




Border Leicester

The Border Leicester first arrived in New Zealand in 1859. After refrigeration was introduced in the 1880s, the Border Leicester was used as a crossing sire to produce heavyweight lambs and wether mutton. Today the Border Leicester contributes high fertility and good mothering qualities to its crossbred progeny. It is a large, long-legged sheep with a pronounced Roman nose.



i BORDER LEICESTER FAST FACTS
National numbers: 110 00 sheep
Breed Characteristics
Weight: Ewes 55 - 65kg Rams 70 - 85kg
 Lambing % 110 - 160 %
Wool: Long, strong and lustrous
Used in upholstery and carpets
 Wool diameter 37 - 40 micron
 Fleece weight 4.5 - 6kg
Meat: Fine grained, very tender & lean

East Friesian

In December 1992, eleven pregnant ewes and four rams were imported into New Zealand from Sweden. It is a large framed sheep with a thin tail and pink nose. The East Friesian will also become the basis for establishment of a sheep milking industry for the production of feta cheese and other sheep-milk products. Over its lactation period it produces 500-600 litres of milk.



i EAST FRIESIAN FAST FACTS
National numbers: 1 200 sheep
Breed Characteristics
Weight: Ewes 75 - 95kg Rams 100 - 125kg
 Lambing % Average 280 %
Wool: Bulky medium - course, white
Ideal carpet wool
 Wool diameter 35 - 37 micron
 Fleece weight 4.5 - 5kg
Meat: A very lean carcass

Meat

Meat was first sent to Britain in cans, in 1870, after the wool market began declining. In 1882, the first frozen sheep carcasses were shipped on the Dunedin, revolutionizing the industry. Farmers began farming sheep that produced good meat, not just good wool. Most meat went to Europe, specifically Britain, and in later years the United States.

The meat from sheep is known by different names depending on the age; lamb being the youngest at under a year; hogget refers to sheep older than a year but up to two; and mutton which is the oldest and can be up to five years of age. Today sheep meat is exported to a wider range of countries and New Zealand is well recognized for the quality of its product.

Some Meat Breeds of Central Otago



Poll Dorset

The New Zealand Poll Dorset Breed was founded in 1959.

The breed has been so well received by the industry that it has grown to be the biggest meat breed in both New Zealand and Australia.

It is an open, white faced, pink nosed sheep with lips free from pigmentation and a long well-muscled body, free of excess fat. The wool is of medium micron, with high wool bulk. This allows Poll Dorset wool to command a premium over other meat breed sires.



i POLL DORSET FAST FACTS
National numbers: About 85 000 sheep
Breed Characteristics
Weight: Ewes 65 - 75kg Rams 80 - 120kg
 Lambing % 130 - 180 %
Wool: High bulk, and free of black fibres
Used in suit linings, costume clothes, coatings and furnishing fabrics
 Wool diameter 26 - 32 micron
 Fleece weight 2.5 - 4kg
Meat: Light in colour and of good texture

Suffolk

The original Suffolks were the result of crossing Southdown rams on Norfolk Horned ewes. The breed first arrived in New Zealand in 1913. In 1930, Southdowns were described as large sheep without horns, dark faces and legs, fine bones and long small necks. They were low set in front with high shoulders and light forequarters. One of the worlds heaviest breeds, Suffolks are now the most dominant sheep meat breed throughout the world.



i SUFFOLK FAST FACTS
National numbers: About 60 000 sheep
Breed Characteristics
Weight: Ewes up to 100kg Rams 100kg +
 Lambing % 85 - 130 %
Wool: Bulky & downy
Used in thermal garment filling & bedding
 Wool diameter 25 - 33 micron
 Fleece weight 3 - 4kg
Meat: Fine grained, low fat

New Zealand Hampshire

The first Romney sheep to reach New Zealand was in 1843.

While the composition and quality of the New Zealand wool clip has changed over the last 10 years, the traits such as good whiteness and brightness, as well as good length and strength,

remain the key attributes of the New Zealand Romney. The Romney was the single most popular breed in New Zealand throughout the 20th century. It continues to make up the majority of the New Zealand sheep population today.



i NZ HAMPSHIRE FAST FACTS
National numbers: less than 3000 ewes
Breed Characteristics
Weight: Ewes 80 - 100kg Rams 100 - 120kg
 Lambing % 140 - 180%
Wool: Fine and downy, no black fibres.
Uses : Hosiery, hand knitting yarns & flannels
 Wool diameter 26 - 30 micron
 Fleece weight 2 - 3kg
Meat: Prime lamb, a sweet lean meat

Dorset Down

Now one of the most common breeds in Central Otago, the Dorset Down was first brought to New Zealand in 1921, but soon died out. Further imports were made from 1947 onwards and this time the breed quickly established a niche for itself as a meat breed for the production of export lamb. The Dorset Down is one of the most virile rams of all mutton breeds.



i DORSET DOWN FAST FACTS
National numbers: About 51 000 sheep
Breed Characteristics
Weight: Ewes 65 - 80kg Rams 100 - 130kg
 Lambing % 110 - 140 %
Wool: Dense, downy, full & springy
Often blended with other wools. Hosiery, bedding, upholstery, papermaking & felts
 Wool diameter 26 - 29 micron
 Fleece weight 2kg - 3kg
Meat: High yield carcass, lean red meat