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

Columbia (produces medium wool)
- Large body with white face and wool on legs
- Known for size and wool producing ability and productivity on range

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

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

Rambouilett (produces fine wool)
- Large white face and wool on head and legs
- Long-lived and rugged
- Capability to breed out of season

Merino (produces fine wool)
- Basis of all wool breads
- High flocking instinct

Sheep like rock climbing!

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