation was established to develop products from mountain wool for peatland restoration, replacing non-indigenous coconut fibre products. The wool that is used is traceable from farm to product and provides a fair price to farmers for their product. In addition to wool logs for peat restoration, this organisation also sell wool felt for use to suppress weeds, as liners in plant baskets, hangers and pots. They can also be used for craft applications. Prices range from £78 (10mX1m roll) to £90 (5mX1.5m roll) and £121 (10mX1m roll), dependent on weight and finish.



Chimney Sweep (United Kingdom)

This company produce a sheep wool garden felt with a range of applications. The material is finished with a layer of jute carrier material (rather than plastic). The combination of the sheep's wool and jute provides it with a very flexible application area. The rolls are 1.8mX10m and cost £11 per roll. Applications for the rolls include mulching, protection against weeds, slugs and snails, protecting delicate plants, protecting root balls of trees, base layer for propagating seeds. It can also be used for 'no-dig' planting – the roll can be laid over existing garden with compost added on top.

Floating Peaks (New Zealand)

Floating peaks have produced pole protectors to replace plastic packaging from planting poles in paddocks. They are made from high micron count wool (strong wool) and their benefits for this application are listed as:

- Wool is durable, it can be bent over 20,000 times before breaking.
- Wool can store and release moisture as needed.
- Wool is a sustainable and renewable resource.
- Wool is 100% biodegradable.



40 wool protectors are sold for \$380 NZD (€190).

Animal Feed

LanoTech Ltd (United Kingdom)

Lanolin is the natural oil found on the surface wool, it is often removed during the scouring process and used as an ingredient in cosmetics products. LanoTech Ltd are exploring the opportunity to use lanolin as an alternative ingredient to soy and vegetable oil in animal feed. They have reported that lanolin has a higher energy content and stability than conventional feed oils. LanoTech are an early stage start up, and while lanolin may be suitable as an animal feed ingredient, it is likely that where lanolin is harvested during the scouring process it will achieve higher value as a cosmetic ingredient, rather than as animal feed ingredient.

Environmental - peatland restoration and erosion control

Natural Dales Wool Products (United Kingdom)

This organisation was established to develop products from mountain wool for peatland restoration, replacing non-indigenous coconut fibre products. The wool that is used is traceable from farm to product and provides a fair price to farmers for their product. Wool is paid for at above market prices, according to their website, wool contains 50% carbon, when wool is fixed into degrading peatland, carbon is returned



to the land, rebuilding the peatland and preventing carbon emissions. (Note: this is an oversimplified statement and all comments relating to carbon sequestration by wool should be considered in the appropriate context to avoid misleading interpretation). Wool logs that they have produced have been placed onto four sites since March 2023. They hold a substantial amount of water, they prevent run off and peat erosion.

A number of organisations are considering opportunity for environmental applications for wool:

- Bog restoration using wool filled rolls to replace coir filled rolls from India (high carbon footprint). It is proving quite challenging to replicate the consistent structures achieved with coir rolls but experimentation on wool packing approach continues. FORUM Connemara has been working in this area since 2022 and has produced prototypes which have been in testing since April 2023 across sites from Mayo, Clare, Galway and Wicklow. Scientific testing is underway with regards to these prototypes. They have presented at the IUCN peatlands conference in 2025 on the topic and are currently looking at creating wool composite materials to replace plastic in peatland restoration works.
- Wool matting for covering bare peat and for use in erosion and weed control in National Park. Wicklow National Parks and Wildlife Service are field testing a container load of wool matting imported from NZ on bare peatland. Data from the growing season in 2026 will provide data to compare plant/sphagnum growth rates on wool matting versus hemp (which is what has been used to date). Matting squares are also being trialled around newly planted tree saplings for weed control, particularly bracken, as this currently requires annual maintenance work to control the bracken (initial tests have proven successful as the bracken cannot pierce the matting, whereas grass can, which is ideal).
- Wool fleece for floating pathways on peatland - used extensively in Wicklow National Park.
- Wicklow uplands council is working with Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on possible derogation for use of wool-based products on uplands. FORUM Connemara has also engaged with the EPA on this topic and hopes to have scientific backing to support the use of using wool as a by-product in the near future.

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- Wool rope - Rope made from wool is about twice the price of oil-based alternatives. The Rathlin Island project is using Blackface wool for this and for applications such as seaweed growing. This rope is manufactured in the United Kingdom.

Buildings and Interiors

Dooleys (Ireland)

Dooley Wool are 8th generation farmers and one of Ireland's largest wool merchants, based in Tipperary. Since 2023 they have expanded into the bedding market and now produce mattress toppers (€140-200), Pillows (€70) and Duvets (€155-250).

They promote the positive aspects of wool in terms of sleep – natural regulation of body temperature, natural, biodegradable, sustainable, sourced from Irish farms. They also state wool as having natural anti-allergenic properties, suitable for those with asthma and that wool can improve air quality.

Dooleys have a beneficial business model in their merchant set up, having a well-established supply chain. Cost-wise their products are pitched at the upper end of the feather and down product market, but their marketing pitch is aimed at competing with synthetics (to a certain extent).

Opportunity; use of 'strong' wool for non-clothing applications, thereby avoiding historical negative association between strong wool and clothing.

Het Woolly Collectief (Belgium)

Produces a range of insulating material and panels for use within home and office buildings which are based on wool, combining both white and dark coloured wool fabrics, along with hemp and linen.

These are being used in a new biomaterial build in Flanders and has received interest from architects, designers and other interior applications.

Molwol (Belgium)

Molwol make locally produced wool pillows and duvets, they describe the products as breathable and sustainable. The breed of sheep, Kempen Heath, has been developed through cross-breeding with Merino sheep, and so the wool is finer than Irish strong wool. The production employs local people to produce their products.



Molwol claim better sleep due to their wool bedding based on its characteristics; breathable, wicks away moisture and regulates body temperature. They cite research as showing that wool helps you go to sleep faster and wake up less often (although they do not provide any evidence of this). As with a range of wool bedding they also cite advantages such as allergy friendly and self-cleaning.

Woolow (Ireland)

Woolow is based in Galway, having been a working farm since 1787, Michael Burke is leading this initiative. Their lead product is a wool pillow with 300 thread count cotton (€70), they also have duvet (€120-€220), mattress topper (€170-300) and sleep sprays (€20). They also promote the positive impacts of wool products – natural, organic, breathable, clinically proven to prevent germs and allergens (Allergy Seal of Approval), and therefore must have for those who suffer from allergies and hay fever.

Similarly to Dooleys, these products are priced at the high end of the market.

Opportunity; use of 'strong' wool for non-clothing applications, thereby avoiding historical negative association between strong wool and clothing.

Woolroom (United Kingdom)

The Woolroom have implemented a Wool ID Traceable Wool Program – this is a QR code that links the product bought to the sheep it came from. The breeds of sheep that they use are Texel, Suffolk, Poll Dorset, Portland, Southdown and Lley, which are generally medium to fine micron wool



breeds. Their products are approved by Allergy UK and they also cite research showing that wool bedding helps you to sleep better, although they do not cite this research. They produce Pillows (£60-155), Duvets (£90-225) and Mattress Toppers (£90-290).

Baavet (Ireland)

Baavet are based in Meath, and run by Tom and Breda Gibney. In addition to Baavet bedding, they also run GreenerMe which consists of a wide range of wool products. The wool bedding range is duvets (€145-280), pillows (€40-80) and mattress protectors (€135-225).

Its advantages are listed as chemical free, Irish wool, 250 thread count cotton, they card their own wool. GreenerMe products include Blankets (€115-135), Capes (€210), Throws (€220), Pocket scarf (€160) and others. They also stock Merino lamb products.

Opportunity; use of 'strong' wool for non-clothing applications, thereby avoiding historical negative association between strong wool and clothing.

Sheep Wool Insulation (Ireland)

Sheep Wool Insulation are based in Wicklow and owned by the extended Pierce family. They produce thermal and acoustic insulation products which are treated with IONIC PROTECT[®], this is a non-chemical treatment for wool that makes it resistant to pests. The benefits of the use of their products are listed as heat insulation, air purification, humidity regulation, sustainability and fire resistance.

Types of products they stock include:

Cylinder jacket (35 gallon; €76) – synthetic comparator €26-€37

Insulation rolls €92-170 per roll and will cover 3.4-4.6m² (average €20-€54/m²) – synthetic comparator €8.58 m²

Carpet underlay €168 per roll and will cover 10m² per roll – synthetic comparator €68.

Associated information; the input material for sheep wool insulation is waste wool from sorting, the cost model for insulation may not be sustainable with scoured wool.

Opportunity; use of ‘strong’ wool for non-clothing applications, thereby avoiding historical negative association between strong wool and clothing.

Wool Insulation Wales (United Kingdom)

Wool Insulation Wales operate the TrueWool brand of sheep’s wool insulation, made from local, sustainable and circular economy materials. It was launched in 2023 and claims to be the UK’s only 100% British wool insulation product. The website claims that wool insulation can manage cold and hot conditions, that it helps to manage damp, humidity and moisture, that it is appropriate for both old and new buildings and that it can lock away VOCs like formaldehyde, and therefore contribute to a healthy indoor environment.



Wull Technologies

Wull technologies produce a rigid wool panel fibre insulation product, it is suitable for acoustic and thermal panelling. According to the company, wool is naturally insulative, breathable and fire-retardant and that their product is the only one on the market in the UK, and the only one that doesn’t use a plastic binder. The technology to produce the rigid panels is patent-pending green chemistry process.



Tourism

Glenshane Country Farm

James McCloy from Glenshane Country Farm is a fully qualified tour guide and has received a OCN NI Level 2 Award in Tour Guiding from the Northern Regional College. With these qualifications he has developed what is described as an immersive, multi-sensory activity, wanting visitors to go home with heads full of story souvenirs they can tell and retell. Most of their experiences are designed specifically for Tour Operators and larger groups but smaller groups of up to ten people can directly book their “Sheepdogs at Work” experience.

Exclusive for tour operators:




A SHEPHERD'S LIFE

Group Size 120 | 1-4 HOURS

PRE-BOOKING ONLY.

Experience the life of a real Irish shepherd in this immersive experience that has been designed specifically for tour operators:

- Sheepdogs at Work
- Shearing the Wool
- Fleece to Fashion
- Fireside Lunch



SHEEPDOGS AT WORK

Private Tour - Min Charge Applies | 60 MINS

PRE-BOOKING ONLY.

Immerse yourself in stories of four generations of hill farming in this unique part of the world.

- Stand in the field beside James and discover how, with a whistle, a whisper or a gesture, he can direct his highly trained working dogs to herd a flock of remarkably well behaved sheep.
- Help James open gates and lead the flock into traditional wooden pens. Breathe in the scent of fresh mountain air and reach over to touch the sheep, their springy wool like candy floss.
- Take shelter in the viewing gallery built with Donegal quartz stone and marvel at the panoramic views of Slieve Gallion, Lough Neagh and the Mourne mountain range.

For private bookings please contact us for more details.

[CONTACT US](#)

Textiles

Cloudwool (United Kingdom)

Cloudwool manufacture non-woven textiles from wool for clothing. They use wool destined to go to waste, which is bonded using a non-woven technology to create a 'super-soft' fabric. Cloudwool textiles can be reclaimed at a higher grade than woven textiles as they don't require extra shredding.



Post Processing

Innouiio (United Kingdom)

The Innouiiio project was established to facilitate the recycling of wool, in 2022 they became part of the Camira Group (a global fabric manufacturer). They have installed a wool and luxury fibre recycling line at their site in Huddersfield. And have worked with take back woolen waste from tailors in London to other unusual projects.

Het Woolly Collectief (Belgium)

This startup focuses on reworking wool waste sources (pre and post processing) and over the past 3 years have been working with Irish Wool Processors (Spinning and Weaving) to use their left-over waste materials during yarn production (burs) and during textile production (selvedge edges). These otherwise waste items are now not waste. They are being used in other textile-based products: mats for bathroom, animals, bags, draft excluders for houses, clothing developed. Furthermore, the projects are also working with social (Old People homes, Hospitals) and educational projects to encourage useability of such material sources.

Other business applications using wool in textile processing

Wollen Cwtch Company (Wales)

Manufacturers of wool coffins, shrouds and Urns. Another alternative for wool application use. Wool, wool rope and willow is the bases of these coffins which are hand made in Wales, using materials ie willow, wool and wool rope from the United Kingdom. They are certified to be used for burial. In addition other side products are also created – shrouds, urns and pillows used within the coffin.



