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### Shearing shed design

W L. McGarry  
*Department of Agriculture*

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# SHEARING SHED DESIGN

By W. L. McGARRY, Sheep and Wool Adviser.

**A**S the returns from sales of wool represent a large proportion of many farmers' incomes at the present time, it is essential that the fullest consideration should be given to any factors affecting the lifting and preparation of the clip for market. Foremost among these is the provision of adequately-designed sheds with plenty of light and sufficient space for shearing and classing and for the wool tables, bins, press and other equipment.

A roomy, well-designed shed is essential if the shearing operations are to be carried out efficiently and expeditiously, and it is disconcerting to record that very few properties in the agricultural areas, possess sheds that meet these requirements.

On the majority of farms sheds are used for shearing and for the storage of grain and fertilisers. It will be found that, in most cases, some re-arrangement of the shearing board, bins, wool tables, etc., will minimise faulty work, lessen confusion and delay at shearing time, and enable the best use to be made of the available space and light.

## SHEARING SHED DESIGN

There are many plans and designs of shearing sheds available to choose from and in the erection of shearing sheds the following points are well worth remembering:—

1. Shed space must be laid out economically to ensure the most efficient handling of sheep and wool, and in planning the wool room it is necessary to aim at a quick, clean, handling of the fleece with the wool travelling in the one direction towards the press.

2. It is a definite advantage to build the shed off the ground. Advantages with these types of sheds are—

- (i) If the shed floor and adjoining ramp are built to the level of the floor of a motor truck, the labour involved in handling, storing, and loading of super,

seed-wheat, wool, etc., is considerably reduced. Laborious lifting is avoided in this manner, and this applies particularly to periods during labour shortage and where large areas are to be topdressed or seeded quickly.

- (ii) The space underneath can be used to house woolly sheep overnight and in the event of rain.
- (iii) A shed built off the ground allows easy cleaning of the space under the sheep pens.

## PLAN OF SHEARING SHED

1. A plan of a 4-stand fixed overhead gear, elevated shearing shed which is also very suitable for storage purposes is shown in Figs. 1 and 2. **This type of shed is definitely preferable to the type where the shearing board is on one side of the shed because it ensures more economical, efficient and easier handling of sheep and wool. This type of shed is recommended for any number up to eight of fixed overhead stands and also two-stand portable plants. The overall measurements, including the catching pens, can be reduced, increased, or modified, according to the number of stands, sheep space required, etc. Do not be too economical with space when erecting a shearing/storage shed. The space will be required eventually.**

