

# **SHEEP WISE – WOOL WISE**

## **EDUCATIONAL FOLDER FOR THE BLACK & COLOURED SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION of NZ**



*Black & coloured sheep/wool*

*Buy with confidence*

*Buy from a member*

**[www.colouredsheep.org.nz](http://www.colouredsheep.org.nz)**

## SHEEP WISE – WOOL WISE

THIS FOLDER WAS COMPILED IN 2016 BY MEMBERS OF THE BLACK AND COLOURED SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION of NEW ZEALAND.

IT CONTAINS INFORMATION ABOUT POPULAR COLOURED SHEEP BREEDS, THEIR HISTORY AND THEIR WOOL. READ THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ANIMAL, READ ABOUT THE WOOL AND DECIDE WHICH ONE IS THE BEST TYPE FOR YOUR NEXT HANDCRAFT PROJECT. FEEL THE TEXTURE OF THE PROCESSED WOOL AND COMPARE THE STAPLES FOR SOFTNESS, LUSTRE AND STRENGTH.

IT WILL SURPRISE YOU HOW DIFFERENT THE FLEECES CAN BE. BUY YOUR NEXT FLEECE ON THIS QUALITY, NOT JUST ON COLOUR.

REMEMBER OUR SLOGAN;

‘BLACK & COLOURED SHEEP/WOOL

BUY WITH CONFIDENCE

BUY FROM A MEMBER.’



## CORRIEDALE SHEEP BREED

### DESCRIPTION.

The Corriedale was first registered in New Zealand in 1906. Bred from Merino ewes crossed with Long wool breeds of Lincoln or English Leicester rams by James Little at Corriedale Station in North Otago , New Zealand. The resulting progeny (Corriedale) are the 4<sup>th</sup> most popular breed in NZ and can thrive on the drier areas of the country. They are a dual purpose sheep breed grown for both meat and wool and can have a lambing rate of 150% .

### WOOL.

The staple of Corriedale wool should be dense, have an even crimp, a soft handle and a micron of 24 to 33 micron, length ideal at 100 to 150 mm. Fleeces weigh on average 4.6kg to 6.5kg unskirted. The wool is ideal for spinning and weaving medium outer garments yet can be fine and soft enough at 24 to 28 micron for a shawl. Fleece can be overdyed , felts readily and is very durable.





 **CORRIEDALE**  
Fine, soft, Bulky wool



# English Leicester

The English Leicester is a large, long and deep sheep.

The wool is long and lustrous, curly locks with a well defined crimp.

Micron is range 37 - 40

Uses :- Spinning for outdoor wear and furnishing fabrics.



# English Leicester



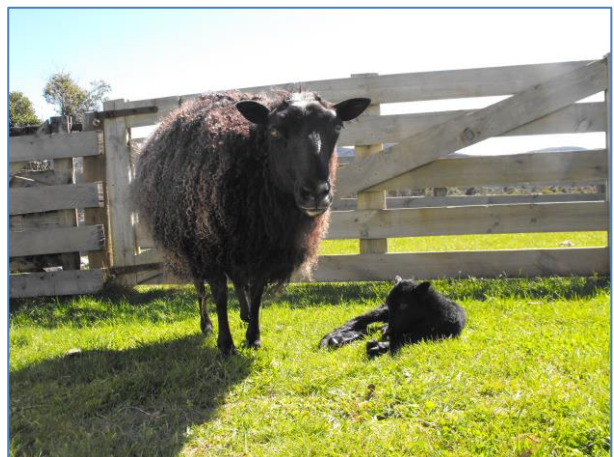


# Gotland

Gotland Sheep originate from the island of Gotland in the Baltic sea, off the East Coast of Sweden. The 'modern' Gotland breed was developed in part from the gule, the horned native breed to Sweden. It is possible to get horns in 'modern' Gotlands, although it is very rare (due to selective breeding over a long time). In its native Sweden they are also called Pelt Sheep because their light and supple skin is a valued product there. They are a short tailed sheep, fine boned and of medium size. They have a black head, sometimes with white markings. Their head and legs are free from wool. Gotlands are considered a rare breed in New Zealand.

Their fleeces can range in colour from near white through to near black, most common though is varying shades of grey. The Gotland's fleece has a high luster and well-defined crimp. A fleece weighs between 2 – 3 kgs but as they are best shorn every 6 months expect half that weight at shearing. The array of silver and grey shades make the fleeces highly desirable to spinners, knitters, felters and weavers. Gotland wool ranges from 29 to 33 microns. The lamb fleeces can be as fine as 20 micron. The wool has become world renowned since Stansborough's Gotland wool was used to make the Magic Elvin Cloak in the movie "Lord of the Rings" and Gandalf's Magical Silver Scarf in the movie "The Hobbit".

Gotlands are known for being very hardy and prolific, twins are quite common and they are excellent mothers. They are a friendly and inquisitive breed and when handled well are easier than many other breeds to manage. The lambs are born black but normally turn various shades of grey/silver as they mature.



# GOTLAND





# Lincoln

The Lincoln sheep is large, heavily built, with dense fleece.

The wool is long and lustrous, broad flat locks are well defined.

Micron range is 37 - 41 +

Uses :- for use where a strong finish is required, especially for weaving and rug making.