6. Actions, Activities and Pilot Programmes

The following actions, activities and pilot programmes have been developed based on information gathered as part of this review. We have included context and purpose for each item, along with suggested personnel to be involved. To note; some personnel suggested may carry out this role as part of their employment, others may act as private consultants or enterprises and so budget may be required for their participation.

i. Tourism

Kerry Wool Co-Operative are in early negotiations with Dingle Peninsula (Sustainable) Tourism Alliance and local tour operators to commence tours of their woolshed and 20-acre sheep farm with spectacular views. Brigid O'Connor offers farm walks on here organic sheep farm in Camp, Co. Kerry and even includes a Shepherding Trail option up on the mountain commonage for more energetic tourists.

Context: Farm diversification is a good strategy to develop additional revenue streams. Rural linked tourism opportunities can provide a means for farmers to generate revenue from activities that they are already taking, or to help to address seasonality issues associated with farm income.

Purpose: To provide an introductory training/information session to sheep farmers and those associated with sheep farming.

Session structure:

- Facilitator
 - Bord Failte and West Kerry (Sustainable) Tourism Alliance
- Case study
 - Farmer already engaged in rural tourism – James McCloy
- Tourism training provider
 - Northern Regional College - 8 weeks part time 6-9pm £125
 - Bord Failte – Brand Building, Digital training
 - Portobello Institute National Tour Guide 3 months, blended learning €2,496

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- Approved Tourist Guides of Ireland

ii. Enterprise Development - Accessing Supports via Business Plan

Context: based on the case studies included as part of this report, there are a number of business opportunities for wool growers that may wish to develop them. These opportunities are at a range of stages, requiring different kinds of inputs, from research and development to supply chain challenges and market entry. A consistent challenge for entrepreneurs and small businesses with innovative ideas is to document their project proposal in a manner that allows them to travel from idea, through research and development, to proof of concept and producing a Minimum Viable Product, to ultimate commercial operation.

While there are numerous early-stage grant supports available through various state agencies (LEO, Leader, Intertrade Ireland) and early-stage funding sources (Microfinance Ireland, Pobal, Rethink Ireland etc), accessing them in a timely manner can prove challenging for the uninitiated innovator. Furthermore, most of these agencies require a business plan and indicative financial projections for the proposed project at the application stage.

Purpose: the purpose of this training/information session is to communicate the supports available to establish new enterprises, review the business opportunities that do exist, and to help to provide a roadmap for attendees to start to address these opportunities. The aim is to give innovators a line of sight on the myriad of supports available and practical guidance on the development of a business plan and financial projections, sufficient for the scale and life stage of the project, for them to access the appropriate support to progress their project at an appropriate pace.

Session Structure:

- Facilitator
 - LEADER representative or Local Enterprise Office (LEO) or Enterprise Ireland (EI). Each jurisdiction will have a relevant LEO and EI contact.
 - Agile Executives (Pat Byrne) and Dr Anu Priyadarshini from Maynooth University Business School – workshop/module on business case and financial model preparation
- New business company support. Ireland is extremely well-resourced in terms of enterprise support, across a range of state agencies. As enterprises develop they will need different kinds of support. Suggest to include relevant, regional representatives from the following organisations.

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- Leader Rural Development – support for non-farming specific projects including capital expenditure, feasibility, training and marketing
 - LEO - feasibility studies and priming; Digital/Lean/Green
 - EI - New Frontiers for startups and HPSU for growing companies
 - Udarás na Gaeltachta - employment supports and capex
 - Intertrade Ireland – supports cross border trading opportunities
 - A 1-2 session course for farmer innovators, outlining the process to progress from business idea, through feasibility study, to developing a minimum viable product and ultimately a business plan and financial models sufficient to secure funding in a timely manner.
 - Wool case studies overview. There are a range of case studies and opportunities for wool enterprises. The decision on what to select and how to progress with these will be based on the attendees’ background, their ambition, resources and sectors that they are aligned with. The range of options outlined in section 5 of this report can be presented with opportunities and barriers.
 - Workshop (Facilitator Circular Bioeconomy Cluster, MTU)– each group takes a wool idea and workshops how to bring to market. Based on the options outlined, attendees can map the process on how to bring these to market identifying key bottlenecks and issues that can then be addressed.

iii. Agriculture

Context: There are a range of agricultural applications for wool, once it has been sheared. A significant advantage for some of these is the use of the wool pre-scouring, removing cost and barriers to utilisation of wool.

Purpose: The purpose of this workshop is to advise of the agricultural applications of wool, pre and post scouring, to support farmers in the use of their wool on farm and the potential revenue streams that may be available from agricultural applications of wool.

Session Structure:

- Facilitator
 - Wool farmer – Matthew Carroll
- Wool applications
 - Fertiliser – compost

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- Leo Murray (ATU)/CRE. Leo Murray is currently leading the compost development part of the DAFM funded SPRINGWOOL project. Jessica Leonard, Research Assistant on this task is due to have wool compost produced by Nov 2025 with a step by step guide produced in early 2026. CRE is the composting and anaerobic digestion association of Ireland. While they state that they do not provide advice for non-members, this event could be an opportunity for them to attract more members.
 - Fertiliser – pellets
 - Peter McGlynn. Peter McGlynn was the main producer of wool pelleted in Ireland up to 2024 when he took the decision to move out of this business. Wool is a Class III Animal By-product, as part of the legislation it must be ‘made safe’ before use. Composting and scouring are recognised as being processes that can achieve this. There is some uncertainty, or lack of data as to whether pelleting achieves this. Wool pellets are available for sale out of Mongolia, USA and Austria, from unscoured wool. Should Peter McGlynn not be available, potential to contact Austrian companies for on-line information session (Gusta Garden CEO – Fabian Pirker).
 - Plant pots
 - Craft knitter person. Wool to be crafted into plant pots needs to be scoured prior to processing. Craft knitter person can outline the steps required to align with this process, and where this could be carried out.

iv. Research and Development

Context: 50% of survey respondents said that they would be interested in innovation with regards to wool. This session is a cross-cutting one, in that it does relate to any one specific sector, but it is an enabler to innovate across all sectors.

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to inform of the different supports for wool R&D, in the context of restrictions with regards to regulations.

Session Structure:

- Facilitator
 - Dr Tim Yeomans (CABR)
 - Dr Archishman Bose (UCC)

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- Current status of wool regulatory landscape and research opportunities
 - Panel discussion – DAFM, Dr Archishman Bose, Dr Tim Yeomans, Rebecca Marsden, Chris Weiniger. Research that may be done to advance wool opportunities needs to be done with the restrictions around scouring and animal by-product legislation in mind. It is important to set this scene, and also to communicate what has been done, and what can be done in terms of wool R&D. Panel consists of University research leads, including textiles, and also a company who has engaged with Universities to carry out research on wool.
 - Funding options for R&D. The type of organisation, and type of research that needs to be carried out will dictate to a certain extent the organisation that may be able to help them. As an example, if all organisations who want to engage in R&D are sole traders then a potential action is to engage with LEO/EI to see what supports could be implemented for sole traders rather than SMEs.
 - EI
 - LEO
 - Udaras na Gaeltachta
 - CAP
 - Workshop on aligning wool opportunities with funding options. The previous sessions will have set the scene in terms of opportunities and how to address them, this workshop will combine all the information that has been communicated to try to advance some ideas.

v. Personal Care and Consumer Products

Context: The personal care product sector has the potential to deliver high value applications for wool-based products. In addition to being pitched as premium products, consumer products based on wool also have the advantage of positioning wool at the front of the consumer mind-set.

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to outline case studies that have applied wool and wool extracts to personal care products, and the use of wool in consumer products. Examples of these include cosmetics, healthcare products and bedding; this session would not address standard textile uses.

Session Structure:

- Facilitator: LEADER, LEO
- Overview of Potential opportunities – presentation of personal care and consumer products highlighted in case studies section.

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- Sectoral experiences – companies that are currently operating in sectors of relevance providing their experience of these sectors, ideally already wool focussed and addressing supply chain factors (sending wool for scouring, getting traced wool back, subsequent processing required).
 - Cosmetics: Banor – Elaine Crosse/Nicola Lyons. Banor are a sheep’s milk based cosmetic brand.
 - Healthcare: Irish Woolen Workshop – Gary Duffy (referred to in case studies section).
 - Consumer Products: Bedding; Woolow; Michael Burke (referred to in case studies section).
 - Buyer perspectives: Pharmacy and Consumer Product buyers to give their perspective on wool-based products, positioning, current opportunities. It is a challenge to get buyers into an event like this and so recommendation would be that this would be a joint event between the LEADER companies.

vi. Supply Chain and Regulations

Context: Based on our survey carried out with almost 200 farmers, 64% currently sell their wool, to wool merchants or their local wool co-op and are not engaged any further with this process. Nearly 50% of the entire cohort said that they would like to be more involved with their wool, including potentially scouring their own wool. This session would provide detailed information on the wool supply chain, wool handling, what happens to their wool after it leaves their farm, including regulatory aspects associated with transport, handling and treatment.

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to provide information to the attendees on the wool supply chain to create greater transparency and understanding of the regulations and processes associated with creating ‘clean wool’, as well as an appreciation of how they can positively impact this through proper wool handling. This will enable wool producers to make decisions as to their greater engagement in this sector.

Structure:

- Wool supply chain overview; Kevin Dooley (Dooley Wool Merchants) or Jayne Harkness-Bones (Ulster Wool). From wool in a bag – what impacts value to assigned to the wool, referring to Irish Grown Wool Council Wool Quality & Presentation guidance (Teagasc Shear Success Campaign 2025). Wool merchant receives wool, steps to get to scouring facility, what is cost

add on per Kg for scouring. Wool completes scouring; if farmer wants their wool back post-scouring what is process for that – how traceable?

- Wool handling recommendations – David Herarty (sheep farmer and shearing contractor), Jayne Harkness-Bones
- What are key regulations associated with wool supply chain; EPA (Michelle Reddy); Circular Economy Regulation)/DAFM (Craig Ennis) /Teagasc (Tim Keady)
- Scouring processes; Lionel Mackey (Eriu), Katarina Hruskova (WoolStore), Sandra Spethman (Curraghmore Farm) – experiences and challenges. Three enterprises who are trying to implement scouring processes will talk about the challenges associated with that, key contacts and agencies that they have engaged with. Potential for EPA, or EPA associated person to be involved here in terms of water treatment processes and requirements.

vii. Supplier-User Speed Networking and Wool Showcase

Context: A consistent response running through-out the survey was that wool farmers often wanted to do more with their wool, but weren't sure what (50%), 65% of respondents said that they would like to see more done with their wool at a local level. This may be due to a lack of time, real understanding of the applications of wool across craft users and lack of connection for potential local or regional end-users.

Purpose: The purpose of this session would be to connect wool producers with those who may be able to use their wool, likely in a craft setting initially. The purpose of the wool showcase would be to stimulate ideas as to what wool could be used for and to engage/inspire wool growers with its potential.

Structure:

Facilitator: Michael Noctor (Circular Bioeconomy Cluster)

Showcase: Wool users would display what they have done with Irish wool, paying particular attention to the type of wool that was used for the product, and ideally its county provenance. Information that should be displayed with the product (ideally) would be price paid for the wool, time taken to produce the product and sale price. Essential information for this event would be cost per kg that scouring adds on to the price of wool.

Speed Networking: During the speed networking stage, wool growers and users would be given time to engage. During this time, some recommended transfer of information would be:

- Wool grower
 - Amount of wool produced per year

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- Breed of sheep and approximate micron count
 - What they are currently doing with that wool
 - Wool user
 - What kind of wool they use, with approximate micron count
 - How much they could pay (a range) for scoured wool
 - How much wool they would need per year

Each Wool grower and Wool user is provided a list of members of the opposite group, they place a tick against all those that they may wish to work with. Organisers send email intro post event as introduction. The importance of these introductions being managed by the organisers is that an idea of the engagement rate can be monitored.

viii. Branding & Marketing

Context: Survey feedback shows strong interest among farmers in developing or adding value to their wool. Of respondents, 47% expressed high or active motivation to explore innovation or take practical steps to add value, while another 35% showed a passive interest, open to learning more or participating in smaller ways. This highlights clear interest in initiatives that can make Irish wool more visible, valued, and market ready.

Branding and marketing offer one of the most accessible ways to increase value. Even before product diversification or large-scale processing, effective branding can reframe Irish wool from a low-value by-product into a sustainable, heritage-based material with strong local provenance. Promoting the natural resilience, traceability, and environmental benefits of Irish wool can build market confidence and create a shared identity that supports growers, processors, and makers.

