Different breeds of sheep

- Border Leicester
- Merino
- Texel
- Dorper
- Corriedale
- Suffolk
Different breeds of sheep

There are many different breeds of sheep in the world. More than 70% of the sheep in Australia are pure-bred Merinos, the rest are other pure breeds and crossbreeds. Wool produced from Merino sheep is finer than wool produced from other breeds.

Not all sheep are used to produce high-quality wool. Some breeds are used for meat, others for milk and some breeds are used to produce both wool and meat. These are dual-purpose breeds.

Common dual-purpose breeds used in Australia include: Border Leicester, Poll Dorset, Corriedale, Coopworth, Texel and South African Meat Merino (SAMM).

Breeds that tend to be used mostly for meat production include: Poll Dorset, Suffolk, White Suffolk and Dorper.

A breed that is used specifically for milk production is the East Friesland. This breed can produce lots of twins and triplets and plenty of milk to raise multiple lambs.

- Sheep producers often cross-breed to produce dual-purpose animals.
- The Australian Merino was originally bred from the Spanish Merino, brought out to Australia during 1797 from Cape Town, South Africa.
- A fully-grown Merino can produce enough wool to produce three men’s business suits.

Did you know?

- Beyond the Bale: beyondthebale.wool.com
- The Workboot Series: The Story of Wool: www.wool.com
- AWI Wool Production YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/AWIWoolProduction
- The USB that came with the LEARN ABOUT WOOL kit.

Glossary

Crossbreed — an animal whose parents were of two different breeds. For example, Merino and Border Leicester.

Dual-purpose breed — a breed used for both wool and meat production.

Pure-bred — an animal whose parents were both of the same breed.

Common sheep breeds in Australia

- Merino (wool and meat)
- Border Leicester (wool and meat)
- Suffolk (meat)
- Texel (meat)

More information