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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1973/12/1

LauchieC.Gillis, Skinning a Lamb First you get a knife of proper steel. An expensive knife. You don't always get a good knife when you pay a lot for it. You might be fortunate by getting a knife from 5 to 8 dollars. Sometimes you'll lose a knife and perhaps you'll find it and it'll be better. It gets better with age, even after it rusts up a little bit. But the first thing after you get your knife you have to thin it out on a grindstone that's running in water. Your steel'll never get hot, running in that. When your steel gets hot on an emery wheel, it's just as well to get a dollar knife. Never, never touch an emery wheel. You'll ruin your steel. Once it heats you don't have the proper temper. Thin that knife out, very thin. Then, you use a steel • a sharpening steel, what they use in butcher shops. You've got to get a good one of those too. You'd probably pay 14 or 15 dollars. For meat the knife has to be razor sharp. You don't want the blade to the steel at too much of an angle. The big difference is that your knife doesn't last long, maybe 2 hours work. If you don't sharpen it too coarse, at too much of an angle, you could use that knife for 3 or 4 days. But learning how to sharpen comes with practise. You can feel it biting, if you've got the right blade and the proper steel. Just a few strokes. (The first step in slaughtering is to knock the animal out. You can use the back of an axe, striking a solid blow to the top of the head. Lauchie said nothing is as nicely balanced for that work as a baseball bat. In bleeding the animal, he did not cut in from the front of the throat; rather, he drove his knife in one side and out the other,' straight through. He said this is a good habit to get into for when you are saving blood; by not cutting the windpipe you avoid getting material from the throat into the blood. The blade goes through, then back, cutting the main vessels in the neck. Then you open it out, tip the head back and-break the neck. Because you have broken the neck now, you will later be able to remove the head with a knife and avoid the use of a saw. Lauchie said:) The next step is Marking. You put the animal up on a crotch we call it, it's just a sort of saxirhorse affair • we lay them on their back there. That'll be 18 to 20 inches from the floor. People can start at the front or the back. You can start either side. I start here, (1) You just slice off a narrow bit of skin along the foreleg and throw that skin away. Then you cut from the foreleg to the throat. (2) Then (3) you take a slice off the other leg, and go from there to the throat. (4) You grab the wool right at the breast (5) and pull back in line with the two legs. This is done by hand • it's not skinned. If it should stick you might have to touch it up a little bit with the knife but if it's marked right it should come right back. You pull it back till about the edge of the ribcage • this leaves the chest bare. Then you go to the back and start the same way. You just clean a little bit off those legs (6,9), which makes it easier to get around the bone. You lose a little bit but the pelt is worthless there. (You cut along 7, the blade edge-up, cutting away from you with short strokes. You cut toward the tail and then half-way around the anus, as shown in the drawing.) You go under the skin and over the tail and you strip it back as far along the tail as you can. (8) Which gives you a handful to catch and you pull that back. (10) You pull that back as far as you come with a pull. Then you do the other side (11). You came



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