A key role of the recently formed Irish Grown Wool Council is to work with stakeholders to develop the 'Irish Grown wool branding and to distinguish products made locally with Irish grown wool from products currently sold in Ireland containing foreign wool, where the value added processing of the raw wool may have occurred outside the Island of Ireland.

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to introduce participants to the fundamental principles of branding and marketing for natural materials and rural enterprises. It will help attendees understand how strategic branding can drive demand and increase perceived value, how to define and communicate a brand story around Irish wool, and how collaborative branding (e.g. regional or collective identity) can benefit small producers. The session will also help participants identify

marketing tools suited to their scale and audience, from social media storytelling and product labelling to participation in eco-conscious design markets.

Structure: An online session (approximately 1.5 hours) delivered to wool producers, processors, and interested stakeholders.

- Introduction (15 mins): Overview of branding and its role in value creation.
- Case Studies (30 mins): Examples of successful wool branding (e.g. Donegal Tweed, New Zealand Strong Wool, or Welsh Wool initiatives).
- Practical Marketing Approaches (25 mins): How to define your story, identify target customers, and use low-cost digital marketing tools.
- Q&A and Discussion (20 mins): Participants share challenges and ideas for applying branding locally.

Facilitator: Catherine Phibbs

ix. Textile Opportunities

Context:

A consistent response running through out survey was that wool farmers often wanted to do more with their wool. This was either producing themselves, working with local creatives (textile production, felting, knitting, hand knitting) or a combination of a co-operative scenario where farmers and producers work together. Though many farmers were not sure what (50%), 65% of respondents said that they would like to see more done with their wool at a local level. This may be due to a lack of time, real understanding of the applications of wool across textile and fashion industries or simply lacking the connection in finding resources and/or potential interested groups within the local or regional areas.

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to evaluate the local supplies of wool (from application useability, micron count, fibre strength and durability, crimp, yield (as this is not always the same year on year as well as the micron) sheep numbers, innovation possibilities (not just the typical blanket, jumper or shawl) with key focus on the region, culture, heritage, what production and processes are already present and the context of small to large scale production.

Whilst it is imperative to connect the farmers and producers whether small to industrial production, fashion and textile students from High School or University, Product Developers across industries of interior, packaging, fashion, medical and packaging students, textile is not solely, for fashion. By exploring alternative industries for wider wool application use can nurture innovation, create resilience for skill creativity, manufacturing and economies within the local and regional areas.

Structure:

A working session of around 3-4 hours will include brief presentations from local producers, farmers, industry, and students. Showcase of present-day scenarios of textiles around the theme of “Where we are now” (50mins of 5 x 10min presentations – differing selection of presentations)

Break-out sessions (around 45mins with each group taking a theme to discuss and then present back to the whole group) will require engagement from mixed groups of attendees to evaluate: “What is the future”? How do people visualise this, create local/regional connections and products whilst incorporating, cultural value/heritage +tech around materials and textile within differing sectors.

From the breakout session initiatives will be discussed on a group level (40mins presentations from the group) with a view to then start up a working group/s (40mins for wrap up and next steps – key to this is having next steps) to then progress with 2-3 projects within the regional areas, pending on take up and leadership.

It will incorporate other factors which are more circular based: ie Digital patterning, zero-waste design, natural dye palettes where regional colours could be included and use of bacteria to colour wool or other natural fibers.

Wool bio composites, differing felts, wool and other bio based materials ie hemp, linen, mycelium, new spinning techniques to enhance natural characteristics of wool, bio-coatings, moisture management, micro-factories for small batch or on demand production, repair models for extended lifecycles, improve performance quality, 3D knitting, better disassembly, biodegradability and the reclaim value from waste wool.

Other areas could also include the develop of digital traceability within Ireland for textiles (though this can also be covered with the Digital Passport that has been introduced by the EU).

Facilitator: Ngaire Takano, Michelle Hickey Legge, with support available from the Forge Design Factory Limerick

x. Pilot Programmes

Pelleting

While pelleting is a low value way to derive use from wool, however it is also a relatively straightforward process with low running costs. 36% of the 34 farmers, who indicated that they currently use wool themselves, indicated that their use was eco/land based.

Fertiliser pellets from raw wool are sold in EU jurisdictions, and clarity is required as to the regulations that govern the sale of these products. Where pelleting is approved as an appropriate way to make wool safe, investment in a pelleting machine on a co-operative or central basis could be an efficient

and effective way to make use of wool not being used for other purposes. The critical step within this pilot programme is to engage with DAFM to determine acceptance of pelleting as a method to treat raw wool.

The Leader Wool Partnership should consider how to approach implementation of a pelleting facility in their jurisdictions.

- Initial set-up
 - A full list of the existing equipment array in Kildare is set out in Appendix 5 along with costings for capex and operational costs.
 - The current asking price €60,000
 - An additional cost of fabricating a new higher capacity hammer mill for processing the actual wool is a further €20,000 as the current wool mill has a very modest through put capacity
 - An indicative operating cost model of operation indicates a cost per tonne of €265 - see Appendix 5 for details
 - There may be merit in exploring the use of co-operative model for this pilot venture
 - Consideration should be given as to whether this could be a Leader funded initiative as the equipment was acquired originally without any grant supports
- Regulatory considerations
 - Impact of class 3 animal by-product classification on transportation of wool off-farm
 - Acceptance of pelleting as an appropriate method to make wool safe (by Animal By-Products section of Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine).
 - There may be an option for a company which is interested in making wool pellets to apply for an EI Innovation Voucher to have scientific testing carried out on wool pellets to clarify their Cat 3 status.
- Mobile option

It may also be appropriate to take the current pelletising equipment that is available for sale on a farm in Kildare and convert it to a mobile unit. The generator, hammer mill for preparing the wool, actual pellet mill, mixing tank and the conveyor belt required could all be accommodated in a 40 foot closed truck body.

One particular benefit of the mobile approach is that the equipment could be moved between farms so that all waste wool on a given farm may be pelletised for on farm use. This 'on farm' approach may be the most practical way of enabling progress in the interim in the absence of regulatory clarity regarding the Cat 3 status of pelletised wool. Cat 3 transport restrictions only come into play when one wishes to move wool off the farm the wool is grown on.

It is also noteworthy that it is widely accepted that there are significant quantities of prior years' wool clip still stored in farm sheds. This wool is not saleable so a particular benefit of a pelleting pilot is that it could quickly convert all that waste wool to pellets which have a use value to the framers involved.

Scouring facility

Small scale scouring facilities exist in the UK, there is the potential to engage with these operations to consider how similar, and smaller size, plants may be implemented in Ireland. Any consideration by the Leader Wool Partnership of scouring as a pilot project should take into account the commitment of the Irish Government to review the feasibility for an on-island scouring facility.

There are a number of enterprises considering and reviewing scouring options. These are referred to in the scouring information session outlined above. Any potential LEADER support of this may be in the context of grant aiding enterprises who want to establish their own scouring facility.

Stakeholders of relevance in this context;

- Katarina Hruskova operates Woolstore from Galway who processes Irish sheep wool from the region, including hand-scouring.
- Evan Higgins operates Caorigh which is a sheep farm, wool store and scouring plant based in Galway
- Crafts of Ireland
- Sandra Stelman operates Curraghmore Farm and is part of the WiseWool project (funded through Creative Ireland Programme). Curraghmore Farm are considering options for establishing a scouring facility.
- EPA – wastewater treatment is a central part of scouring, so EPA involvement at an early stage of the project would be essential.

Please see also Appendix 3 - Considerations for Establishing a Micro-Scale Wool Scouring Plant in Ireland. Indicative pricing for a Canadian Belfast Mini-mill capable of handling between between 4 and 8 tonnes of wool per annum is €19,000, including commissioning and training. A competing and reputedly superior performing equipment is available from Italy.

Peatland restoration

The use of wool in peatland restoration is receiving increasing attention. Funding calls, including the LIFE Programme (EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action) is a significant opportunity to advance Ireland's capability in this respect. Where review and implementation projects are funded through Programmes such as LIFE, the local demand for wool-based products has the potential to grow significantly. Wicklow Uplands Council conducted a short study with local National Parks and Wildlife Service to assess the feasibility of establishing a social enterprise to produce such products. The conclusion of this study was that, under current NPWS budgets and workplans there was not sufficient local demand to justify establishing such a venture. However, if significant funds are

allocated to peatland restoration (under LIFE etc), then the situation may be quite different. Wicklow Upland Council have an ongoing discussion with Terra Lana from NZ, who have supplied wool matting currently being tested on local peatland restoration sites, with a view to them providing consultancy support on the design and costing of a wool matting facility in Ireland, should a substantial future demand be established. It should be possible to explore the possibility of exporting these products to other EU and UK restoration sites as well.

Co-Op model

When considering pilot programmes, it is worth bearing in mind that the IGWC received advice from ICOS that there are significant merits in the Co-Op model for developing wool value chains to ensure that a fair % of the value ad makes its way back to the primary producer farmers. Kerry Wool Co-Op based in Lispole may provide a useful platform for any such pilots; they have already made an offer to Curraghmore Farm, that should their planned wool scouring project prove too difficult to carry out in South Kerry that the Co-Op would consider facilitating the activity on their Category 3 ABP licenced site.

Interestingly an EU CAP Network Focus Group on “Innovative and sustainable ways to strengthen the role of farmers in revitalising the European wool value chain.” has been established with Blathnaid Gallagher of Galway Wool CoOp and Tim Keady of Teagasc being the Irish representatives. Our survey results here suggest that a sizable % of Irish farmers are willing and able to take a proactive role here.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

At a national level, the vast majority of farmers (82%) are not delivering anything innovative with their wool; 64% are selling direct to wool merchants and 24% are either storing or dumping the wool. Almost 50% showed an active or highly motivated interest to developing or adding value to their wool. This provides a strong platform to advance the wool sector in Ireland.

Within the jurisdictions of West Galway, East Galway, North Tipperary, Clare, North East West Kerry and Kilkenny responses to the survey varied, with only the Galway, Kilkenny and Kerry jurisdictions providing sufficient data to support specific recommendations.

These jurisdictions had similar responses in terms of the role of sheep farming (mostly part time), however wool specific questions raised differences between Galway and Kilkenny. Generally speaking the Galway and Kerry jurisdictions saw wool as a potentially more valuable material, than Kilkenny; in line with this, farmers in Kilkenny were more likely to dispose or throw away their wool than their Galway or Kerry counterparts, this is reflected in the highest response to wool being a ‘costly nuisance’. These four jurisdictions had similar response to whether they did anything with their wool although Galway farmers had a greater interest in developing or adding value to their wool.

While having an overall lower number of sheep than Galway, Kerry and Tipperary, both Clare and Kilkenny have a greater number of lowland and lowland cross sheep than highland sheep and therefore may have a different focus in terms of product applications and innovation.

A range of actions, activities and pilot programmes are recommended in Section 6; specific recommendations for the Galway, Kerry and Kilkenny jurisdictions can be made for these, for the remaining jurisdictions, guidance can be inferred from the overall response to the survey.

The Galway jurisdictions demonstrated a strong desire to do something more with their wool and generally viewed wool as a more valuable resource than Kerry and Kilkenny. Galway responses were probably influenced by the fact that a number of farmers in the region are running businesses using wool including Woolow (Bedroom products), Caorigh (Wool scouring and a couple of innovative products under development including wool matting) and Woolstore (scouring, carding and craft products). Also, Forum Connemara has been working with products for use in peatland restoration activities including wool rolls to replace imported coir. There is also an existing precedent for the use of Galway Breed wool from Kilkenny and surrounding counties by the fully vertically integrated Cushendale Mill in Graiguenamanagh.

All programmes suggested in Section 6 would be appropriate for the Galway and Kerry jurisdictions; for Kilkenny actions that should be taken would be more in line with generating interest and options for sheep farmers in this jurisdiction. Consideration should be given that sheep farmers may be at too early a stage in Kilkenny to engage with events such as the Research and Development and Supplier-User Speed Dating and Wool Showcase events.

Promotion and jurisdiction focus on these events should consider both the maturity of approach to use of wool, but also the economy of scale of running joint events rather than individual ones. From the perspective of availability of personnel from EPA, DAFM, etc, as well as the optics of well-attended events, joint events are likely to have a greater impact.

Tralee, County Kerry have secured the hosting of European Wool Day 2026, on March 28th; this may be a good opportunity both to engage with wool stakeholders and to promote the work commissioned by the Leader Wool Partnership.

