

MEATMASTER

Origin and Overview

The Meatmaster is a composite sheep breed developed in South Africa. It is bred as a non-fat tailed hair-type sheep for meat production. It offers farmers an alternative with unique characteristics to meet the needs of a huge market in South Africa and around the world. At the moment Meatmaster breeders are found mainly in the central and Western extensive sheep breeding areas of South Africa. Meatmasters are however represented in all 9 Provinces of South Africa and are becoming increasingly popular in agricultural areas with a need for a sheep breed with extreme easy care and high production.

In 2005 a number of New Zealand sheep breeders began developing sheep along the guidelines of the SA Meatmaster standard leading to registration of the breed with the NZSBA in 2009.

Breed Standards and Characteristics

When selecting the genes necessary for the development of the Meatmaster all emphasis where placed on two aspects for consideration.

- What a sheep breed needs to keep costs as low as possible.
- What a breed needs for high fertility and production to maximize income.

The Breed Standards are thus very unlike any other sheep breeds. They where set up specifically to achieve that which is set out above.

It was decided that Meatmasters must have a percentage of Damara blood

It will have an open flock book

It does not matter how breeders plan to cross their Meatmasters in the development stage, But it is vitally important that the breed standards and selection norms are strictly adhered to, these form the basis of the breed.

1) Coat Colour and Skin Pigment

Any colour or combination of colours is acceptable. Good skin pigmentation around the eyes and over the ears is however essential.

Reason:

- To prevent cancer, eye infection and for stronger hoofs.
- Less work

2) Head and Horns

Ewes must be feminine tending to be polled. Rams must be masculine also tending to be polled. Horns in both sexes are however acceptable.

Reason:

- Easier to manage in sheep yards
- Less vulnerable to fly strike with horn injuries.
- Less work

3) Coat Covering

Mainly short shiny hair with an underlying blanket of fluffy fine wool.

The breed must never be shorn thus natural shedding ability of coat is essential.

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Reason:

- Lambs to service below 0 °C winter temperatures as well as extreme heat tolerance.
- Protection from ticks and flies (no fly strike)
- No shearing costs and danger times with weather after shearing.
- Less work

4) **Conformation and Legs**

The sheep must be of average size with a functional efficient body conformation and well placed legs with excellent walking ability. Lambing should never be assisted, nor should sheep ever be cast, nor should any foot need treatment.

Reason:

- Easy lambing,
- Enough meat with good movement.
- Less work

5) **Tail**

The tail must have a good attachment, preferably shorter than the hock, able to be lifted high and have a neat wedge shape with only a moderate amount of fat. It must never be necessary to have the tail taken off.

Reason:

- Prevent fly strike and also no stress or possible infection with tail cutting,
- Less work.

6) **Herd Instinct**

The breed must have a strong herd instinct.

Reason:

- Vital for better management in rugged or mountainous regions.
- Prevents wandering and going through fences.

7) **Enforced Selection to Achieve the Following:**

- o Highly fertile sheep.
 - o Good mothers that rear their lambs adequately.
 - o Virile rams with excellent serving ability.
 - o Sheep with a good walking ability.
- To achieve the above and generate maximum income we have a policy of zero tolerance for:
- o All ewes must lamb every year.
 - o Good growth to the age of 5 months is essential.
 - o Any ewe not in lamb or losing a lamb before weaning will be culled.
 - o Never need shearing
 - o Never need assistance at lambing
 - o Never need feet treated.

Reason:

- More Profit.
- Less work

IN ALL ASPECTS IT MUST BE AN EASY CARE SHEEP

Breeders are expected to practice minimal dosing of their Meatmasters for internal parasites. Meatmasters should also be bred and managed under natural conditions for the area with no or very limited licks or supplementary feeding.

A quick glance at the above Breed Standards confirms the fact that there is no breed at

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present that has remotely the same breed standards. It is short and to the point, concentrating only on economic aspects. Take note of the fact that in total contrast to other breeds, it is nowhere stated what the neck and the shoulder attachment must be or for that matter the shape of the fore quarter, hind quarter, or any other body part.

The breed standards simply state a good functional efficient body conformation. The Breeders are determined once and for all to breed a profitable sheep, and then learn to love and like what they have bred and not just to try and breed another sheep pleasing to the eye.

Economic aspects are all that count.

Key points

- Must contain a percentage of Damara blood
- Must never be Shorn
- Must Lamb every year
- Must be focused on lower costs AND increased profits

C) Performance Testing

Performance testing and recording is compulsory for all breeders of Meatmasters. Performance testing is utilized solely to improve a breeders Meatmasters genetic ability to become more profitable.

D) Appendix Sheep

Ewes can be registered as pure or appendix ewes. Pure ewes are ewes which meet all breed points and are fully recorded and are the progeny of pure or appendix A parents. Appendix A sheep are sheep which meet breed points but are the progeny of appendix B parents or are foundation cross animals. Appendix B ewes are ewes which meet most but not all breed points. I.e. they may not contain Damara or may need shearing, or are not fully recorded. These ewes may produce appendix A Meatmaster lambs if mated to appropriate Rams and the offspring, upon inspection, meet all breed points.

A.B.F.

SIL No. 4969

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Flock No. 1
(Registered 2010)

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Founded in 2005 by Daniel T. Wheeler on Finn, Dorper X Finn & Wiltshire X Finn ewes. Damara, Damara X rams have been used. This flock is bred using the South African Meatmaster breed standard.

In 2016 the prefix changed from Wheeler Meatmaster to Wheeler.

Sires used have been bred by W.J.& F.M.Lott (F.8 Dorper); Daniel T .Wheeler (F.8); Punakaiki Dorpers (F.109 Dorper); and Owner
No Return - 2017

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Appendix Flock

Founded in 2008 by M.H. & S.D. Willis on 3 ewes, bred by K. Crossland and Wiltshire and Wiltshire Marsh ewes.

Sires used have been bred by Owners.

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