2. In this type of shed the sheep do not have to be carried across the shearing board and the shearer does not have



# GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF 4-STAND OVERHEAD, ELEVATED SAWTOOTH ROOFED SHEARING SHED

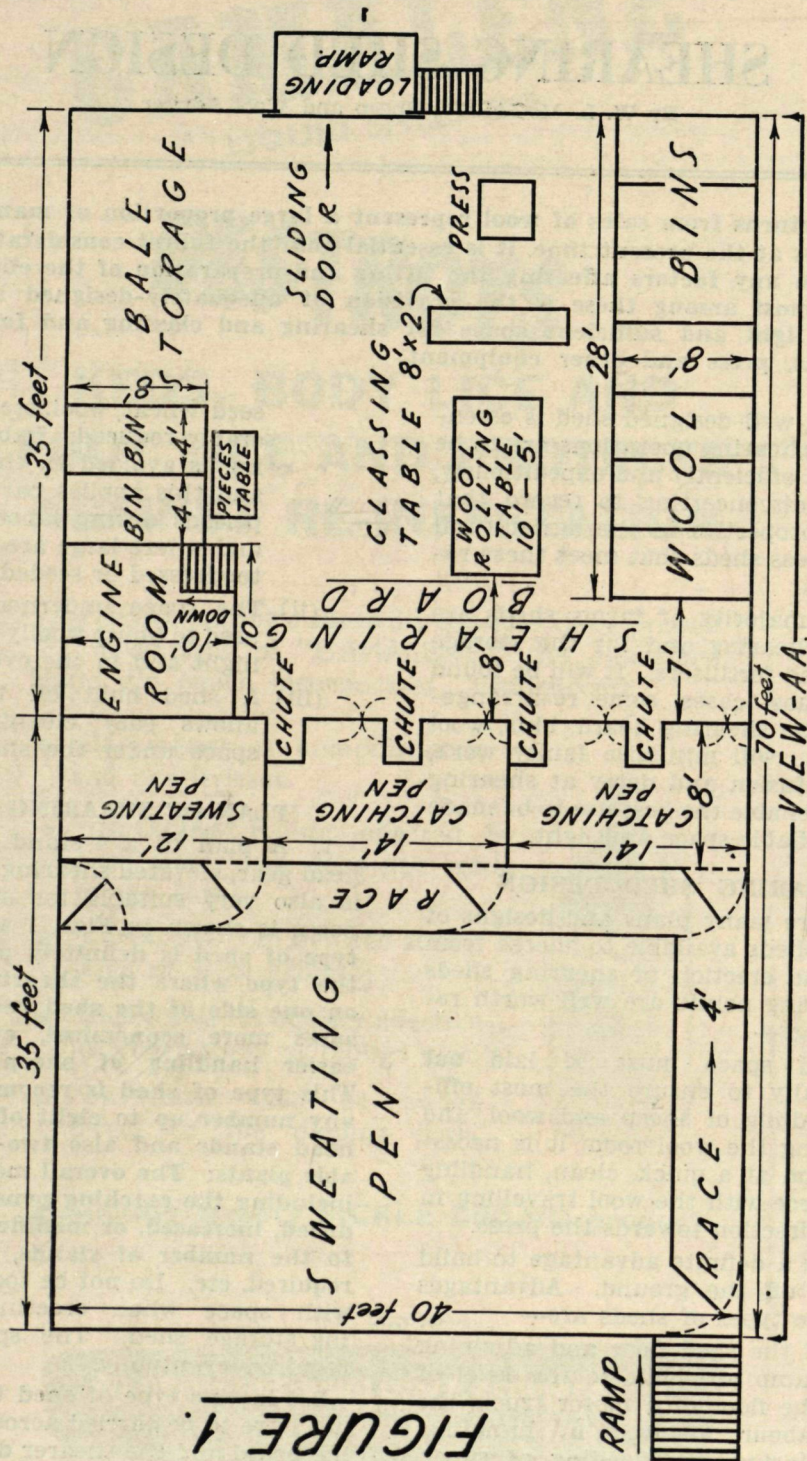
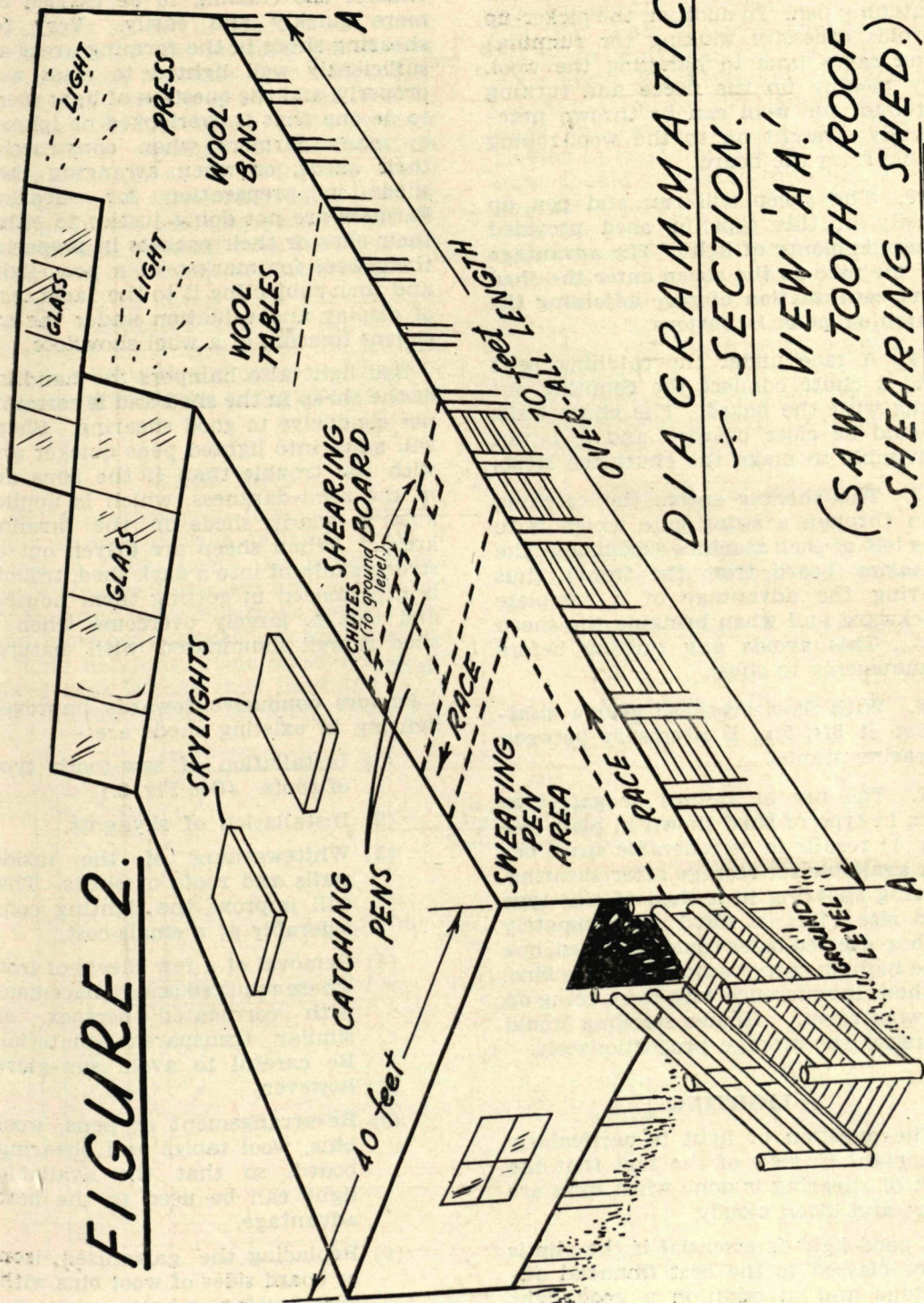