8. LEADER actions; Regionally and Nationally

This report has highlighted the lack of value-chain infrastructure that would be required to accelerate route to market for sheep farmers across the country, and within the target jurisdictions. There is a need for stronger farmer knowledge, training and consistent wool-handling protocols, along with coordinated action across actors.

National Perspective

At a national level, LEADER organisations have a unique opportunity to have impact due to their remit for rural support.

1. Support national wool awareness, capacity-building and skills development

Inconsistent shearing, storage and handling practices remain one of the most significant barriers to adding value to wool, as repeatedly identified in this report. While Teagasc and the IGWC provide technical guidance, LEADER has a critical complementary role in supporting delivery, uptake and localisation of training. At a national level, LEADER should work with these bodies to support a coordinated, multi-county roll-out of wool-specific capacity-building initiatives.

This could include funding local delivery of training programmes, developing shared educational materials, supporting demonstration farms, and subsidising farmer participation where cost or time is a barrier (potentially in collaboration with Skillnets and ETBs). LEADER can help ensure that training is not limited to farmers alone, but also reaches shearers, community groups, craftspeople and emerging processors, building a broader skills base across the value chain.

2. Enable early-stage processing and aggregation infrastructure

While LEADER cannot fund major industrial infrastructure, it can play a decisive role in de-risking early-stage investments. The absence of scouring and small-scale processing is one of the most significant national bottlenecks identified in the report. LEADER organisations, working together nationally, could prioritise support for feasibility studies, business planning, pilot-scale equipment and shared infrastructure such as mobile scouring units, aggregation hubs, or shared storage facilities.

By supporting these preparatory stages, LEADER can help move projects to a point where they are investment-ready for larger funding sources (e.g. DAFM, Enterprise Ireland, EU programmes). National coordination is essential here to avoid multiple counties independently exploring similar feasibility work without shared learning or economies of scale.

3. Lead a national programme of pilot projects and peer-learning

This report highlights the importance of local pilots, demonstration projects and practical learning as precursors to wider adoption. LEADER's strength lies in funding and supporting small-scale, place-based experimentation that would be too risky or premature for national agencies to support. At national level, LEADER should coordinate a rolling programme of wool innovation pilots, with each participating county focusing on applications best suited to its context (e.g. heritage textiles, insulation, horticulture, eco-materials).

LEADER's role would be to design a common framework for these pilots—shared objectives, reporting templates, evaluation criteria—while allowing local flexibility. This approach would generate comparable evidence across jurisdictions, helping to identify which uses of wool are technically,

economically and socially viable. LEADER should also facilitate structured peer-learning between pilot areas through site visits, workshops and practitioner exchanges, accelerating knowledge transfer and confidence among farmers and communities.

4. Act as the national coordinator and convenor of a fragmented sector

A recurring theme in the report, and the regional analysis, is that the wool sector suffers from fragmentation: farmers, shearers, processors, designers, researchers and buyers operate in isolation, often at county level, with limited visibility of one another. LEADER organisations are uniquely positioned to address this by acting as a neutral national convenor. At a national level, LEADER should establish and support a formal Wool Sector Coordination Forum, bringing together LEADER partnerships, the Irish Grown Wool Council, Teagasc, farmer representatives, processors and relevant state agencies.

This forum would not replace existing organisations, but would provide a structured space for coordination, shared learning and strategic alignment. It would enable LEADER groups in different counties to share successful approaches and avoid duplication of effort. It would also allow LEADER to present a single, coherent voice when engaging with national policymakers, regulators and funding bodies on issues such as scouring infrastructure, waste classification and bioeconomy supports.

5. Act as a bridge between local innovation and national policy

Many of the challenges facing the wool sector, such as regulatory treatment of wool as waste, uncertainty around processing standards, or lack of procurement pathways, require national policy responses. LEADER organisations are well placed to act as a bridge between on-the-ground experience and national decision-makers. At national level, LEADER should systematically gather evidence from local pilots and farmer experiences and translate this into clear, evidence-based policy proposals.

This could include advocating for clearer regulatory guidance on wool processing and alternative uses, inclusion of wool within national bioeconomy strategies, or recognition of wool-based products within green public procurement frameworks. By grounding advocacy in real LEADER-supported projects, LEADER can ensure that policy discussions remain practical and rooted in rural realities.

6. Support development of a coherent Irish wool narrative and identity

The lack of a clear national narrative around Irish wool undermines efforts at both regional branding and market development. While LEADER should not attempt to create a national marketing brand alone, it can support the development of a shared story and values framework—sustainability, traceability, rural livelihoods, biodiversity—that regional initiatives can align with. This narrative coherence is particularly important as different counties pursue different applications for wool.

At a national level, LEADER could support storytelling initiatives, case studies, exhibitions, and shared communications platforms that showcase the diversity of wool uses emerging across regions. This

helps normalise wool as a valuable bio-resource and strengthens public and political support for continued investment.

7. Position LEADER as the long-term steward of place-based wool development

LEADER organisations should explicitly position themselves as long-term stewards of place-based wool development rather than short-term project funders. This report makes clear that rebuilding a functioning wool value chain will take time, trust and iteration. Nationally, LEADER should advocate for continuity of support across programming periods, ensuring that successful pilots are not abandoned and that knowledge is retained within rural communities.

By maintaining institutional memory, fostering long-term relationships between actors, and embedding wool initiatives within broader rural development goals (climate action, biodiversity, circular economy), LEADER can help ensure that the wool sector’s revival is durable rather than episodic.

Regional Perspective

While a coordinated approach could generate more substantial impacts, region-specific approaches are suggested below.

1. County Kilkenny — Lowland meat-first flocks with under-used wool

a) Establish a Kilkenny Lowland Wool Collection & Grading Hub
Kilkenny’s sheep sector is dominated by lowland, meat-focused flocks, where wool often has minimal perceived value and is frequently stored or discarded. As highlighted in the report, inconsistent storage and lack of aggregation directly reduce fleece value and make it impractical for processors to source quality wool at scale. A dedicated collection and grading hub would centralise supply, reduce contamination, and provide farmers with a predictable route to market. By standardising presentation and grading, Kilkenny could shift more wool out of low-value disposal pathways and into commercial uses, supporting both farmer income and regional circular-economy ambitions.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (iv) Supply Chain and Regulations (Training)

b) Create training programmes on shearing, storage, and contamination control
This report emphasises that inconsistent wool handling and limited knowledge of best practice are key contributors to devalued fleece, especially in lowland counties. Kilkenny farmers often see wool as a by-product rather than a managed output, so county-level training—aligned with IGWC and “Shear Success” guidance—would improve fleece quality and reduce the volume of wool rendered unusable. By running refresher programmes ahead of the shearing season, farmers would gain practical knowledge on rolling, packing, contamination prevention and storage, significantly lifting the county’s baseline quality.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (iv) Supply Chain and Regulations (Training)

c) Support development of wool for alternative uses (fertilisers, mats, insulation) Kilkenny has limited heritage-wool markets and no strong identity in artisan textiles, making diversification into non-textile wool products more realistic. Coarser lowland fleeces are often well-suited to insulation, horticultural fibres, erosion mats and fertiliser pellets rather than fine yarn. Supporting innovation in these areas would create demand specifically aligned to Kilkenny's wool profile and allow farmers to benefit from emerging bio-based product markets.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (ii) Enterprise Development – Accessing Supports via Business Plans; (iii) Agriculture (Training)

d) Build links with craft and design sectors via Kilkenny Design Centre Kilkenny is home to one of Ireland's strongest design and craft ecosystems. Although local wool quality may not suit high-end garment production, designers can incorporate wool into felted products, interiors, accessories or blended fibres. Connecting farmers with local designers would foster collaborative product development, stimulate small-scale demand, and anchor wool within Kilkenny's creative identity. This cultural connection also makes wool more visible and valued locally, supporting long-term behaviour change among farmers.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vii) Supplier-User Speed Networking and Wool Showcase; (viii) Branding and Marketing (Training and Marketing/Branding)

2. County Galway — Strongest existing ecosystem; heritage breed advantage

a) Tourism-linked 'Galway Wool' experiences: Galway already has Ireland's most advanced farmer-led wool ecosystem with established artisan processors and the Galway Wool Co-op. The region's cultural and tourism strengths—particularly in Connemara—provide an ideal platform for experiential wool tourism, such as shearing demonstrations, craft workshops, farm tours and storytelling centred on the iconic Galway sheep breed. These experiences would deepen the region's heritage narrative, boost retail sales of Galway wool products, and generate supplementary tourism income for participating farms.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (i) Tourism (Training and Feasibility/Analysis)

b) Expand the Galway Wool Co-op model to neighbouring mixed-flock farms This report highlights the importance of peer-to-peer knowledge transfer and farmer networks. Galway's model is the strongest in Ireland and has already demonstrated success in high-quality fleece handling, traceability and premium pricing. Expanding the co-op's support to neighbouring mixed-flock farms would improve consistency of wool presentation, broaden supply, and help sustain the heritage breed. This would also help build critical mass of quality wool for small processors, strengthening the value chain as a whole.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vii) Supplier-User Speed Networking and Wool Showcase; (viii) Branding and Marketing (Training and Marketing/Branding)

c) County funding for micro-processors or craft textile units
One of the most significant national bottlenecks identified in the report is the absence of domestic scouring and small-scale processing. Galway is the most viable location for early-stage investment because it has both committed farmers and existing artisan users. Supporting micro-processors—through grants, equipment funding, or space—would reduce reliance on overseas scouring, shorten the supply chain, and increase the volume of wool processed domestically. This builds resilience and underpins long-term sector viability.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (iv) Research and Development; (vi) Supply Chain and Regulations (Training and Feasibility/Analysis)

d) Breed conservation incentives for Galway sheep
The Galway breed is Ireland’s only officially recognised native sheep breed and produces a distinctive medium-grade fleece. Incentivising conservation and expansion is both culturally important and commercially strategic. A recognisable regional fibre creates opportunities for premium yarns, interiors, slow-fashion branding, and heritage craft products. Supporting breed conservation also stabilises the supply base for the Galway Wool Co-op, ensuring that the region’s wool identity remains strong and marketable.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (viii) Branding and Marketing; (ix) Textile Opportunities (Training and Marketing/Branding)

3. County Kerry — Hill wool potential; tourism; eco branding

a) Launch a ‘Kerry Mountain Wool’ identity
Kerry’s large hill-flock population produces coarse wool that is often undervalued but well-suited to robust eco-products and landscape-linked branding. Creating a “Kerry Mountain Wool” identity would differentiate the region’s fibre in the marketplace, much like Scottish Blackface or Welsh mountain wool. Such branding reinforces Kerry’s rugged landscape narrative and supports both local tourism and eco-product positioning, helping to lift demand for hill fleeces that might otherwise be discarded.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (viii) Branding and Marketing (Training and Marketing/Branding)

b) Pilot project for coarse-wool insulation and eco-materials
Hill wool is generally unsuitable for fine textiles but ideal for insulation, acoustic panels, erosion mats and horticultural products. This report emphasised the need to develop alternative uses tailored to fleece profile. Piloting coarse-wool eco-materials in Kerry—especially in collaboration with peatland restoration projects, environmental NGOs or local builders—would demonstrate practical viability and help unlock new commercial markets aligned with Kerry’s environmental identity.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vii) Supplier-User Speed Networking and Wool Showcase; (viii) Branding and Marketing (Training and Marketing/Branding)

c) Determine the requirement to establish seasonal shearing-service coordination for isolated farms Geography can be a barrier for some farmers, with remote upland areas facing labour shortages and potential inconsistent access to skilled shearers. Greater efficiency and consistency at shearing time facilitated by a county-coordinated mobile shearing and collection service could reduce farmer costs, improve fleece quality, minimise contamination, and ensure wool collected is usable and aggregated efficiently.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vi) Supply Chain and Regulations (Training)

d) Partner with tourism operators (Ring of Kerry, West Kerry) for “sheep & wool stories” Kerry already attracts millions of visitors annually. Integrating wool stories into tourism—through craft trails, farm visits, storytelling at heritage centres, or local markets—strengthens the link between sheep farming and regional culture. This supports farm diversification, raises awareness of wool as a natural material, and provides visibility that can drive demand for Kerry-made wool goods.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (i) Tourism and (viii) Branding and Marketing (Training and Marketing/Branding)

