

2026 Fiber Report

The 2026 Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival, held May 16–17 at Masterson Station Park in Lexington, Kentucky, welcomed more than 4,500 visitors from across Kentucky and surrounding states. As the Commonwealth's premier celebration of sheep, wool, and fiber arts, the festival continues to connect consumers with Kentucky agriculture while showcasing the many products and opportunities created by our state's sheep industry. This number was just shy of our record breaking year last year- but attendance has doubled in the last 5 years and we are very excited by the growth and community engagement.

A highlight of the festival is the Kentucky Fleece Show and Sale, where visitors can view and purchase high-quality fleeces. Every fleece sold provides direct income to local producers while educating consumers about the value of Kentucky-grown wool and encouraging the use of locally sourced fiber. The expanded display and sales area continues to increase visibility for participating farms and creates meaningful connections between producers, fiber artists, and consumers. This was carefully managed by our own board member Cheryl Kersey- her dedication to this competition and sale are amazing and have grown the sale greatly. We couldn't do this without her support- thank you Sheri!

The Shearing Demonstration remains one of the festival's most popular educational attractions. Throughout the weekend, attendees watch animals being shorn and learn about fiber production, animal husbandry, and the journey from raw fleece to finished textile products. These live demonstrations provide an engaging, hands-on educational experience for visitors of all ages.

The festival also serves as a marketplace for Kentucky farms, fiber artists, and agricultural small businesses, bringing together producers, artisans, educators, and consumers in one location. Increased attendance continues to generate strong sales for vendors while introducing thousands of visitors to Kentucky-grown wool, yarn, meat, sheepskins, and handcrafted products.

The committee has already begun meeting for the upcoming 2027 Festival, and applications to vend and to teach are open now on our website:
www.kentuckysheepandfiber.com.

For many visitors, the Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival serves as the gateway to discovering Kentucky's diverse and growing fiber community. The festival introduces attendees to locally grown wool, natural fibers, livestock producers, artisans, yarn businesses, and other members of the state's fiber economy. The connections and excitement generated during the festival continue throughout the summer through the

5th Annual Kentucky Fiber Trail Bluegrass Yarn & Fiber Crawl, held July 24–August 2, 2026.

The Bluegrass Yarn & Fiber Crawl is designed to encourage visitors to take their interest in Kentucky fiber beyond the festival grounds and explore the businesses, farms, and communities that make up the Commonwealth's fiber industry. During the 10-day event, fiber enthusiasts are encouraged to travel throughout Kentucky while visiting participating yarn shops, fiber farms, mills, fiber artists, and other fiber-related businesses.

The Crawl provides an important opportunity to showcase the breadth of Kentucky's fiber economy while connecting consumers directly with the people who raise animals, produce fiber, process raw materials, create yarn and finished products, and operate fiber-related businesses. These personal connections help consumers better understand the journey from farm to fiber and the value of purchasing Kentucky-produced and Kentucky-connected products.

The Crawl also strengthens relationships within Kentucky's fiber community. Bringing together farmers, producers, shop owners, artisans, educators, and consumers creates opportunities for collaboration, networking, education, and new business relationships. These connections are particularly important as Kentucky continues to build awareness of the economic and agricultural potential of sheep, wool, alpaca, and other natural fibers.

The Bluegrass Yarn & Fiber Crawl demonstrates how a statewide fiber event can extend well beyond a single festival or location. By encouraging visitors to follow the fiber trail across Kentucky, the event helps tell the larger story of the Commonwealth's fiber industry—from the farm and the animal that produces the fiber, through processing and manufacturing, to the yarn shop, artisan, and ultimately the consumer.

Together, the Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival and the Kentucky Fiber Trail Bluegrass Yarn & Fiber Crawl create a year-round pathway for education, tourism, commerce, and community engagement. These events promote Kentucky agriculture, strengthen connections between consumers and agricultural producers, encourage travel to rural communities, and help build continued support for Kentucky's vibrant and evolving sheep and fiber industry.

More information about the Kentucky Fiber Trail, participating businesses, and upcoming events can be found at www.kentuckyfibertrail.com.