

DIFFERENT BREEDS OF SHEEP



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 **crossbred**.

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, 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.



Merino (wool and meat)



Border Leicester (wool and meat)



Suffolk (meat)



Poll Dorset (meat)

Common sheep breeds in Australia

Glossary

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

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

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

Did you know?

- 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.

More information

To find out more about sheep breeds and breeding, take a look at:

- learnaboutwool.com
- Beyond the Bale magazine: beyondthebale.wool.com
- Download the free 'Sheep Breed Compendium by AWEX' smartphone application

