

## OXFORD DOWN



The Oxford Down is a British breed from Oxfordshire, dating back from the end of the 19th century. The breed was developed for meat and wool production on the fertile lowlands of southwestern England and is the largest of the Down-type breeds.

The first Oxford Down sheep arrived in Finland in 1989, imported from Denmark. Later the breed's gene pool was supplemented by import of embryos and sperm from New Zealand in 2000 and live animals and sperm from Latvia in 2012.

Oxford Down sheep are polled and long-tailed. They are very large and robust, and exhibit rapid growth. The brownish-white wool is straight, medium fine and dense, and covers the entire animal. The snout and feet are chocolate brown. Adult ewes weigh 80 to 100 kg and rams from 100 kg up to 140 kg.

The breed is best suited for springtime lambing. Fertility and mothering ability are good, and lambing is usually easy, with an average of 1.8 lambs born at a time. Average birth weight is 5.3 kg and weight at four months of age 45 kg.

Oxford Down sheep are fast-growing and efficient fodder users, making them affordable to feed. The meat is of excellent quality, and lambs born in spring will be ready for slaughter at the end of the grazing season. Slaughter weight is reached at 6 months of age on average, or at 5 months in optimal cases.

Oxford Down sheep have a strong herd instinct and are calm and quiet, yet also sensitive and stubborn. The breed has been developed for grazing on cultivated pasture, and is well suited for use in three-way crossbreeding either as the terminal male or in production of crossbred ewes.

Information repository:

[www.lammasyhdistys.fi/materiaalipankki](http://www.lammasyhdistys.fi/materiaalipankki)