

## DORSET



The Dorset breed of sheep was first developed in Great Britain in the latter part of the 19th century. The breed spread quickly worldwide. Originally all Dorset sheep were horned, but the poll dorset variant was developed in Australia between 1930 and 1960. Dorset sheep were first imported to Finland in 1989 from Denmark; the most recent imports were in the form of sperm and embryos delivered from New Zealand in the year 2000.

Dorset are white, medium-sized, fast-growing long-tailed sheep. They can be horned or polled. Adult rams weigh 80 to 110 kg and ewes 60 to 75 kg. The breed's fertility and mothering ability are good, and lambs can be produced year-round. It is recommended to wean lambs no later than four months of age.

Dorset ewes birth an average of 1.89 young per lambing. Healthy lambs have an average birth weight of 5 kg and daily growth of 250 g. Average weight at four months of age is 37.5 kg, with slaughter weight typically reached at 5 to 6 months. Carcasses are typically given the EUROP grades R and U.

Dorset sheep utilise fodder well and graze calmly and meticulously. The lambs are fast-growing, and the long-rounded body and good musculature typical of the breed have a high inheritability.

Dorset ewes have good characteristics and are often used in crossbreeding. Milk production is excellent, and the mothers take good care of their lambs. The Finndorset, an established crossbreed of the Finnsheep and Dorset, serves well as the crossbred ewe in three-way crossbreeding.

Dorset wool is short and dense, providing good protection from inclement weather; the head is also covered in dense wool. Due to the shortness of the wool Dorset sheep only need shearing once per year, though because of the long tail the rear may need trimming during summer or before lambing.

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