

Thursday, August 28, 2008

Hi everyone it's Marshall Ball here again reporting on our 4-H meeting.

On August 27th we went to the Belle Vallee Wools operation. It is so cool, I recommend to anyone that has never see the Belle Valle Wools place go it is sure interesting.

David Wight started the meeting by explaining how to grade wool, then he decided to take us on a tour of the mill so then we could see what he was talking about. We went to a room where there was lots of bags of wool, Dave had sheared some of his sheep that day so we could see some wool without him opening any bags. He grabbed a piece of wool and pulled it a part and showed us the waves in the wool he said that it would be graded as fine wool, if there is more waves in the wool it would be a finer grade. The waves looked just like if a girl were to crimp her hair.

Then we went into another room where they wash the wool. The wool that was in the wash tanks he said was washed 3 times. Then they take the wool and put it into the dryer, the wool is dried at a temperture of over 100 degrees. Then from the dryer to a machine called the picker where the wool is cleaned more if there was any hay or straw usually it comes out. From the picker to the roller, the machine is long and has lots of rollers when the wool comes out at the end it looks like stands of wool ready for knitting,,,, but not yet because it is not strong enough. the next machine the wool is on large spools at the top of the machine , and the spools of wool all lay on down in a row. it is about 12 feet long or better that machine. The wool then is threaded down where it is spun onto other spools that are up right. When the spools are full Dave said now these spools have what you call 1 ply wool so then the spools are then taken to another machine where you use 2 spools of wool are thread threw and are spun together to make 2 ply wool, ready for knitting.

We seen wool that was all different colours. They dye the wool there also. Dave showed us where the weave the wool to make blankets and tartans. Tartans are blankets also they all have many square in the blanket like a checkered shirt but bigger squares, he said he was working on a tartan called the Mc Farlen. He had just finished a tartan called the Smith Tartan that is very rare. People that order the tartans and want certain colours and designs just take pictures of what they want, send it to him and he will try to make what they want.

Dave's wife Connie was also there and she was very helpful explain stuff to.

Dave told us that he got into the bussiness of making wool when they had about 400 ewe's and there was no place close in the north to send the wool to. He bought his equipement fixed it up and got things running. The Belle Vallee Wools operation is the only one operating in the north. Dave asked us if we knew what 2 qualities there is in the wool. One is that is wool getts wet it stills insolates well ,keeps you warm.... and that wool does not burn that is why there is wool in rugs.

We were able to see some of what they make, they had some nice pull over sweaters and mitten sets, hats and mitts they had some really nice jackets that zipper up they were cherkered red and black and the make vest I know my Dad would really like one of those jackets and vest. We thanked Dave and Connie for showing us the wool mill and that ended our meeting.

There are no more meetings with the Sheep Showers only our meeting at the fair to show our sheep. I will try to report about the fairs and I still have the goat club to report on. Thankyou to all my readers from Marshall Ball.