

Most numerous

The ▲Rambouillet is the most numerous breed of (commercial) sheep in the US, especially in the West where they are the foundation of most range flocks.



Most popular

▲Katahdins and Dorpers are the most popular US breeds in terms of purebred registrations (and transfers). Both are hair or shedding breeds.



Best all-around

The ▲Polypay is perhaps the best all-around breed of sheep in the US. Katahdin is the best all-around hair sheep. The best all-around meat breed might be the Suffolk.

Biggest

The ▼Suffolk is the biggest breed of domestic sheep. Mature rams can weigh up to 400 lbs. While not as heavy, Columbia rams can stand quite tall.



Smallest

The smallest breed is the ▼Ouessant (29-44 lbs.). It is relatively new to the US. The Soay is slighter larger. Both are primitive breeds categorized as Northern European short-tailed sheep.



Least seasonal

Dorsets, especially the ▼Dorset Horn, are highly prized for their ability to naturally breed and lamb year-round.





Oldest

The oldest US sheep breeds are the ▲Navajo Churro and Gulf Coast Native (also Florida Cracker). Both descend from sheep brought to the new world in the 16th century.



Finest wool

▲ (Delaine) Merinos produce the finest wool, typically under 22 microns (64s). Their wool is also the softest. Rambouillets descend from Merinos and produce fine wool, too.



Most meat

▲Texel is the heaviest muscled sheep breed in the US. It has a high frequency of the myostatin mutation (MSTN). Dorper is the heaviest muscled hair sheep.

SHEEP SUPERLATIVES



Most milk

The ◄East Friesian is the heaviest milking breed of sheep in the world. They form the basis of most dairy flocks in the US. It is common to cross them with the Lacaune, a French breed.



Most wool

◄Lincoln sheep produce the heaviest fleeces with the longest staple length and most luster. Though now rare, they are one of the largest wool breeds.



Most resistant to parasites

The ◄St. Croix is the US sheep breed most resistant to internal parasites (worms). The Gulf Coast Native (also Florida Cracker) is the most resistant wooled breed.



Most prolific

Finnsheep and ◄Romanov are the most prolific sheep breeds in the US. Litters of 3 to 4 lambs are the norm. It is common to use them for crossing to increase reproductive performance of commercial flocks.

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