

# The Rise in a Shetland Fleece Explained

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When the sheep goes through a period of hardship in the winter they get a natural "break" in the fleece which is when they are less able to put resources into fibre growth and it results in a section where the fibre diameter is thinner than the rest. When this section grows above skin level is also lifts the old lanolin and dirt away from the skin. This is the rise. This line can be clearly seen when you part the fleece as a yellowish line with the break below it.

Tups get their rise earlier than ewes because they work hard in November December, whereas ewes see their hardest period in Feb March when they are heavily in lamb but grazing is sparse.

If you shear under the rise, along the break, it is like a hot knife through butter on the fine fleece of a Shetland. If you shear too early and are trying to shear through the rise then it's like shearing through molasses! The sheep end up getting nicked and it's not pleasant for anyone involved. You need to shear once the rise is up. If you shear before the rise is up then it may be a little easier but you end up with a matted mess when the rise does come and you'll possibly need to shear again to tidy them up.

