

ÅLAND SHEEP



The Åland sheep is a Finnish landrace breed and one of the Northern European short-tailed sheep breeds. It is graceful and smallish, making it well adapted to the island environment. It has been subject to systematic breeding since the 1980s. Adult weight averages 60 kg for rams and 45 to 50 kg for ewes.

The breed has good fertility and mothering ability. An average of 2 or 3 lambs are born at a time. Animal monitoring data gives an average weight of 3.17 kg for lambs at three days of age, with an average daily growth of 169 grams.

The Åland sheep has a compact body and slender bone structure. Its meat production ability is average. Lambs reach slaughter weight at the age of 8 to 9 months on average. Muscularity is good, with rams reaching 18 kg of slaughter weight at as low as 43 kg live weight. There is however a great amount of variation within the breed in both growth rate and muscularity.

Åland sheep come in a wide variety of colours. Varying shades of grey, white, beige, reddish-brown and black are all represented, with instances of atavistic mouflon-like colouring also occurring. Approximately half of rams and at least 25% of ewes are horned, with three different varieties of horn found among the breeds.

Wool production ability is good. The pelt is two-layered, with a soft undercoat and longer, coarse outer coat. Quality varies from fine to coarse. The large possible variety makes pelts a good source of income for sheep farmers.

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