# Lincoln



37m



## MERINO SHEEP BREED



### DESCRIPTION

The Merino Sheep Breed was originally bred in Spain. In the late 1700 they were distributed to England and many countries across Europe. Coloured Merino flocks are now found in Australia, North America and New Zealand. The Merino was originally kept for its fine wool qualities but has recently become a dual purpose breed for meat and wool. The rams have large curled horns giving them a majestic appearance. Folds of skin under the neck produce more wool while a long narrow face enables them to browse rough pastures in mountainous country.

### WOOL

Merino wool ranges from a super fine to an extra strong fibre and fleeces can weigh an average of 3.5 to 5kg unskirted. Staple lengths range from 50 to 60mm for fine wool and 100 to 120mm for strong wool. Microns range from 15 to 19 for fine wool, ideal for baby clothes, shawls and lighter garments. Micron of 20 to 23 for medium wool is best for weaving while the Micron of 24 to 27 for strong wool is useful for outer garments, hats, scarves and gloves. Merino wool has a soft handle and can be overdyed.





# MERINO

Soft, super-fine to fine wool



# Perendale



Professor Peren developed the white Perendale breed at Massey University by crossing Cheviot rams with Romney stud ewes and then breeding the progeny to fix the type. The Perendale is listed within the “crossbred” (long wools) category and the white Perendales were first Registered in 1960.

Black and coloured Perendales arose from recessive genes occasionally present within the white breed.

The Perendale is an alert, active, free moving, hardy, dual purpose sheep who likes to be handled quietly. It is a medium size sheep with prick ears, legs clear of wool, some wool on poll between ears and a slight Roman nose.

Genetic and environmental factors contribute to fineness and length of wool. An average ewe fleece is between 31 and 36 micron, with hogget fleeces finer. A Perendale fleece can be in a lower, medium or higher bulk range. The wool has low sheen. An average staple is 5 – 7” (12.5-17.5 cm) long with the average fleece weighing 3.5 – 5 kg. A shorn hogget fleece with about 8 months growth is 4 – 5” (10-12.5cm) long. All the wool should be well formed, free opening and have defined staples.

The finer medium to high bulk wool when used in knitwear gives warmth and comfort in relation to weight garment and is used mainly in knitted garments and blankets - medium wools are used for bulkier end products and outdoor wear – wools at the stronger edge are used for weaving, rugs, wall hangings.

A well skirted fleece for the handcrafter requires little preparation, is easy to spin and hence a good learners fleece.

Perendale natural coloured fleeces come in many colours, shades and colour patterns ranging from black through to a paler badgerface pattern.



# PERENDALE



Shorn Hogget Fleece  
Medium/High  
bulk

Shorn Hogget  
Medium  
Bulk

ewe Fleece  
Medium Bulk

shorn Hogget  
lower bulk



spun ring-garment  
medium bulk



higher bulk sample  
ewe Fleece



# Polwarth



The Polwarth sheep were developed by the Dennis family at Tarndwarncoort in Victoria, Australia in 1880. You can still visit the latest generations of the Dennis family at their historic property where they have the descendants of the original breeding programme.

They crossed Saxon Merino with Lincoln and then bred the progeny back to a Merino. With intensive culling over a period of time a stabilized breed was formed. The original name of Comeback was not particularly flattering or marketable and so they settled on the name Polwarth which was the name of the county in which Tarndwarncoort resided.

The Polwarth sheep is a relatively plain bodied sheep that produces a fleece that ranges in micron from 21 microns to 26 microns. The Lincoln influence allows the sheep to annually produce a fleece that is 110mm to 125mm in length that shows some lustre. The Merino provides the soft handle that is associated with a Polwarth fleece. These attributes make it well sort after by handcrafters.

Originally bred as white sheep, a range of colours has slowly emerged within the breed. The Dennis family still has a sizeable flock of both white and coloured Polwarths. In New Zealand the largest flock of coloured Polwarths is bred by Stuart and Sue Albrey. Their genetics have been strongly influenced by the use of top quality white stud rams from Matakanui Station.

**Fine Fibre Farms**  
**Stuart and Sue Albrey**  
[S.S.Albrey@xtra.co.nz](mailto:S.S.Albrey@xtra.co.nz)  
[www.fffnz.com](http://www.fffnz.com)

POLWARTH





# Romney



**Romney** staples should have a well-defined crimp and medium lustre, with a characteristic pointed tip and a round staple.

- Fibre diameter: 33-37 microns.
- Staple length: 125-175mm (in a full year's fleece)
- Mature or Hogget Fleece weight: 3.5-6.0 kg
- Uses: Heavyweight apparel, carpet, drapes, upholstery fabric, blankets. Romney lamb and fine hogget fleeces are suitable for medium weight apparel.

**For the Spinner:** Romney is easy to get and easy to spin. A mature Romney fleece is most suitable for heavy woven jackets or knitted work jerseys, furnishing fabric, carpets, mats and drapes, where durability under hard working conditions is required.

Fine soft Romney lamb fleece, which would have a fibre diameter of less than 30 microns, would give soft warmth to a light sweater and would be very special. A hogget fleece (the first taken from the sheep after lamb shearing) is generally the best fleece to spin for other projects.



Mature

Fleece

# Romney

Hogget

Fleece

Lambs

Fleece

