

ANIMAL HIDE HANDLING GUIDELINES

Not all skins are suitable for tanning. skins need to be well butchered and have wool suitable for making a nice finished product. Matted / felted wools are not suitable in a quality finished product. Marker paint is difficult to wash out resulting in extra process for the tannery. Inform the butcher that the skins are intended to be tanned. skins that have cuts, holes or off shape often become more damaged throughout the tanning process. The sooner that skins can be brought to the tannery is best. Animals and insects can and will damage skins in storage so proper care should be taken to protect and keep them out of reach.

Skin Preparation	Skins need to be salted or frozen immediately after butchering (within a couple hours). Salting is preferred by the tannery and reduces processing times for a finished product. Freezing is acceptable, however the skin will still need to be salt cured after thawing. Do not rinse or wash off the skin. All washing will be done during the tanning process.
Freezing:	Do not rinse or wash off the skin. All washing will be done during the tanning process. Roll the hide with skin side out and wool side in. This prevents the skin sides from freezing together and allows a faster even thawing that helps prevent spoilage on the edges or areas that thaw first.
Salting:	<p>Salt tightens the skin and reduces bacterial growth while dehydrating and keeping the wool from falling out. The salt should be a NON IODIZED fine white salt such as fine feed salt (NON MINERALIZED). It takes approximately 5 – 6 lbs. per skin. Rock salt is not acceptable. Do not rinse or wash off the skin. All washing will be done during the tanning process. Skins should be kept indoors out of the rain and sun.</p> <p>Trim any excess skin that will not be a part of the finished product (example- long legs, long tails, head etc.)</p> <p>All excess fat needs to be cut off the skin as the salt cannot penetrate fat or meat greater than ¼"</p> <p>Spread salt evenly over the entire skin right to all the edges. Any part of the skin that is not salted will result in the wool falling out.</p>

Additional Instructions and considerations

Check skins daily. If salt appears to be dissolving and saturated as it draws the moisture out of the skin, wipe off the saturated salt and reapply a fresh salt layer. There should always be a thin layer of dry salt on the skin. Skins can be sent to the tannery after a minimum of 3 days salted.

Skins that are fully salt cured and dehydrated are also stable for long term storage until ready for tanning. After about 10 days the salt should have most of the moisture out of the skin leaving it dehydrated ready to be stored long term or sent to the tannery. Dry skins will also reduce the cost of freight when shipping.

During the warmer months skins will spoil sooner and need more attention. It is necessary to get the skin extra dry if you require long term storage. After a 10 day salt curing period, skins can be dried outside in the sun. They only need to be out for one day. Pick a day that is sunny with no chance of rain. Spread skin on a dry surface, 4-5 hrs on the skin side and 4-5 hrs on the wool side. By the end of the day the skin should be put inside and into storage. Never leave skins outside overnight.

All questions can be sent to Cheryl Reynen of Wildfibre Farm & Tannery

Email: wildfibrefarm@gmail.com | Website: www.wildfibrefarm.com



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