4. County Tipperary — Mixed-farming county with emerging agri-innovation capacity

a) Create a Tipperary Wool Innovation Working Group Tipperary’s mixed-farming landscape make it an ideal hub for developing technical applications of wool beyond textiles. A working group would coordinate farmers, researchers, processors and potential end-users to test products such as horticultural pellets, equine bedding, or composite materials. These innovation pathways are directly aligned with the report’s emphasis on developing alternative high-volume uses for Irish wool and addressing the current lack of market pathways.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (ii) Enterprise Development – Accessing Supports via Business Plans; (iii) Agriculture, (iv) Research and Development (Training and Feasibility/Analysis)

b) Partner with research providers for technical pilots Our report identified the need for scientific and technical evaluation of wool products—particularly in areas such as moisture management, durability, storage stability and processing feasibility. Tipperary’s research infrastructure is well-equipped to lead pilot trials on wool quality, cleaning, pelleting, and blending with other biomaterials. These evidence-based pilots would support investment decisions and help farmers understand realistic commercial opportunities.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (iv) Research and Development (Training and Marketing/Branding)

c) Encourage farmer clusters for shared wool storage infrastructure Poor storage is one of the major causes of wool devaluation across counties. Shared storage solutions—

centralised sheds, container-based hubs, or farmer co-op stores—would ensure fleeces remain dry, labelled, uncontaminated, and attractive to buyers. For a county like Tipperary, where farms are dispersed and wool is not currently aggregated, these clusters create efficiencies and elevate quality standards.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vi) Supply Chain and Regulations (Training)

d) Link wool to equine sector (Thurles, racing, studs)
Tipperary's strong equine industry creates a natural local market for wool bedding, felted pads, and sound-dampening materials. These products do not require high-grade fleece, making them ideal for the county's mixed wool profile. By connecting sheep farmers with equine facilities, studs, and trainers, Tipperary can develop a closed-loop local supply chain that benefits both sectors.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vii) Supplier-User Speed Networking and Wool Showcase; (viii) Branding and Marketing (Training and Marketing/Branding)

5. County Clare — Mainly lowland flocks; craft culture; eco-tourism

a) Support a Burren Wool Collective
Clare's unique Burren landscape and thriving craft culture make it a prime location for a place-based wool collective similar to the Galway model. A Burren Wool Collective would aggregate hill wool, support farmers in improving fleece handling, and anchor the wool within a strong regional brand rooted in heritage and ecology. This reflects the opportunity of cooperative models in increasing market access and quality consistency.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vi) Supply Chain and Regulations (vii) Supplier-User Speed Networking and Wool Showcase; (viii) Branding and Marketing (Training and Marketing/Branding)

b) Promote training for farmers on shearing, grading & wool handling
This report identified inconsistent handling and lack of access to best practice as critical barriers. In Clare—where many smaller and hill farms operate—targeted training would significantly improve wool quality and empower farmers to participate in artisan or eco-product markets. This also increases the likelihood that wool collected can feed into local craft or horticulture uses.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vi) Supply Chain and Regulations (Training)

c) Accelerate development of wool-based horticulture products
Clare's vibrant environmental and gardening communities are well-positioned to adopt wool-based horticultural goods such as mulch mats, slug barriers, and fertiliser pellets. Hill wool from Clare is structurally suitable for these products, and local eco-groups, community gardens, and conservation projects provide ready pilot sites. These markets offer stable local demand without requiring high purity or fine fibre.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (ii) Enterprise Development – Accessing Supports via Business Plans; (iii) Agriculture (Training and Feasibility/Analysis)

d) Expand craft & design partnerships (e.g., Ennis, Doolin, Burren College of Art) Clare’s craft sector—including Ennis makers, the Doolin creative community, and the Burren College of Art—can create high-value, small-batch wool products. Strengthening partnerships between farmers and makers ensures that hill wool finds meaningful, place-based uses. This supports local livelihoods, reinforces Clare’s cultural identity, and helps stabilise demand for small but premium artisan wool outputs.

Supporting Actions and Activities: (vii) Supplier-User Speed Networking and Wool Showcase; (viii) Branding and Marketing (Training and Marketing/Branding).

APPENDIX 1 – FARMER SURVEY QUESTIONS

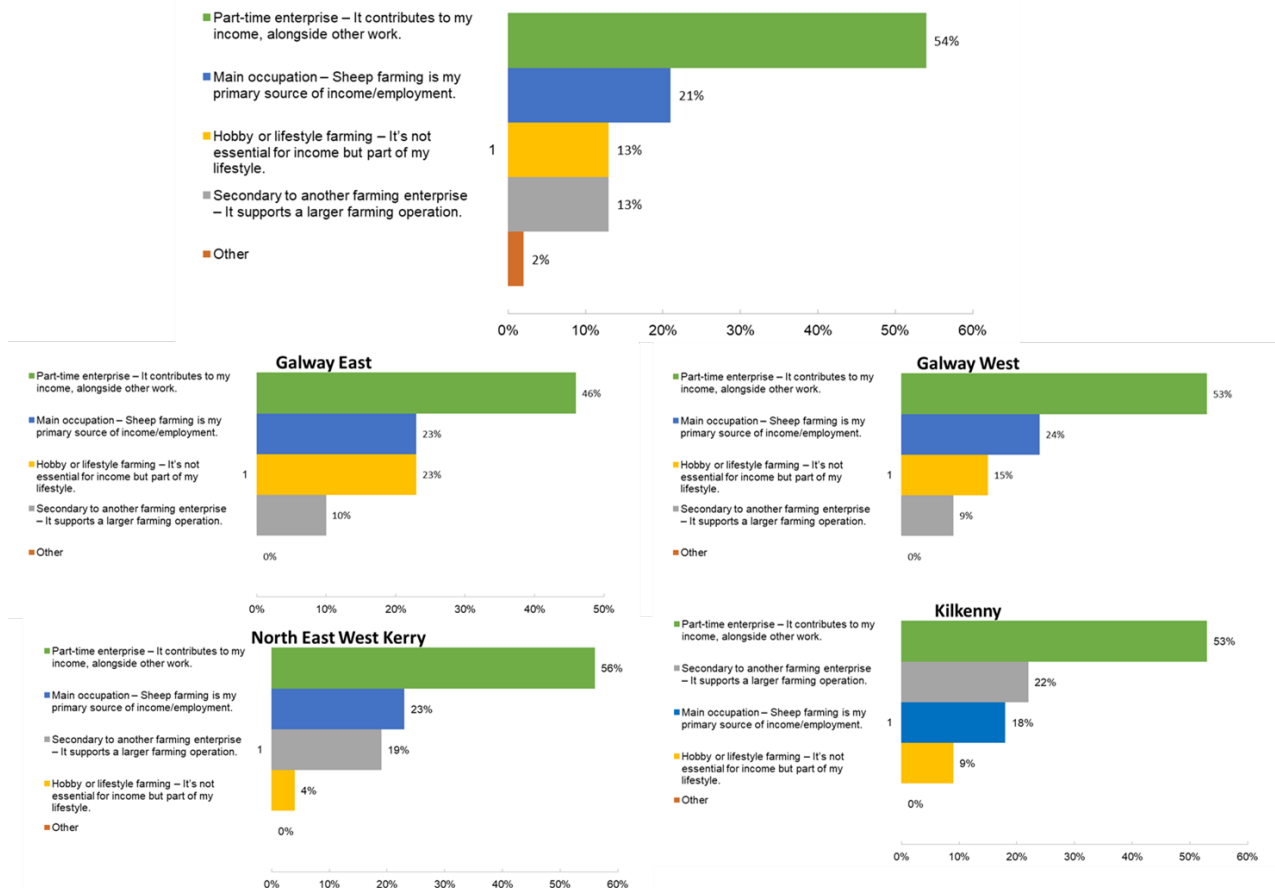
A survey was created to provide a baseline of information on sheep farmers' perspective on wool; the questions included in this survey were as follows:

1. Where is your sheep farming enterprise based?
 - a. Galway-East
 - b. Galway-West/Connemara
 - c. Clare
 - d. Kilkenny
 - e. North East West Kerry
 - f. North Tipperary
 - g. Other
2. How would you describe the role of sheep farming in your overall work or income?
 - a. Main occupation
 - b. Part-time enterprise
 - c. Secondary to other farming
 - d. Hobby or Lifestyle farming
 - e. Other
3. How would you describe the role of wool in your farming operation today?
 - a. A costly nuisance
 - b. Low value by-product
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Undervalued resource
 - e. Valuable natural product
4. What best describes your interest in adding value to your wool?
 - a. No interest
 - b. Limited interest
 - c. Passive interest
 - d. Active Interest
 - e. Highly motivated
5. What is the typical fate of your wool?
 - a. Sold to merchant
 - b. Stored with no current use
 - c. Dispose/thrown away
 - d. Wool co-op or textile company
 - e. Other

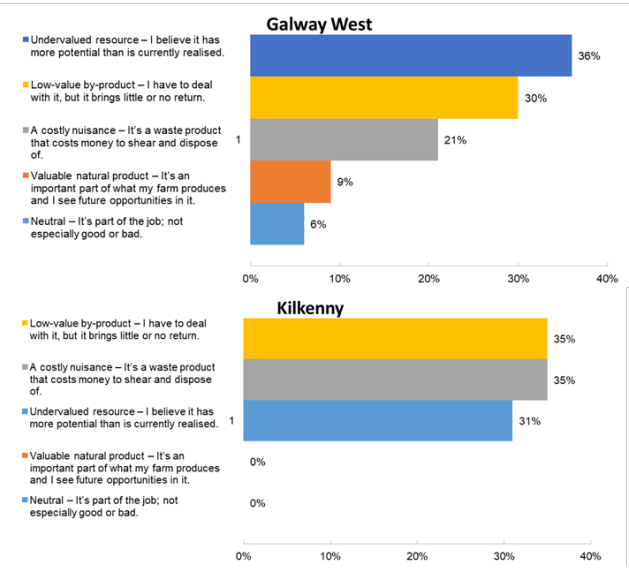
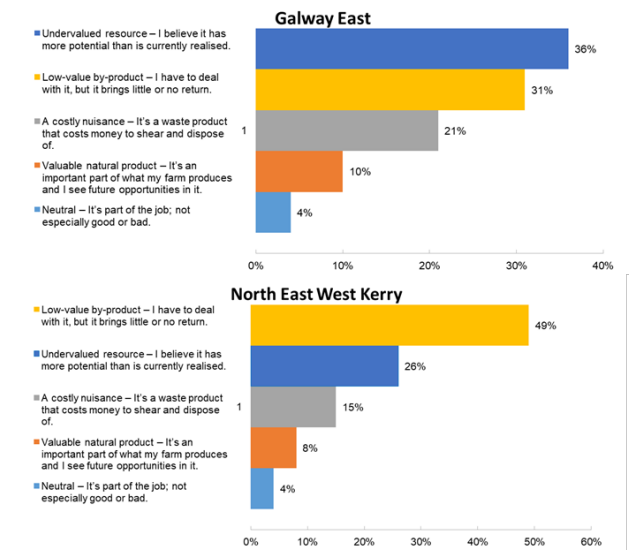
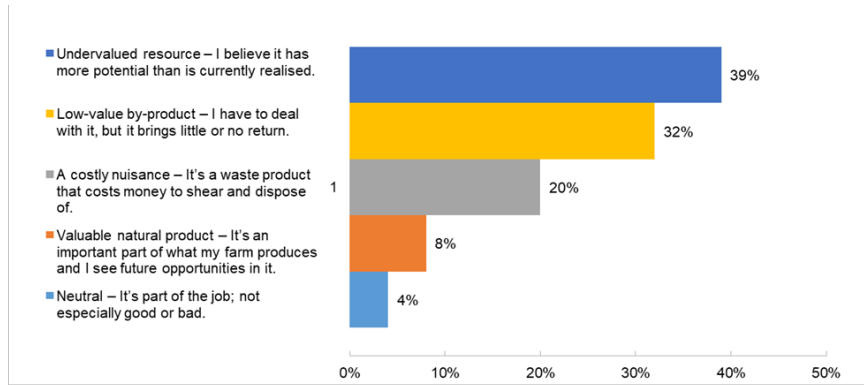
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6. How important is it to you that wool is processed and used locally – for example turned into products that are used and sold in the region?
 - a. I don't mind where it goes
 - b. I have a mild preference for local
 - c. I support local use in principle
 - d. I actively prefer local processing
 - e. I strongly believe in local use
 7. Are you currently doing anything innovative or different with your wool?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 8. Which of the following best describes what you're currently doing with your wool?
 - a. Crafts or textile products
 - b. Research or product development
 - c. Eco-use or land-based solutions
 - d. Commercial or local sales
 - e. Tourism, education or heritage activities
 - f. Other

APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF FARMER SURVEY RESULTS

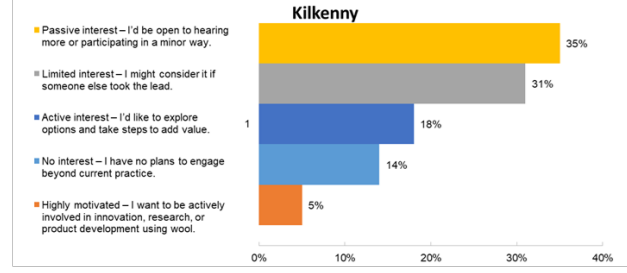
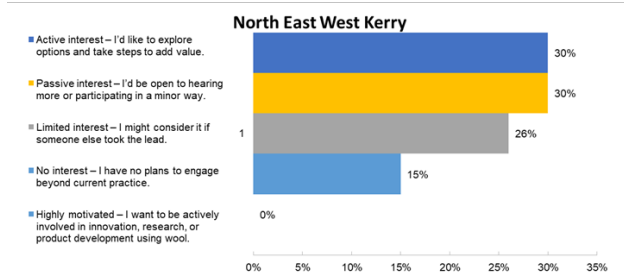
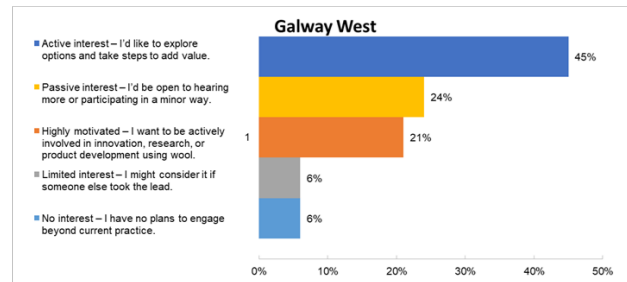
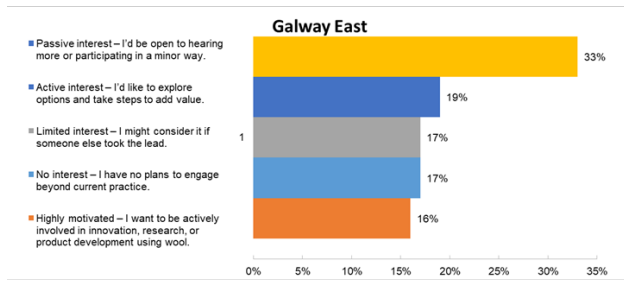
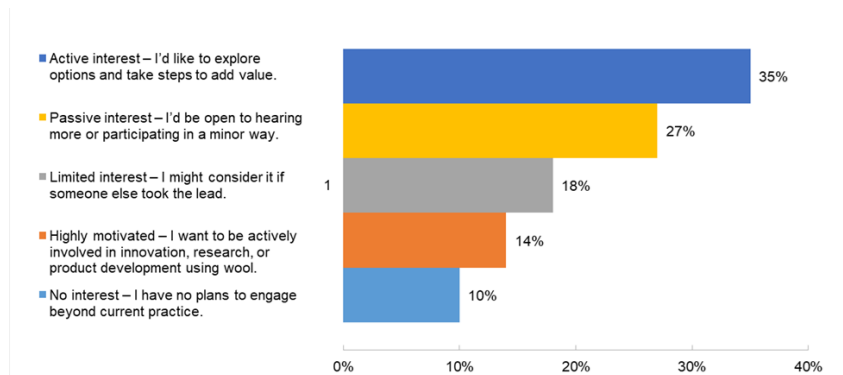
How would you describe the role of sheep farming in your overall work or income?



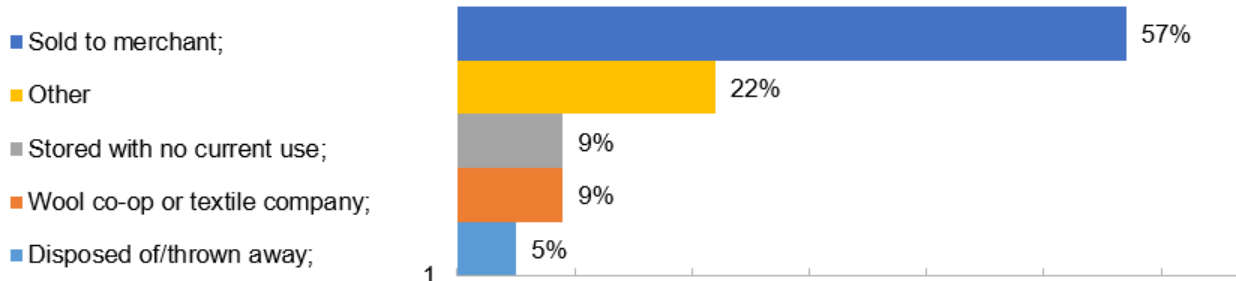
How would you describe the role of wool in your farming operation today?



What best describes your interest in developing or adding value to your wool?

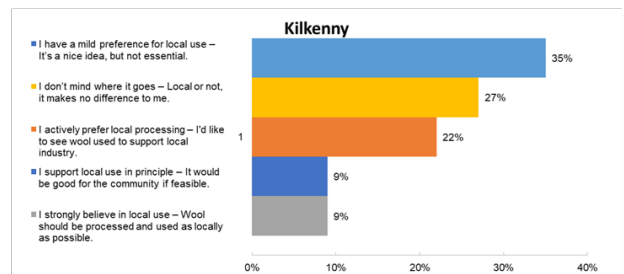
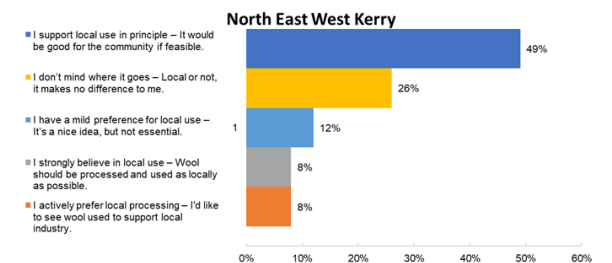
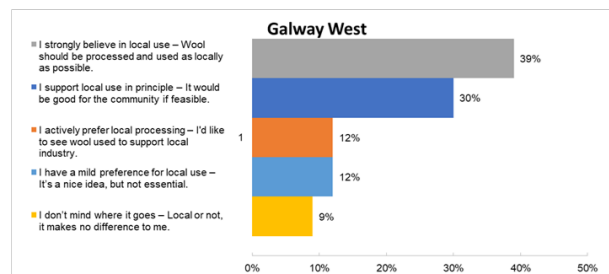
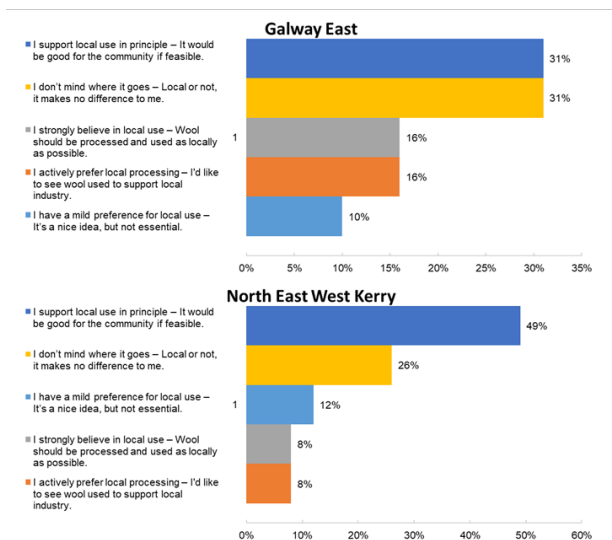
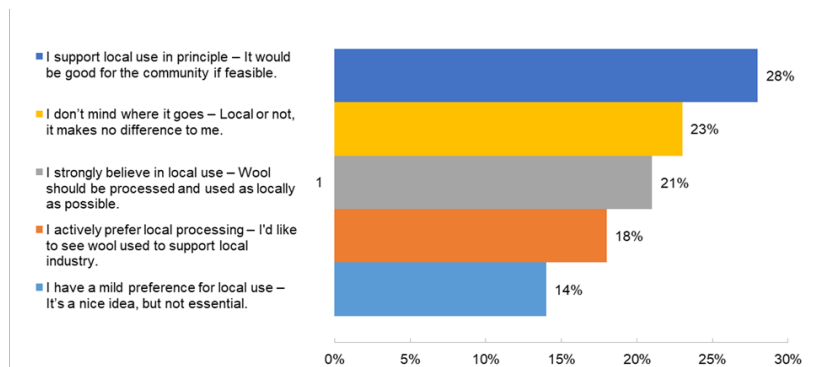


What is the typical fate of your wool? (Select all that apply)

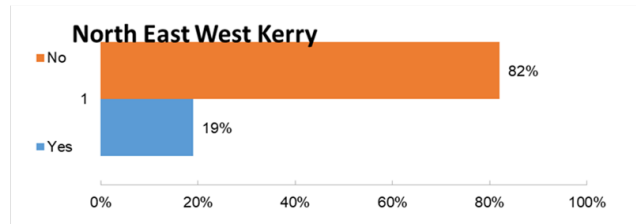
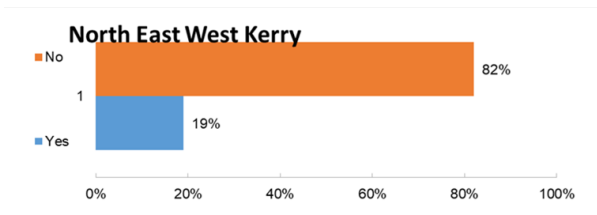
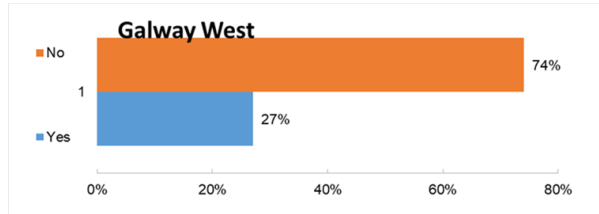
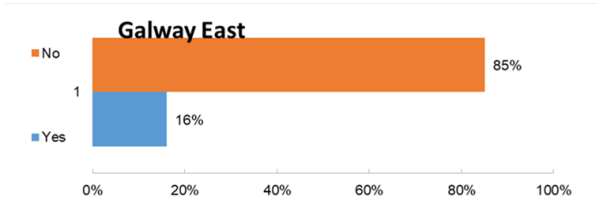
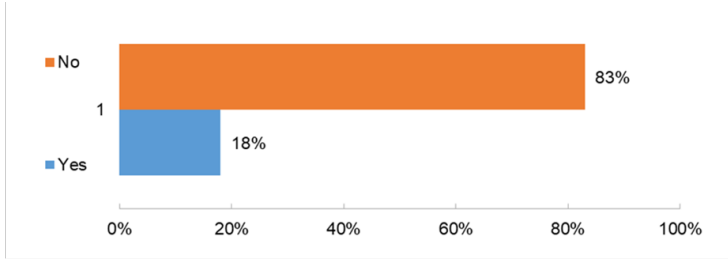


	Galway East	Galway West	North South East Kerry	Kilkenny
Sold to merchant	67%	65%	52%	57%
Other	23%	12%	4%	7%
Stored with no use	2%	18%	4%	9%
Wool CoOp-Textiles	2%	3%	34%	5%
Thrown away	6%	2%	8%	22%

How important is it to you that wool is processed and used locally—for example, turned into products that are made and sold within the region?

