

Sporting the finest in winter wear, these sheep at Environmental Diagnostics in Paschall were herded together last week to wait their turn under the professional clippers of the Alfred Armstrong family of Doe Hill, Va.



There's just no dignified way to shear a sheep, but the animals offer little resistance as the shearer moves them hind and fore to obtain the closest shave possible.



"Not too close around the neck" could well have been the instructions this sheep would have given could he have communicated with his shearer.

## Shearing 550 Sheep

Grazing serenely in the rolling green pastures of Environmental Diagnostics in Paschall on the Warren County-Virginia line are 550 sheep who have no trouble discerning the arrival of spring.

The coats that have kept them warm through the winter months become a burden long about the end of March and by April the arrival of Alfred Armstrong and his sons from Doe Hill, Va. is greeted with enthusiasm—well, as much enthusiasm as a sheep can muster.

Alfred Armstrong has been in the sheep-shearing business for 35 years. Until several years ago, when he thought he would settle comfortably into retirement, Armstrong kept a ledger on the number of sheep whose coats had fallen to his clippers. The number was 160,000. Armstrong didn't retire and the number continues to grow.

The Armstrongs, who spend about two months a year shearing sheep, work between eight and nine hours a day for two or three days to complete the shearing process at Environmental Diagnostics, a division of Burlington's Carolina Biological Supply.

In addition to shearing, the sheep are also given three shots—one to prevent foot disease and two to prevent miscarriages among the ewes.

For the shearing process, three men man the clippers, one packs the wool, three assist the packer, and five bring the sheep to the shearers and take the newly shorn animals away.

The sheep are identified by numbered ear tags and charts are kept for each animal.

The wool, which this year filled 22 150-pound bags, is taken to market in Kenbridge, a southeast Virginia town in Lunenburg County.

And for the record, the Environmental Diagnostics animal family is not without its one black sheep, whose wool never makes it to market. Wool from the black sheep cannot be dyed and is virtually worthless to anyone except the black sheep who wears it.



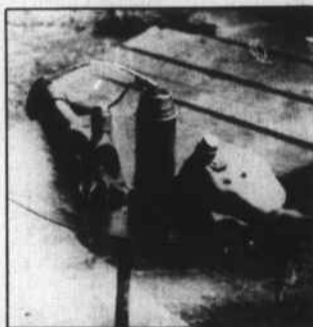
The wool is packed in bags that hold between 150 and 160 pounds, the weight of the wool of about 20 sheep. Young Mark Perkinson, son of Luther Perkinson, farm manager of Environmental Diagnostics, annually has the responsibility of dropping himself into the bags on top of the wool and, simply put, jumping up and down to ensure that the wool is tightly packed.



At last, it's almost over. The shearing process produces between seven and eight pounds of wool per sheep. Were the sheep not sheared, they would naturally shed some of their wool, but would enjoy nothing near the comfort brought by the annual shearing.

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Tools of the sheep-shearing trade are given a momentary respite.

## Patterns Of Memory Prove Interesting

By ALEXA WILLIAMS  
"How could I forget?" you ask, after a memory lapse left your rent check unmailed, or your purchased groceries still at the store, or your coffee pot bubbling away in an empty house?

But Dr. Thomas M. Hess, associate professor of psychology at North Carolina State University, asks a different question: "How do you remember?"

If you think your memory is less sharp than your daughter's or your grandson's—or worse, if they think so—Hess says you may be just practicing a more memorable way to remember.

Hess is interested in patterns of memory. With the aid of a two-year, \$100,000 grant from the National Institute on Aging, he is conducting behavioral studies to find out how people use their knowledge to remember things.

Hess tested young adults (18 to 30 years) and older adults (65 to

80 years) to compare memory patterns of the two age groups. NCSU students and alumni were subjects in the laboratory experiments.

Scripts about everyday occurrences, such as going to a restaurant, are read sentence by sentence on a computer screen by participants in the project. Both age groups read faster the sentences about routine aspects—looking at the menu, ordering the dinner, paying the bill.

Both groups remembered these routine details less well than an unusual but related occurrence, such as the script character's walking up to pay the bill and finding he'd left his wallet at home.

The age groups differed in their memory of unrelated details that were not essential to the script—such as the character's putting a pen in his pocket. Young par-

ticipants had better recall of this type of detail, showing, Hess said, more use of memorizing by rote.

Older adults were less successful in recalling the odd, unrelated detail. Hess attributes this to older adults depending more on their experience to remember and tending to screen out unnecessary things.

Hess said that he used scripts of routines familiar to both age groups to get past generational differences. He has made about 15 studies over six years, with 40 to 120 participants in each study.

Hess said he is not sure how valid his laboratory results will be in predicting memory in the real world, and he wants to make field tests of natural memory. Recall of things that are interacted with may be more spontaneous, he said.

Hess believes older adults use more memory props, such as notes to themselves. "But that's

adaptive," Hess said. "Older adults may notice lapses of memory more than younger people and attribute these lapses to aging."

Although Hess has not finished his research on memory patterns, he sees no behavioral reason healthy older adults can't go on remembering.

Kevin King Harris has been selected as a member of the Outstanding College Students of America.

Harris, a senior at East Carolina University in Greenville, was chosen for outstanding merit and accomplishment as a college student.

The honoree is the son of Bernard and Helen Harris of Norlina. He is the grandson of Mrs. Helen Hicks, also of Norlina.



The wool goes to market in Virginia and the sheep goes back to the pasture—until next year.