

PORTLAND SHEEP

Breed Standard

The Portland Sheep is a direct descendant of the South West Horn, which was a heathland breed and formerly existed in considerable numbers in the Dorset area.

The Portland is a small animal (average weight adult ewe 38-40 kg). The average weight of adult rams is 55 kg (at three years old and body condition 3), rarely exceeding 66 kg and 65 cm at the withers. The body is of a primitive type within the Down Group of breeds with good width between the legs. The withers may appear slightly lower than the rump. The tail is long and well set up on the rump.

HEAD: The profile of the face is slightly concave in the ewes but is straighter in the rams. The face is a tan colour, but may have lighter areas around the eyes and muzzle. The flesh of the nose is dark. Some sheep carry a light covering of wool on the forehead but the rest of the face is free from wool.

HORNS: Light in colour with heavy spiralling in rams, but smaller in ewes, curved through a half circle. In both sexes, there is often a black line showing in one or both horns.

TEETH: Incisor teeth should be short, broad, straight and even and meet on the pad.

EARS: Short, tan and clean.

EYES: Dark

LEGS: The legs should be fine boned with an even tan colour matching the face. They should be free from wool on the front legs and below the hock. They should be up on their pasterns and the hooves should be uniformly dark, small and straight.

WOOL: The wool is creamy white, close and fine with a short staple, but may be coarser on the britch where some red kemp fibres may be found. Lambs are born with a foxy red coat but this changes in the first few months.

UNDESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS

1. Narrow, angular conformation.
2. Black horns.
3. Dip in the back.
4. White marks on face or legs.
5. Black hair on face or legs.
6. Black marks or patches.
7. Upright, flyaway or ingrowing horns.
8. Woolly cheeks or legs.
9. Coarse wool or open fleece.

RECLASSIFICATION: Any significant departure from the Breed Standard or any major functional defect should result in the animal being classified in the C Category. Rams should be assessed more strictly than ewes.