FIGURE 1.

**SPECIFICATIONS.**—Capacity, 300 sheep allowing 4½ sq. ft. per sheep. Plan may be modified suitable for greater or lesser number of stands or for 2-stand portable plants. Floor to be built truck-height from ground. Bins to be of the movable type or hinged type swinging back against wall when not in use.



FIGURE 2.



DIAGRAMMATIC

SECTION.

VIEW 'A-A'

(SAW TOOTH ROOF  
SHEARING SHED.)



to step over the fleece to reach the catching pen. In addition the picker-up avoids excessive walking (or running) and saves time in handling the wool. By picking up the fleece and turning around, the wool can be thrown practically straight on to the wool-rolling table from the board.

3. The sheep will run and pen up easily in this type of shed provided there is plenty of light. **The advantage of the race as the sheep enter the shed and continuation of race adjoining the catching pens is obvious.**

4. A race under the catching pens and a chute connect the counting out pens with the board. The chute walls should be close boarded and it is not advisable to make the chute too steep.

5. The shearer enters the catching pen through a swing gate which is to the left of each machine (looking at the shearing board from the front), thus having the advantage of a complete backward pull when bringing the sheep out. This avoids any turning before commencing to shear.

6. With fixed overhead gear a *minimum* of 5ft. 2in. is necessary between shearing stands.

7. The use of frames or gate-type bins in type of shed shown in plan (see Fig. 1) results in considerable space being available for storage after shearing. During shearing in a shed of this type and size (70ft. x 40ft.) approximately 22 box-pressed bales could be stored, one bale high, in corner adjoining piece bins, without interference with work going on in wool room. Higher stacking would increase the storage proportionately.