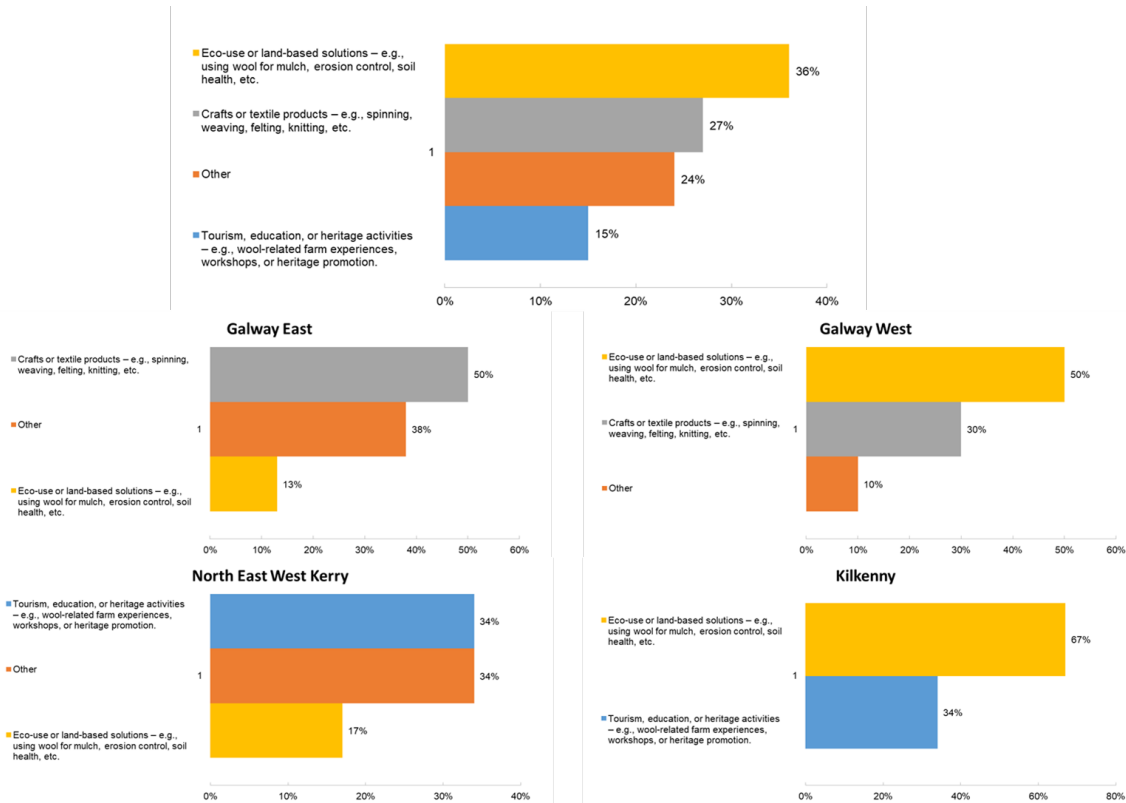


Are you currently doing anything innovative or different with your wool (e.g., micro-scouring, product development, processing, research, eco-use, tourism, craft, etc.)?



Which of the following best describes what you're currently doing with your wool?

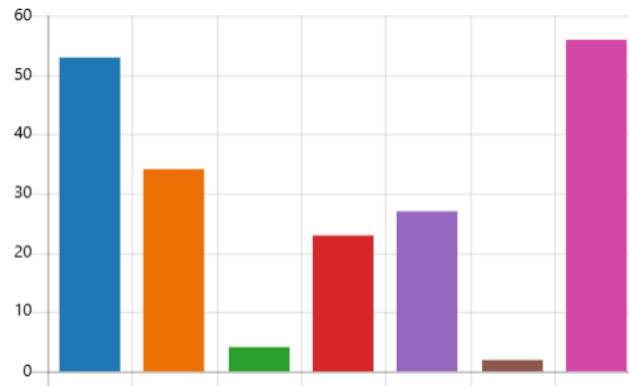
Activity	%	N
Tourism, education or heritage activities	15%	5
Other	24%	8
Crafts or textile products	27%	9
Eco-use or land-based solutions	36%	12
		34



Summary Graphs; Microsoft Forms

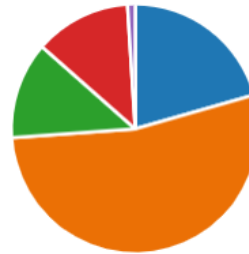
1. Where is your sheep farming enterprise based?

Galway – East	53
Galway – West / Connemara	34
Clare	4
Kilkenny	23
North East West Kerry	27
North Tipperary	2
Other	56



2. How would you describe the role of sheep farming in your overall work or income?

Main occupation – Sheep far...	41
Part-time enterprise – It contri...	106
Secondary to another farming...	25
Hobby or lifestyle farming – It'...	25
Other	2



3. How would you describe the role of wool in your farming operation today?

A costly nuisance – It's a waste...	39
Low-value by-product – I have...	62
Neutral – It's part of the job; n...	7
Undervalued resource – I belie...	77
Valuable natural product – It's ...	14



4. What best describes your interest in developing or adding value to your wool?

- No interest – I have no plans t... 19
- Limited interest – I might cons... 34
- Passive interest – I'd be open t... 52
- Active interest – I'd like to expl... 68
- Highly motivated – I want to b... 26



5. What is the typical fate of your wool? (Select all that apply)

- Sold to merchant 128
- Stored with no current use 28
- Disposed of/thrown away 19
- Wool co-op or textile company 14
- Other 23



6. How important is it to you that wool is processed and used locally—for example, turned into products that are made and sold within the region?

- I don't mind where it goes – L... 44
- I have a mild preference for lo... 26
- I support local use in principle... 54
- I actively prefer local processi... 35
- I strongly believe in local use ... 40



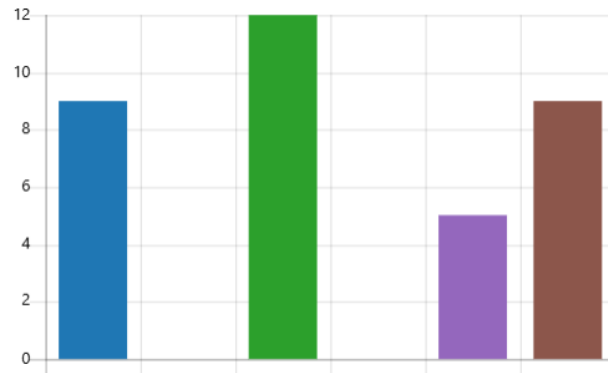
7. Are you currently doing anything innovative or different with your wool (e.g., micro-scouring, product development, processing, research, eco-use, tourism, craft, etc.)?

- Yes 35
- No 164



8. Which of the following best describes what you're currently doing with your wool?

- Crafts or textile products – e.g... 9
- Research or product develop... 0
- Eco-use or land-based solutio... 12
- Commercial or local sales – e.... 0
- Tourism, education, or heritag... 5
- Other 9



APPENDIX 3 – CONSIDERATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING A MICRO-SCALE WOOL SCOURING PLANT IN IRELAND

Micro Scale Wool Scouring Ireland

A review of Conditions Governing the Design and Operation of a Plant Compliant with Regulations

This review provides an overview of key factors to consider when planning and developing a small-scale wool scouring facility in Ireland. It brings together practical, regulatory, environmental, and operational considerations, particularly for facilities that aim to operate as demonstration, educational, research-based, or community-focused projects. This is not a definitive or exhaustive checklist. Regulatory requirements can vary by county, local authority, scale of operation, and site context. This guide is intended as a starting point for planning and discussion, and further professional, technical, and legal advice will be required before any facility is designed or commissioned.

Introduction

Raw sheep's wool is an abundant renewable fibre in Ireland. There is increasing interest in establishing micro-scale wool scouring plants for a combination of educational, demonstration, craft, and agri-tourism purposes. These facilities can contribute to local wool value chains while preserving Ireland's heritage and creating vital connections between art, craft, and science. They also act as demonstrators that support research, public engagement, education, and training. Operating within strict regulatory frameworks is essential. This report brings together the conditions set out by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and other Irish authorities, presenting them in a coherent narrative that covers legislation, registration, plant structure, hygiene, processing, and waste management.

Conceptualising the Vision

The vision for a micro-scale wool scouring plant extends beyond simply washing raw wool. Such a facility can act as a demonstrator hub for Ireland's emerging bioeconomy, linking heritage and tradition with innovation and sustainability. By situating scouring within a context of education, craft, and public engagement, the plant becomes more than a processing site: it becomes a living laboratory where art, science, and industry converge. Demonstration scouring provides a platform for research collaborations, training opportunities, and the development of new bio-based applications for wool by-products, from lanolin recovery to natural fertilisers. In this way, the plant operates as a catalyst for rural development and a showcase of Ireland's commitment to combining heritage with forward-looking, circular-economy practices.

Template for a Demonstrator Plant

A new micro-scale wool scouring plant in Ireland can be conceptualised as a best-practice demonstrator hub for the bioeconomy at local level. Such a plant would combine traditional scouring with integrated sustainable technologies, showing how circular design principles can be embedded in even the smallest of industrial operations. Key features of this template include the generation of renewable energy on site, for example through solar PV and/or biogas systems to provide hot water for scouring; rainwater harvesting and closed-loop water reuse systems to reduce abstractions; and nutrient recovery from suint and sludge fractions to create soil improvers. Wastewater treatment would be optimised by integrating grease recovery, dissolved air flotation, biological digestion, and membrane technologies to ensure compliance with strict discharge standards. Skirting and wool waste could be diverted into a micro-scale anaerobic digester, providing biogas for energy and digestate for nutrient cycling.

The vision aligns directly with the *National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy* and the Bioeconomy Action Plan for Ireland, both of which emphasise the need for demonstrator projects that showcase innovative use of biological resources and waste valorisation. At local level, such a facility can serve as a flagship of rural circular economy practice, linking primary producers, processors, and communities while promoting improved wool quality at the farm gate. The plant also draws strength from Ireland's growing research base, particularly the EPA-funded **REVIRE** project, which is developing regenerative design options for wastewater treatment plants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enable nutrient recovery, with further details available through MaREI (2025), and the **SPRINGWOOL** project at Munster Technological University, which investigates new applications and processing methods for Irish wool. Together, these initiatives provide a scientific foundation for designing and testing the next generation of wool scouring systems that integrate heritage, craft, science, and sustainability.

Governing Legislation

The regulatory framework for wool processing is underpinned by European and national law. Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 and Regulation (EU) No. 142/2011 establish the rules for the management of animal by-products (ABP), while the European Union (Animal By-Products) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 187/2014) provide the national basis for enforcement in Ireland. Within this framework, wool is designated as a Category 3 ABP, meaning that it poses a low risk to public or animal health provided it comes from animals free from communicable disease. This classification is central to how small-scale wool processing facilities are designed and managed (DAFM, 2015a; DAFM, 2015b; DAFM, 2015c).

Plant Registration and Approval

Any facility that handles, stores, or scours wool must be registered with DAFM as an ABP plant. Registration entails a clear set of obligations. Operators are required to notify the Department of any significant changes in activities, staff, or infrastructure. Where operations cease, the facility must be formally decommissioned in line with strict protocols to ensure no residual risks

remain. Although the scale of operation may be small, micro plants are subject to the same registration and oversight requirements as larger facilities (DAFM, 2015a).

Biosecurity and Plant Structure

The conditions set out for approved wool stores (DAFM, 2015b) also reinforce the requirements for appropriate facilities and segregation of wool from food or feed areas.

The physical design of a plant is an essential part of compliance. Wool must be received, handled, and stored within a fully enclosed building or container. The premises must be separated from food, feed, and related machinery to prevent cross-contamination. Surfaces such as floors and walls must be constructed in a way that allows them to be easily cleaned and disinfected. Effective pest control programmes, supported by documented bait maps and service records, must also be in place. Hygiene facilities for staff, including toilets, changing rooms, and washbasins, are considered essential to safe operation (DAFM, 2015a).

Personnel, Hygiene, and Transport

The operation of the facility relies not only on structural conditions but also on staff behaviour. Personnel must wear protective clothing when handling wool and maintain high standards of hygiene. Wool is to be transported in sealed packaging or leak-proof vehicles, all of which must be clearly marked with the statement “Category 3 – Not for Human Consumption.” Transporters must be registered ABP hauliers unless the wool is delivered directly by the farmer of origin (DAFM, 2015a).

Intake, Processing, and Handling

With the exception of wool delivered directly from the farm, consignments must be accompanied by commercial documents, which are standardised records detailing the origin, quantity, date, and destination of each batch of wool. These documents form part of the official traceability system and travel with the consignment to the plant. Detailed intake logs must record the source of the wool, the date of receipt, transporter information, and the quantity received. These records, along with documentation of dispatch, must be retained for at least three years and be accessible to DAFM inspectors. Processing activities are limited to the acceptance, collection, sorting, washing, temporary storage, and dispatch of wool. Other uses, such as the production of feed or fertiliser, are prohibited without separate approvals (DAFM, 2015a; DAFM, 2015c; DAFM, 2015b).

Storage, Dispatch, and Traceability

The storage and movement of wool is closely monitored to ensure traceability throughout the supply chain. Wool may only be dispatched to facilities that are themselves approved or registered with DAFM. Each consignment must be accompanied by appropriate commercial documentation, and facilities are required to carry out a reconciliation of wool handled at least every six months, meaning that records of wool received and dispatched are compared and balanced to ensure no discrepancies in quantities and that all consignments are fully accounted

for. The aim is to ensure that wool can always be traced back to its source and forward to its next destination (DAFM, 2015a).

