



Livestock Production

Animal Anatomy, Physiology and

Animal Health

Handout 1B

Merino Sheep: Characteristics,

Origin, Uses and Breed

Information

October 4, 2020 ROY'S FARM

The Merino sheep is a very important and popular breed of domestic sheep. It was originated in Spain and it is highly prized for its wool.

The modern Merino sheep were domesticated in Australia and New Zealand. Sheep were introduced by the Phoenicians from Asia Minor into North Africa.

And the foundation stocks of the Merino might have been introduced by the Marinids, a tribe of Berbers in Spain as late as the twelve century.

Although there were reports of the breed in the Iberian Peninsula before the arrival of the Marinids; perhaps these came from the Merinos or tax collectors of the Kingdom of León, who charged the tenth in wool, beef jerky and cheese.

The Spanish breeders introduced English sheep breeds, which they used and bred with the local sheep breeds for developing the Merino sheep in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

This influence was openly documented by the Spanish writers at the time. Most of the flocks of these animals were owned by nobility or the church. And the flock grazed the southern plains of Spain in winter and the northern highlands in summer.

The Merino sheep is the foundation stock of many well-known and modern sheep breeds. And today, they are available in many countries, almost throughout the world. Read some more information about this sheep breed below.

Merino Sheep Characteristics

Merino sheep are medium sized animals with very beautiful appearance. They can be either polled or horned. The polled version has no horns, or has a very small stubs, known as scurs.

And the horned version has long and spiral horns, which grow close to the head. Carcass size of these animals is usually smaller than that of the meat sheep breeds.

Merino Sheep | Breed Profile

Breed Name

Merino

Other Name	None
Breed Purpose	Meat and wool
Special Notes	Very hardy and strong animals, well adapted to almost all climates, excellent foragers, need to be shorn at least once a year, wool is of very good quality, pretty good for meat production
Breed Size	Medium
Weight	Ewes weight around 55-80 kg, and mature ram's weight can vary from 80 to 105 kg
Horns	Yes or polled
Climate Tolerance	Native climates
Color	White
Rarity	Common
Country/Place of Origin	<u>Spain</u>

As a medium sized animal, average live body weight of the mature rams is around 80-105 kg. And the mature ewes on average weight around 55-80 kg. Photo and info from [Wikipedia](#).

Uses

Merino sheep are wool sheep breed. They are raised primarily for wool production. But they are also good for meat production.

Special Notes

The Merino sheep are strong and hardy animals. They are well adapted to almost all climates and they are excellent forager.

They need to be shorn at least once a year because their wool does not stop growing. If the coat is allowed to grow, it can cause heat stress, mobility issues and blindness.

Delaine Merino Sheep: Characteristics, Uses & Breed Information

October 4, 2020 Sheep No Comments ROY'S FARM

The Delaine Merino sheep is a type of Merino sheep originated in the United States. It is mostly predominant in North America.

It has become a most practical Merino sheep on the average farm and is especially adapted to range sheep production in the Western and Southwestern states.

The breed is also known by some other names such as **American Delaine sheep** and **American Merino sheep**. And it has been bred for over thousand years.

The Delaine Merino sheep has earned international reputation for its prize-winning wool production. Today the breed is raised mainly for wool production in its native area. However, read some more information about this breed below.

Delaine Merino Sheep Characteristics

Delaine Merino sheep are medium sized animals. Unlike most Merinos, these animals have a smooth body and short neck, sometimes with one or two dewlap under their chin.

Their wool is strong, fine, soft, dense and uniform in length. The wool extends down their legs. They grow large, often become long-legged with inferior quality wool.

They are said to have longer productive lives than other [sheep breeds](#). They can live and produce lambs and wool for 10 years, or sometimes more.

The Delaine Merino sheep are excellent foragers, and they can thrive well in extreme climates

As a medium sized animal, average live body weight of the mature Delaine Merino ewes is between 57 and 82 kg. And the mature ram's average live body weight vary from 80 to 107 kg. Photo and info from Raising Sheep.net and Wikipedia.

Uses

The Delaine Merino sheep is a wool sheep breed. It is raised mainly for wool production.