## LIGHTING

The question of light is particularly important in view of the fact that the bulk of shearing is done when days are short and often cloudy.

A good light is **essential** if the clip is to be classed to the best financial advantage and in addition a good light

enables the classing to be carried out more quickly and easily. Very few shearing sheds in the farming areas are sufficiently well lighted to class wool properly, and the question of light seems to be one that is overlooked or ignored by many farmers when constructing their sheds, or when arranging their sheds in preparation for shearing. Farmers are not doing justice to either their clips or their pockets in preparing their wool for market in a poor light, and then subjecting it to the "acid test" of display and valuation under the excellent lighting of a wool showfloor.

Bad light also hampers the handling of the sheep in the shed and is certainly not conducive to good shearing. Sheep will move into lighted pens quicker and with less trouble than if the pens are in the semi-darkness, which is applicable to many sheds in the farming areas. When sheep are driven out of strong sunlight into a dark shed, trouble is experienced in getting them housed, and this is largely overcome when a shed is well illuminated with natural light.

Factors conducive towards improved lighting in existing sheds are:—

- (1) Installation of saw-tooth type of roofs. (See Fig. 2.)
- (2) Installation of skylights.
- (3) Whitewashing of the inside walls and roofs of sheds. This will improve the lighting considerably at a small cost.
- (4) Removal of a few sheets of iron where required and replacement with corrugated perspex, or similar transparent material. Be careful to avoid sun-glare however.
- (5) Re-arrangement of pens, wool bins, wool tables and shearing board, so that the available light can be used to the best advantage.
- (6) Replacing the galvanised iron or board sides of wool bins with wire netting or battens.



## CATCHING PENS

Penning up can be made much easier if the side of the catching pen facing the shearing board is close boarded or covered to a height of about six feet. In this way the movement of the shearers and others working on the board is obscured and, as a result, the sheep will run much easier when being penned. **Except in the catching pens do not instal battens parallel with the direction in which the sheep are travelling.**

Removal of sheep from the catching pen is facilitated and leg injuries to sheep are minimised when the battens run parallel with the direction in which the sheep are being removed for shearing.

## WOOL BINS

It is necessary to have at least six bins in the average farmer's flock of 1,000 to 1,500 sheep. In larger flocks more bins are necessary and in the rush of shearing more bins mean better classing, more convenience, less work and less double handling. One disadvantage of *fixed* bins is that they limit the space for storage after shearing. Another

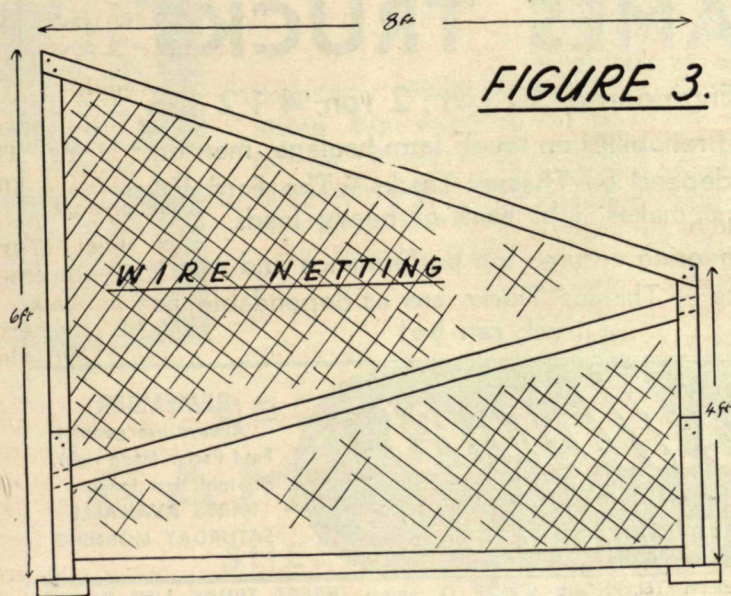
drawback is that these bins are generally made the same size, with the result that there is insufficient room for the main lines and too much for the other lines. Fixed bins are usually close boarded or made with galvanised iron sides and, as a result, are generally lacking in good illumination. Plenty of light should penetrate each bin to enable the classer to see that the various lines are kept uniform and to allow of the comparison of neighbouring lines of wool. It is an advantage to avoid placing wool bins against a wall if possible. If they are arranged so that the presser can obtain the wool from the back of the bin, this will give the presser, classer and other shed workers full freedom of movement without delaying or interfering with their work.

