

Glossary of Common Sheep Terms

Adaptability - the capability of an animal to make changes that make it more suitable to its environment

Banding - (1) This is a method of castration in which a tight rubber band is placed around the scrotum. This procedure cuts off circulation to the testicles and destroys them. (2) This is a method of docking in which a tight rubber band is placed around the tail, which cuts off circulation and destroys the tail.

Black face breeds - meat breeds of sheep

Bracing - see **rumping**

Bred ewe - a ewe that is pregnant

Breed - (verb) to cause to reproduce; (noun) a genetic strain of a domestic animal having consistent and recognizable characteristics

Breeding stock - the livestock retained to expand the flock

Buck - male sheep of any age that has not been castrated (see **ram**)

Bummer - an orphan lamb

Bunk - an animal feed trough

By-product - something that is made from the leftover parts of a sheep

Castration - the removal of an animal's gonads

Carcass - the body of a processed and gutted animal

Carcass merit - the relative worth of a carcass

Club lamb - lambs that are generally exhibited at fairs and raised for carcass quality and overall eye appeal

Colostrum - the first milk a ewe produces after the birth of the lamb; high in antibodies

Commercial operation - a flock used to produce animals that will eventually be processed for meat

Conformation - the height, length, and depth of an animal's body

Sheep Production

Creep feeding - a penned-in feeding system for young lambs; has an opening that prohibits mature sheep from entering; the feeder contains special feed for the young lambs while they are still nursing

Crimp - natural waviness of wool fibers

Crown roast - made by curving around two rib halves, eight ribs each (racks), and tying them to resemble a crown

Crutch - to remove the wool from the sheep's udder, between the legs, and around the dock

Cull - (verb) to eliminate an animal from the flock; (noun) an animal that does not meet the flock's standards and is sold or eliminated from the flock for production reasons

Dam - a female parent

Deworm - the process of controlling internal parasites in sheep

Dipping - the process of controlling external parasites of sheep by submerging the animal in treated liquid

Direct marketing - the sale of sheep from a producer to a meat packer without making use of an intermediary

Dock - (noun) the stub end on a sheep's or lamb's tail; (verb) to cut short a lamb's tail for sanitary reasons

Drench - oral administration of a liquid medication usually given for internal parasites

Driving - see **rumping**

Dry lot management - a bare, fenced-in area used as a place to feed and fatten lambs

Dual-purpose breed - sheep breeds that produce both wool and meat

Dust - dry, powdered materials used on sheep to control external parasites

Ear tag - a metal or plastic tag attached to a sheep's ear for identification

Enterotoxemia - an overeating disease in sheep with high death rates

Enterprise - a project or business that is considered to be complicated or risky

Ewe - a female sheep of any age

Ewe breed - those breeds of sheep noted for their strong maternal qualities

Glossary of Common Sheep Terms

Ewe-to-ram ratio - the ratio of the number of ewes in a flock per ram

External parasites - an organism that grows and feeds on the skin of the host animal

Farm flock - animals that a producer raises on his/her farm, especially a small flock that is part of a diverse operation

Feed conversions - pounds of feed that must be fed to a lamb to get one pound of body gain

Feed efficiency - the relative quality of how feed is utilized by an animal for maintenance and production

Feeder lamb - a lamb that is weaned and sold to be fed for more growth before being processed

Feed stuff - the material that sheep eat, either by grazing or supplied by the producer

Fertility - the condition, state, or quality of an animal capable of reproducing

Finishing - the act of feeding an animal to produce a desirable carcass for market, usually refers to deposition of fat on the animal

Flank - the region between the side of the sheep and the sheep's rear leg

Fleece - wool as it is shorn from the sheep; fleece should remain one piece

Flock - a group of sheep

Flushing - the practice of increasing the level of nutrition of ewes and rams before and during the breeding season to increase the chance of conception

Foot rot - a highly contagious foot disease caused by bacteria

Gestation - the time during which an animal is pregnant; in sheep, the gestation period lasts for 143 to 152 days (147 days on average)

Granny ewe - pregnant ewe that is close to lambing and tries to claim another ewe's newborn lamb

Growth rate - the rate of increase of an animal in muscle, bone, vital organs, and connective tissue as contrasted to fattening

