

Trailing of the Sheep Festival

"To gather, present, and preserve the history and cultures of sheepherding in Idaho and the West"

info@trailingofthesheep.org

P.O. Box 3692, Hailey, ID

(208)720-0585

BREEDS & BEHAVIOR

Each breed for each species has characteristics and attributes that make it popular in general and for specific purposes such as reproductive qualities versus meat qualities versus wool production qualities or range hardiness.



Southdown (produces medium wool)

- ◆ Small to medium frame with grayish face and wool on legs
- ◆ Produces a meaty carcass



Dorset produces medium wool

- ◆ Able to breed out of season
- ◆ Heavy milkers
- ◆ Produce more than one lamb crop per year
- ◆ Lambs are hardy and yield heavy muscled carcasses



Columbia (produces medium wool)

- ◆ Large body with white face and wool on legs
- ◆ Known for size and wool producing ability and productivity on range



Hampshire (produces medium wool)

- ◆ Black face with wool cap
- ◆ Moderately Prolific
- ◆ Very good milking ability, growth and carcass cutability

Flocking behavior

Sheep are best known for their strong flocking (herding) and following instinct. They will run from what frightens them and band together in large groups for protection. This is the only protection they have from predators.

There is safety in numbers. It is harder for a predator to pick a sheep out of a group than to go after a few strays. Flocking instinct varies by breed, with the fine wool breeds being the most gregarious. It is this strong flocking instinct that allows one person to look after so many sheep.



Suffolk (produces medium wool)

- ◆ Black head and legs
- ◆ Known for its meatiness and high carcass quality
- ◆ Ability to grow rapidly and produce



Merino (produces fine wool)

- ◆ Basis of all wool breads
- ◆ High flocking instinct

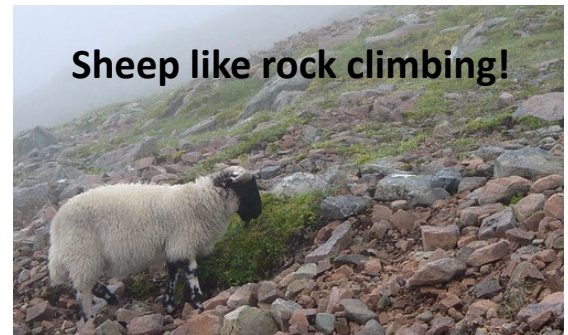
Follow the leader

When one sheep moves, the rest will follow, even if it does not seem to be a good idea. The flocking and following instinct of sheep is so strong that it caused the death of 400 sheep in 2006 in eastern Turkey. The sheep plunged to their death after one of the sheep tried to cross a 15-meter deep ravine, and the rest of the flock followed.



Rambouillet (produces fine wool)

- ◆ Large white face and wool on head and legs
- ◆ Long-lived and rugged
- ◆ Capability to breed out of season



Suppose you are a large rancher or a hobby enthusiast ...

What breed of sheep would you choose to grow if you wanted to grow your own sheep for wool to knit sweaters? _____ Why? _____

What breed would work best to produce meat for fine restaurants? _____ Why? _____

Select the breed for making cheese to sell at farmer's markets. _____ Why? _____

What is your favorite breed? _____ Why? _____

Resources and research:

<https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/4h/projects>

Sheep101.info

<https://www.foxnews.com/story/450-turkish-sheep-leap-to-their-deaths>

trailingofthesheep.org