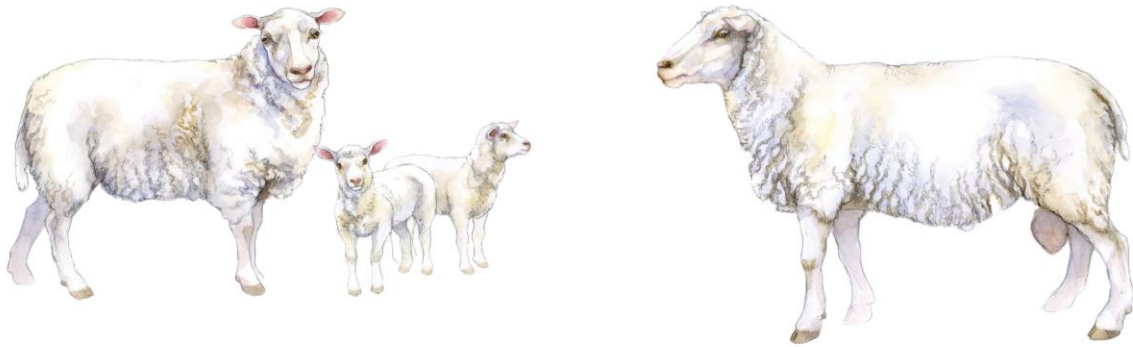


FINNTEXEL



Crossbreeding results in efficient meat production. Crossbreeding is the systematic mating of two pure breeds, with the goal of producing offspring with the desirable characteristics of both breeds, as well as to take advantage of heterosis or hybrid vigour resulting from the combination of different genetic lineages. When crossbreeding sheep the dam will be selected from a breed with good fertility, mothering ability and the capability for year-round lambing, while the sire will be selected for rapid growth and muscularity.

In Finland the breeds most used for breeding of F1 hybrids are the Finnsheep, Texel and Dorset. In three-way crossbreeding, when Texel is one of the initial breeds the third breed is usually Suffolk, Oxford Down or Dorper.

The Finnsheep is a good initial breed for crossbreeding due to its versatility, fertility and capability of year-round lambing. Dorset is also a good choice due to year-round lambing, fertility and good milk production. Texel provides muscularity and good carcass quality. Common examples include Finnsheep x Texel or Dorset x Texel. For improved heterosis, a three-way breeding plan can be e.g. Finnsheep x Dorset -> Finndorset x Texel or another meat breed.

Crossbreeding typically results in two or three lambs per lambing. Finnsheep x Texel crossbred lambs have an average daily growth of 263 grams, Finnsheep x Dorset lambs 250 grams.

F1 hybrids tend to resemble the dam's breed more than the sire's in appearance.

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