Hock - the tarsal joint of a sheep's hind leg; similar to a human ankle but is located halfway up the leg and bends backward

Internal parasites - organisms that grow and feed inside the host animal

Sheep Production

Jaundice - yellowishness of the skin, mucous membranes, and secretions

Ked – a sheep tick; a common external parasite

Lactation - the period of time when a ewe is producing milk

Lamb - the offspring (of either sex) of a sheep; meat from an animal that is less than 1 year old

Lanolin - a fatty substance from sheep wool; when refined it is used in cosmetics, ointments, and many other products

Lice - an external parasite of sheep affecting wool quality, weight gain, and the general condition of the sheep

Liver fluke - a flat parasitic worm that lives in the bile ducts of an animal

Loin - part of an animal's side and back between the ribs and hips

Lungworm - an internal parasite of sheep

Maggot - the larva of various flies

Market weight - the weight at which an animal is processed

Marking harness - a harness with a chalk or crayon marker worn by the ram during the breeding season. As the ram mounts a ewe for breeding, the rump area of the ewe is marked.

Mastitis - inflammation of the udder caused by bacteria

Milking ability - the ewe's capacity to lactate

Muscling - the lack of fat in meat; the desire to have increased amounts of muscle mass in the areas where the most desirable meat cuts are taken from an animal.

Mothering ability - the ewe's capacity to care for newborn lambs; demonstrating maternal instincts

Mutton - meat of a grown sheep that is more than 2 years old

Muzzle - the mouth part of a sheep

Parasite - a harmful organism that lives in or on a host

Pastern - the part of a sheep's foot just above the hoof

Glossary of Common Sheep Terms

Pins (also called pin bone) - region on each side of the tail head on the hind quarters

Poll - (noun) the top of the head

Polled - (adjective) having no horns

Predator - an animal that preys on other animals

Primary products - the main parts of a sheep carcass that are used

Prolificacy - able to produce offspring in relatively great numbers

Purebred sheep enterprise - an enterprise in which sheep of a recognized breed are kept pure for many generations. A purebred animal may or may not be registered, but all registered animals are purebred.

Rack of lamb (rib roast) - contains rib bones, backbone, and thick, meaty rib-eye muscle; outside fat cover is usually removed

Ram - a male sheep that has not been castrated and is used for breeding purposes

Ram breed - those breeds of sheep that are strong, muscular, and have good meat carcass qualities

Range enterprise - a large flock of sheep handled as one unit on a large uncultivated area of grazing land

Ration - total feed given to an animal during a 24-hour period

Replacement animal - an animal selected to be kept for the breeding flock

Reproductive efficiency - the degree of ability to reproduce

Restraining - a handling technique at shows in which the exhibitor places his/her leg at the front of the lamb so it does not move forward; it may also be necessary to place a hand on the dock of the animal

Roughage - feed containing more than 18% crude fiber when dry

Roundworm - a stomach worm that is parasitic to sheep

Rumping - a handling technique at shows in which the exhibitor uses his/her knee or leg to apply pressure to the lamb's breastbone in order to give the sheep's muscle tone much greater definition and firmness in the rump and leg area; also known as bracing and driving

Sheep Production

Saddle - the part of a meat animal's body including the top of the rump and loin area

Scours - diarrhea

Selenium - a metallic element given to new born lambs

Shear - the removal of a sheep's fleece

Shrinkage - the weight loss by an animal while it is being shipped to market

Sirloin - section between the hipbone and back of the loin; presented boneless and trimmed of excess fat

Soundness - freedom from body blemishes and defects; good feet and legs

Strip - to remove the wax plug from the ewe's teat canal

Tapeworm - a ribbonlike internal parasite that infects sheep and other vertebrates

Teat - the outlet for milk produced in the udder

Thigh - the upper leg muscle of an animal

Tick - an eight-legged bloodsucking external parasite of sheep

Trait - a physical or behavioral characteristic of an animal

Udder - an encased mammary gland with teats

Vaccine - substance injected into healthy sheep to prevent a disease

Versatile - ability to adapt to many conditions

Wean - to eliminate mother's milk from the offspring's diet

Wether - a castrated male sheep

Yearling - a sheep of either sex that is approximately 1 to 2 years of age or a sheep that has cut its first incisors

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Credits:

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