## PORTABLE WOOL BINS

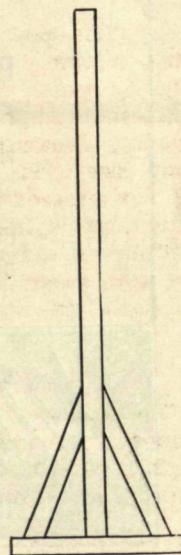
(Fig. 3)

The portable or frame type of wool bin is recommended and its advantages are:—

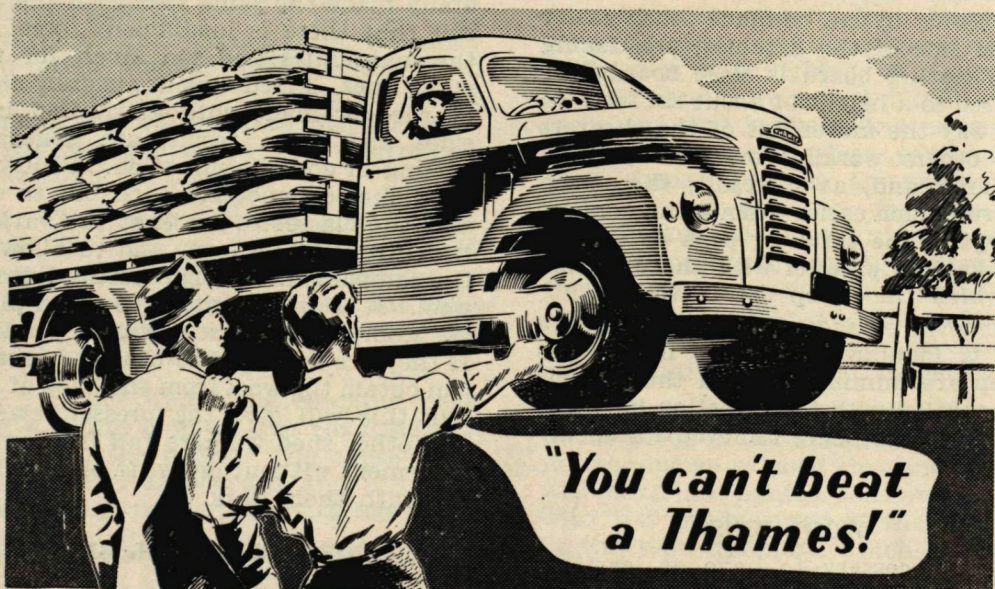
- (1) After shearing these can be moved and this allows the use of the maximum storage space for super, grain, etc.



Movable frame used for forming wool bins







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Portable bins can be made of light timber (8ft. long and 6ft. high) in the form of frames, with the uprights fitting into "feet".

Front uprights—2in. x 2in. x 4ft.  
Rear uprights—2in. x 2in. x 6ft.  
Bottom cross pieces—2in. x 1½in. x 8ft.  
Top cross pieces—2in. x 1½in. x 8ft. 6in.  
Foot pieces—3in. x 2in. x 18in.  
It is necessary to cover the frames with wire netting and this should be stretched tightly across the frame.

### GATE-TYPE BINS

Bins made of light timber and affixed to the walls by hinges, gate fashion, are also very suitable. These can be swung back flush against the walls and out of the way after shearing and the whole bin space utilised for storage, etc.



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