

## **A Freak Merino Fleece.**

---

By V. BOSMAN, M.Sc., Sheep and Wool Research Officer,  
Onderstepoort.

---

A FREAK fleece of a merino ewe from the flocks of the Grootfontein School of Agriculture\* is here described. The sheep was peculiar in that it had a distinctive band, about three inches wide, of coarse long wool growing transversely across the back, stretching over the sides towards the belly region. (Fig. 1.) A cross-section through the freak region (Fig. 2), showed that the wool projected in length beyond the normal fleece. In addition, the freak wool was considerably coarser than the normal fleece and had large definite crimps. In fineness, it measured  $20.2\mu$  or a 64's quality number. The normal wool of the animal anteriorly and posteriorly to the freak wool measured  $17.7\mu$  or an 80's quality number. The average straight length of the fibres in the freak region was 19.6 cms. while the adjacent normal wool was 15.4 cms. As regards the number of follicles growing per unit area of skin, the freak region produced 1,600 per square cm. while the normal growth on adjacent regions was 4,400 per square cm. anterior to the freak region, and 4,100 per square cm. posterior to this. When wool production, per unit area of skin was compared, the freak region produced .50 grams of clean dry wool per 4 square cm. of skin, while the adjoining regions gave anteriorly .79 grams and posteriorly .75 grams of clean dry wool per 4 sq. cm. of skin.

---

\* The author is much indebted to Mr. G. S. Maré, Principal Sheep and Angora Officer of the Union, for the material.

A FREAK MERINO FLEECE.



Figure 1.—The Merino Sheep with the freak region (indicated by the arrow) growing as a distinctive band across the back and sides of the animal.



Figure 2.—A cross-section through the freak region, showing distinctive differences between the freak wool and the normal wool.