

Terminal sires

A terminal sire is a ram whose offspring are intended for slaughter not breeding. Terminal sires are selected for traits like growth rate, muscling, and carcass quality. Lamb survival is another very important terminal sire trait. Terminal sires are typically used in crossbreeding programs to produce market lambs, while different sires (maternal or dual-purpose) are used to produce replacement females.



The **Suffolk** is the most popular terminal sire breed in the US. It is a British breed first imported to the US in 1888. Suffolks are large framed with big droopy ears and clean black heads and legs. Their lambs excel in feed lot systems and have significant popularity as club lambs.



The **Texel** is the most popular terminal sire breed in the world and increasingly popular in the US. It is a Dutch breed known for its incredible muscle development and carcass leanness. Frame size is average. The first Texels were imported into the US in 1985. Texels are polled and white-faced with no wool on their head or legs.



The **Hampshire** is similar in appearance to the Suffolk, but with wool on its head (wool cap) and legs. Hamps tend to be heavier boned and muscled than Suffolks but are less popular as a sire of commercial market lambs. They have found favor in the club lamb sector. Hampshires are a British breed that was first imported into the US in 1840, but none survive the Civil War, so they were reimported after the war.



The **Shropshire** is a less popular terminal sire breed that also originated in England. At one time Shropshires were the most influential breed in the US. The breed is similar to the Hampshire.



At one time, the **Southdown** was the most popular terminal sire breed in the US. They are the smallest of the British “down” breeds, known for their excellent conformation and high-quality meat. They’re ideal for siring “hothouse” lambs.



New or less common terminal sire breeds include the ▲ **Charollais**, **Ile de France**, and **Dutch Spotted**. All three are European breeds more recently imported into the US.