

When Assessing A Fleece You Might Consider These Steps

- 1.** Determine (if you have a plan) what your project will be. There is a use for every type of fleece, but not all fleeces are good for every project. Most people buy a fleece because they like its feel (hand), color or type.
- 2.** Lift the bag and see if it feels like it has enough weight to potentially be used in your project. If you know how, check the weight and calculate how much you will need to complete your project. Suri fleeces are much denser (heavier) than other fleeces.
- 3.** Open the bag and carefully spread the top out so you can easily view and work with the fleece.
- 4.** What is your initial impression? Do you notice any odor? Does it seem dirty? Is it dull (chalky) or lustrous? Do you like the color and or look of the fleece?
- 5.** Gently look through the fleece.
 - Do you see a minimal or large amount of debris?
 - Is it free from lice or parasites?
 - Does the fleece seem to be well skirted? (absent of large debris, all things removed that you wouldn't want to process etc.)
 - Minimal second cuts?
 - Most of the fleece is within 3 inches of length?
 - Is the fleece free from coting or webbing?
 - Does the fleece feel nice to the hand? If it feels cool, it may be suri (a good suri fleece is cool to the touch, but not all suri fleeces are good so it may not be cool).
 - Is the fleece dense? Does it bounce back when you gently flatten it with your hand? This is for double with crimp or single with crimp fleeces only.
 - Gently take a lock or piece and pull it tight between your fingers, does it reflect light (shiny) or show luster? This is a luster test.
 - Hold the lock up to your ear and gently pull both ends. Do you hear crackling or does it break in half? This is a strength test.
 - Lean down and smell the fleece. Is it free of mildew or other unpleasant smells? It should not smell heavily of grooming products.
- 6.** After this assessment, is this a fleece you can see yourself purchasing or using?
- 7.** Has this fleece won any awards? Will the owner let you have the ribbons and or a picture of the animal to include with your finished project?

*Note: You may want to determine your mill capabilities prior to buying a fleece.