

Breeds of Sheep—English

The English breeds of sheep originated on the English downs (rolling foothills). They are raised primarily for meat, with wool production of secondary importance.

Dorset

The Dorset originated in southern England in the counties of Dorset and Somerset. They are of medium size. Rams weigh from 175 to 250 pounds and ewes weigh between 125 and 175 pounds. Dorsets have a longer breeding season than other breeds of sheep, which allows them to be used in accelerated lambing programs. The face, ears, and legs of the Dorset are white and practically free from wool. Nostrils, lips, and skin are pink and hoofs are white. Both rams and ewes are horned.

Polled Dorset (*not pictured*)

Polled Dorsets have been selected from the horned Dorsets. They are hornless, but have all of the other desirable qualities of horned Dorsets.

Hampshire

The Hampshire originated in England in the County of Hampshire. It is one of the largest of the medium wool breeds. Mature "Hamp" rams weigh from 225 to 300 pounds; ewes from 150 to 200 pounds. The ewes will shear about 8 pounds of medium grade wool each year. The ears, face, and legs are dark brown to black. Hampshires are hornless, but some rams have scurs.

Oxford

The Oxford was imported from England into the United States in 1846. It is selected for size and productivity. The Oxford is a medium-to-large sized sheep with a dark brown to gray face and wool on the

legs. The breed is prolific and heavy milking with good maternal instincts and lambing ability. It's very useful in farm flock production. The mature ram will weigh from 200 to 300 pounds; the ewe from 150 to 200 pounds. Oxford sheep produce a medium grade of wool which is suitable for spinning.

Shropshire

The Shropshire originated in Shropshire and Staffordshire counties, England. Mature rams weigh between 225 and 275 pounds; ewes from 160 to 190 pounds. The face, ears, and legs are deep brown. "Shrops" are vigorous, open-faced farm flock sheep. They are hornless, although rams frequently have small scurs.

Southdown

The Southdown was developed in extreme southeastern England more than 300 years ago. It is the smallest and blockiest of the "down" breeds. Mature rams weigh from 175 to 225 pounds; ewes from 125 to 160 pounds. The face, ears, and legs are deep brown with wool inclined to creep down over the face.

Suffolk

The Suffolk breed was developed in Suffolk County, England in the mid-1800's. They are slightly larger than the Hampshire and are similarly marked with black faces and legs. It's easy to tell the difference, however, because the Suffolk has no wool on its head or on its legs below the hocks. Grown rams will weigh from 250 to 325 pounds; ewes from 175 to 225 pounds. The Suffolk is popular with commercial sheep producers because of its size and growth rate. Suffolk rams are often mated with white-faced range ewes to produce high-quality market lambs.



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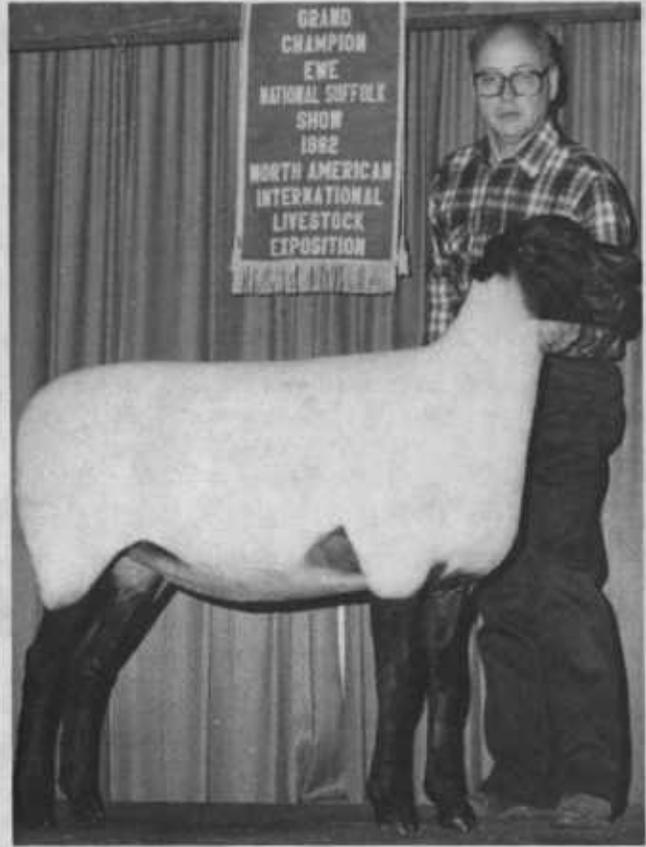
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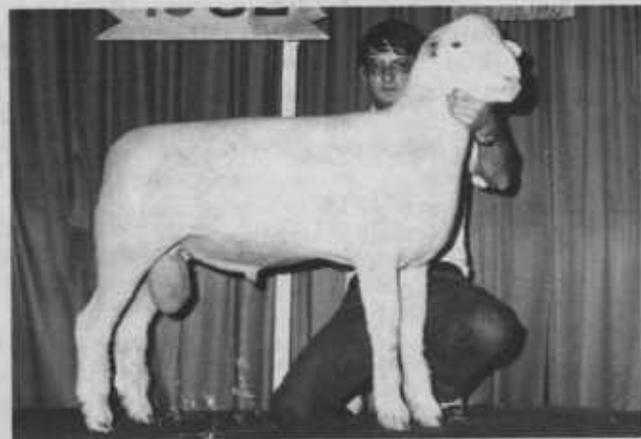
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