Wastewater and Waste Management

The most significant environmental challenge associated with scouring is wastewater. Wool scouring wastewater has exceptionally high biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and chemical oxygen demand (COD), often reaching 20,000 to 40,000 mg/L for BOD and 37,000 to 100,000 mg/L for COD (Labanda and Llorens, 2008). These values are hundreds of times higher than the baseline discharge limits in Ireland, which are set at 25 mg/L BOD and 125 mg/L COD under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (S.I. No. 254/2001). Even after treatments such as coagulation–flocculation and membrane filtration, levels may remain far above legal thresholds (DAFM, 2014).

As such, wastewater must be treated on-site to reduce organic loads before any discharge. Typical treatment measures include grease and lanolin recovery, dissolved air flotation, biological digestion, and membrane filtration. In addition, solid waste wool must be sent to a Category 1 or 3 rendering plant, while packaging must be managed in accordance with environmental legislation (DAFM, 2014).

Educational and Research Exemptions

DAFM has provisions for the use of animal by-products in education and research, as outlined in CN21. Under this framework, exemptions may be granted to allow wool to be used for demonstration and training purposes. However, these derogations do not exempt operators from requirements related to wastewater treatment or traceability, and risks to public and animal health must remain tightly controlled (DAFM, 2016).

Conclusion

A micro-scale wool scouring plant in Ireland must be designed and operated within the full scope of DAFM's animal by-product regulations. The facility must be registered with DAFM, operated within an enclosed and hygienic structure, and managed with rigorous traceability and pest control systems. Trained staff must follow strict hygiene practices, and transport arrangements must ensure wool is clearly marked and safely delivered. Wastewater, with its very high pollutant load, represents the greatest compliance challenge and requires robust treatment systems before discharge. Exemptions for education and demonstration, as provided under CN21 (DAFM, 2016), can support micro-scale facilities, but they do not reduce obligations around environmental and public health protections.

By adhering to these requirements, micro-scale scouring plants can operate responsibly, supporting both Ireland's wool industry and sustainable rural development.

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Labanda, J. and Llorens, J. (2008). Wool scouring waste treatment by a combination of coagulation–flocculation process and membrane separation technology. *Chemical Engineering and Processing: Process Intensification*, 47(7), pp.1061–1068. doi:10.1016/j.cep.2007.07.010.

APPENDIX 4 – SHEEP NUMBERS IN IRELAND – COUNTY BREAKDOWNS

Total number of other sheep by county in 2024 December 2024.

County	2024	2023	Change in head	sort
Carlow	29,239	28,613	626	2.2%
Cavan	23,544	25,542	-1,998	-7.8%
Clare	6,915	7,934	-1,019	-12.8%
Cork	38,635	41,434	-2,799	-6.8%
Donegal	155,390	151,321	4,069	2.7%
Dublin	5,088	5,498	-410	-7.5%
Galway	113,979	124,958	-10,979	-8.8%
Kerry	72,611	78,077	-5,466	-7.0%
Kildare	33,177	32,038	1,139	3.6%
Kilkenny	17,712	19,693	-1,981	-10.1%
Laois	12,864	13,761	-897	-6.5%
Leitrim	29,776	30,814	-1,038	-3.4%
Limerick	5,267	5,722	-455	-8.0%
Longford	9,591	12,864	-3,273	-25.4%
Louth	16,759	17,896	-1,137	-6.4%
Mayo	106,070	109,900	-3,830	-3.5%
Meath	47,505	46,361	1,144	2.5%
Monaghan	18,284	18,435	-151	-0.8%
Offaly	20,521	21,760	-1,239	-5.7%
Roscommon	48,340	50,603	-2,263	-4.5%
Sligo	34,891	35,141	-250	-0.7%
Tipperary	38,709	38,186	523	1.4%

Waterford	16,462	16,425	37	0.2%
Westmeath	22,050	22,954	-904	-3.9%
Wexford	50,822	52,719	-1,897	-3.6%
Wicklow	67,419	68,992	-1,573	-2.3%
Total	1,041,620	1,077,641	-36,021	-3.3%

Note these numbers even though stated 2024 are using data from late 2023 early 2024.

Resource was from the document by Darren Carty - "Worrying decline in sheep numbers in Galway for the 2024 numbers of sheep".

APPENDIX 5 – PELLITISING PILOT COSTINGS

CAPEX		OPTIONS	BASIS	INDICATIVE COST
Existing set-up Kildare				
Generator				
Small capacity wool hammer mill				
Mixing tank				
Pellet Mill				
Conveyor				
Augur		Contract price per tonne by current owner	Asking price for sale	60,000
New Higher volume wool Hammer drill (100kg per hour)		Continue at low volume unit initially	Estimated cost TBC with fabricator	20,000
Covered 40 foot container and truck/tractor for mobile unit		Truck and 40ft sealed container probably about €120k	Reasonable to assume available to entity developing the Pilot	0
TOTAL CAPEX				80,000

OPERATIONAL COST MODEL	ASSUMPTIONS	COST PER TONNE 3 RD PARTY	COST PER TONNE OWN FARM
Wool	No value on basis mainly old/waste wool used		
Fuel		60	60
Equipment		65	65
Labour		80	80
Collect and dry additives (horse manure/bio-char/bracken)		60	0
Pelletiser service fee	TBA		
TOTAL COST PER TONNE		265	205

APPENDIX 6 – SHEEP BREEDS IN IRELAND SUMMARY

Sheep breeds:	Mature Ewe fleece weight (kg)	Ram fleece weight (kg)	Micron	Traits	Wastage of fleece	Comments	Website of breeders
Scottish Blackface	3.3 - 4.0kg	3.8 - 4.5kg	28-33	Exceptionally hardy creatures, able to withstand the long, cold, dark and stormy winter months here in Ireland. They have long fleeces and curved horns. Though this also depends on the breeding traits and whether it is has been mixed breed and how many generations or purebreed.	Typical spinning mill can loose up to 50%, though can be more ie returning 40% of the fleece	Micron counts depend on the breed and quality of the breed, not forgetting health of sheep, food source and origin. This can be improved. Also depends on the age of the sheep. Non native sheep of Ireland. Multiple breeders are listed on the sheep.ie website.	https://www.sheep.ie/hill-breeding-groups-and-rams-genotyping/
Suffolk	2.3 - 3.6kg	3.6 - 5kg	26-33	down type wool, springy, superwashed naturally and is known to resist felting. Staple length is around 5-10cm.	Pending on the quality of the wool and the breeding (ie mixed breeds or pure suffolk) can have an influence on it when using for felting purposes as it is known to not felt but also felt.	Lovely wool, easy to spin, Good felt properties. like socks, rugs, and hardy outerwear.	https://www.irishsuffolksheep.org/

Texel	3.5 - 5.5kg	4.0 - 6kg	30-34, Lambs wool is around 30microns	Coarse fiber, socks, ideal for felting and upholstery.	Factors such as mastitis, age, and teeth problems, This is also related to breeding and the heritage line of the sheep, though also with a combination of the environment.	Must have a good crimp to the wool. Long fibers. Blending with other wools enables it to then be used for other applications. Springy.	https://irishtexel.com/
Galway : Roscommon	3.5 - 8.1kg	3.5-10kg pending on the sheep.	28-34 or could be less ie 24.5	Have a blob of wool on the top of their heads and legs. White in colour.	see notes along with wool prices, useability and processing is causing use of wool.	Known to produce quality wool, their size and also docility as a sheep. Medium to coarse wool, Useability is knitting and weaving. Though it is important that the sheep are kept well. Long staple length of a staple length.	https://galwaywool.ie/
Cladoir	1.5 - 2kg	2.5 - 3.5kg	25-33 microns	They have a preservation society for these sheep.	see notes along with wool prices, useability and processing is causing use of wool.	Ongoing breeding sessions in Ireland. Is viewed as a local breed of sheep. Breeding studies data is available up to 2024. South Connemara is the region for these sheep.	https://www.cladoir.ie
Kerry Hill	2.75 - 3.0kg	3.25 - 4kg	26.5 - 33	Good mothers, produce good milk supply for lambs, can be farmed organic and non	see notes along with wool prices, useability and processing is causing use of wool.	Non native to Ireland. The fleeces are White, dense, and high quality. White, dense, and high quality. Meat,	https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Northern-Ireland-Kerryhill-Sheep-Group-100068836307767/
Hill/Mountain	4 - 6kg	4.5 - 6kg	27-40	Mule Ewes are a cross between a blackface and cheviot.	see notes along with wool prices, useability and processing is causing use of wool.	Require good food and nutrition sources.	known as blackface - located along the west coast and cheviot is more Wicklow area.

Blackface Mountain Sheep - Ireland	2.4-	3.5- 4.5	27;5-30.5	small, hardy, black sheep known for good maternal traits, high fertility, and producing quality lean meat. Located in Kerry, Mayo/Connemara type, Waterford and Donegal. Coarse wool. Male and Female both have horns, hardy sheep,	see notes along with wool prices, useability and processing is causing use of wool.	coarse wool - carpet, insulation, mixed fibers and kemp.	https://inrbs.ie/blackface-mountain-sheep/
Romney	3-6kg	10kg	29-36	Meat producers and wool https://elitematernals.ie/ - genetics. Their micron count will vary due to the genetics and origin of the sheep.	see notes along with wool prices, useability and processing is causing use of wool.	outerwear and also interior applications.	Ériu uses Romney sheep in their products.

Blue Face Leicester	2.5kg	3.5kg	24-28 pending on breed origin	Mule breed. Wool is good for spinning.	Significant portion of the clip is wasted, therefore not financially viable. Though this can be changed by modifying shearing techniques ie not on soil or straw; though this wool is a good quality of wool, so farmers need to be inventive or collaborate with those who can support the farmers.	clothing, spinning, sheen,. Though also depends on the breeding, shearing and wellbeing of sheep also which impacts the fleece. Can be breed to challenge Merino micron standards.	https://blueleicester.co.uk/regions/southern-ireland/
Swaledale	1.5-2kg	3-4kg	35-40	Not a local breed.	Waste resource due to the coarseness and the value of wool.	Carpets, tweed, interior, heavy outwear ie jackets/coats, rugs. When mixed with softer wool, this can then provide other applications.	https://inrbs.ie/swaledale/

North County Cheviot	2kg	3-3.5kg	27-33	present and gaining popularity in Ireland, valued for its hardiness, versatility, and productivity. They are well-suited to both hard hill ground and better pastures, where they produce vigorous lambs and are popular for crossing with other breeds like the Texel to create prime lambs. Good crimp.		clothing applications ie gloves, shawls, blankets, outerwear, other applications also if crossed. Good for hand spinning.	
Jacobs	2kg	2.5-3kg	26-36 or 32-34 pending on breeding, environment etc. can vary	Medium coarse wool.		hand spinning, felting, weaving	https://jacobsheepsociety.co.uk/sheep-society/regional-information/ireland/
Whittlow Cheviot Sheep	2	3-3.5kg	27-33		Waste resource due to the coarseness and the value of wool.	Known for a rugged wool and sort after wool for clothing and carpet making. Good mothers and lambing	https://www.wicklowsheep.com/

Suffolk Cheviot	2.3kgs	3.6kg	25-33	Coarse wool, yet blended with other wool it strengthens the wool.	Waste resource due to the coarseness and the value of wool.	Socks and Meat, knitwear	https://www.irishsuffolksheep.org/home/news/
Lleyn Sheep	2.5	3-3.5kg	31-33 or can be up to 40	very coarse wool.	waste resource due to the value of the wool and other factors as mentioned in the beginning.	Meat, knitting, socks though would need to be blended with other wool to soften. Wet felting also.	https://www.lleynsheep.com/
Zwartbles	3.0	3-4kg, though can be more.	27-31	medium to coarse wool.	waste resource due to the value of the wool and other factors as mentioned in the beginning.	outerwear, felting, good crimp, also suited for home interiors. Can be blended to give colour.	https://zwartblesireland.com/
Herdwick	1.5	2-3kg	35-40	coarse fleece	waste resource due to the value of the wool and other factors as mentioned in the beginning.	conservation grazing	https://inrbs.ie/herdwick/
North Ronaldsay	1	1-2kg	23-28	double coat that includes a coarser outer layer and a softer, shorter undercoat	logistics, shipping, quality of wool have an impact	having two coats you can actually spin these two coats separately. Thus enabling more application use. Meat	https://inrbs.ie/north-ronaldsay/

