



British Wool LEARNING

BRITISH SHEEP BREEDS AND THEIR WOOL Mountain Type

Swaledale



ORIGINS

The borders of North Yorkshire and Westmorland. The Breeders' Association began in 1919.

CHARACTERISTICS

A bold and hardy sheep, very suited to an exposed hill environment and, popular as a breeding ewe, very often crossed with a Bluefaced Leicester to produce the North of England Mule. A dark upper head round, low-set horns and distinctive grey muzzle, grey, or mottled, legs. Long, thick and woolly tail and rugged, resilient wool that is mostly white, although mixed with black on the top of the head.

LOCATION

The hills and moorlands of northern England.

MAIN USES

Carpets.

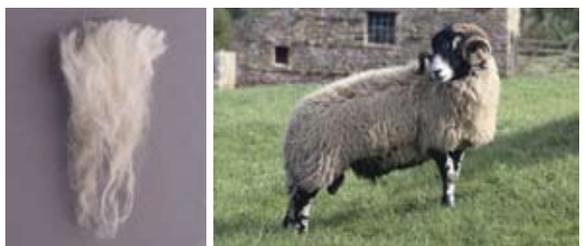
Fleece Weight:
1.5 - 2.5 kg

Staple Length:
10 - 20 cm

Micron Range:
35+



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British Wool LEARNING

BRITISH SHEEP BREEDS AND THEIR WOOL Hill Type

Cheviot



ORIGINS

The Cheviot Sheep Society was founded in 1890 but it is reported there have been small, hardy white sheep running in the Cheviot Hills in the Scottish Borders since records began.

CHARACTERISTICS

A white-faced hill sheep, with a distinctive 'ruff' behind the ears and crisp, white, lustrous wool. The rams can have horns.

LOCATION

Cheviot Hills, Southern Scotland, Northumberland, Northern England and South Wales.

MAIN USES

Carpets, tweed cloth, knitwear, blankets.

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Fleece Weight:
2 - 3 kg

Staple Length:
8 - 10 cm

Micron Range:
30 - 33





British Wool LEARNING

BRITISH SHEEP BREEDS AND THEIR WOOL Cross Type

Mule



ORIGINS

Developed over the last 30 years by crossing a Bluefaced Leicester ram with a hardy hill breed, either a Swaledale (North Country Mule), a Blackface (Scotch Mule) or a Welsh Mountain, Welsh Hill Speckled Face or Beulah (Welsh Mule).

CHARACTERISTICS

Picking up traits of both the sire and the ewe, the North Country Mule is a hardy, thrifty and prolific sheep. Hornless, with a mottled brown and white face and ears, and a demi-lustrous fleece with a curled appearance.

LOCATION

Popular throughout the UK.

MAIN USES

Generally in carpets.

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Fleece Weight:

2.5 - 4 kg

Staple Length:

10 - 22 cm

Micron Range:

29 - 33





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BRITISH SHEEP BREEDS AND THEIR WOOL Medium Type

Romney



ORIGINS

Takes its name from the Romney Marsh area of South East England, where this breed has been kept since the 13th century.

CHARACTERISTICS

A hardy, large-framed lowland sheep, well adapted to tight grazing and bleak conditions. It has a broad white face and a woolly 'top knot' and heavy white fleece which contains some lustre.

LOCATION

Mostly in South East England.

MAIN USES

Versatile because of its characteristics and used in knitwear, blankets and carpets, depending on its fineness.

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Fleece Weight:
3 - 5 kg

Staple Length:
10 - 17 cm

Micron Range:
31.5 - 34





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BRITISH SHEEP BREEDS AND THEIR WOOL Fine Type

Suffolk



ORIGINS

Evolved from crossing a Southdown ram with a Norfolk Horn ewe. First recognised as a pure breed in 1810, the Suffolk Sheep Society was formed in 1886. A popular commercial terminal breeding sire.

CHARACTERISTICS

Without horns, the Suffolk has a long body with a black head and legs. White densely grown, fleece with a short staple.

LOCATION

Throughout the UK.

MAIN USES

Usually in blends for knitwear and cloth, it is also used in the Japanese bedding market for futons.

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Fleece Weight:

2.5 - 3 kg

Staple Length:

5 - 10 cm

Micron Range:

31 - 34





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BRITISH SHEEP BREEDS AND THEIR WOOL Lustre Type

Wensleydale



ORIGINS

Wensleydale, North Yorkshire in the 19th Century, to provide rams for crossing onto local hill breeds. The breed can be traced to an outstanding ram, 'Bluecap' born in 1839, a large animal with dark skin and excellent wool. Breeders' Association was started in 1890.

CHARACTERISTICS

Large, hardy longwool sheep with distinctive blue head and ears. Still valued as a crossing sire and also for its long, lustrous and curly fleece.

LOCATION

Not numerous but mainly in Northern England.

MAIN USES

Hand knitting yarn.

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Fleece Weight:

3 - 6 kg

Staple Length:

15 - 30 cm

Micron Range:

32 - 34





British Wool LEARNING

BRITISH SHEEP BREEDS AND THEIR WOOL Naturally Coloured Type

Jacob



ORIGINS

Closely related to a Middle Eastern breed of Biblical times and introduced to Britain in the 18th century as a fashionable and attractive parkland breed. Breed Society established in 1969.

CHARACTERISTICS

An easily managed, distinguished sheep, either two or four horned in both sexes, with a naturally coloured fleece ranging from cream and brown through to almost black.

LOCATION

Throughout the UK.

MAIN USES

Used undyed it has niche market appeal and in a wide range of textiles, including carpets, and clothing. It is also popular with hand spinners.

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Fleece Weight:
2 - 2.5 kg

Staple Length:
8 - 15 cm

Micron Range:
32 - 34

