



FOCUS

Finnsheep – Opportunities For Profit

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Finnsheep

The Finnsheep breed, known as Finnish Landrace in its native country of Finland, has been in North America for less than fifty years. Initially imported due to the unique ability to produce litters of lambs, ewes of this breed given appropriate nutritional support routinely feed up to quadruplets with no assistance.

Their prolificacy through crossbreeding in commercial flocks of other breeds has raised lambing percentages and profitability for the United States sheep industry. A 1%-2% increase in productivity has been achieved for each 1% of Finnsheep blood added into a crossbreeding program. Finn genetics have contributed to more than twenty newly composed sheep breeds worldwide in the last forty years. Pure line preservation for retention of their unique traits is a significant goal which will benefit future generations.

Aside from an outstanding maternal attitude coupled with ease of lambing, this docile breed has a flocking instinct and gentle nature which enables easy handling. Having developed in Finland's harsh environment, they possess adapt-



A Stillmeadow Finnsheep six-year old ewe, FBA23224 Ginger Ears, with her four-day old quintuplet litter of purebred lambs.

ability to a wide range of climates and are good foragers in both open meadows and forestlands.

Due to their ability to breed in most seasons Finns enable year round avail-

ability of fresh lamb meats. As a light boned, medium sized sheep, the meat to bone ratio is surprisingly good. Market weights are attainable by 6-7 months from grass fed lambs producing low fat meats which are naturally succulent with mild flavor and tenderness.

Since the enthusiasm for fiber crafts has grown by leaps and bounds, Finnsheep wool has become highly sought after as a specialty enterprise. The softness and luster of the fleece plus a noteworthy felting quality inspire creativity in contemporary artisans. With the complete range of natural colors now available the appeal of Finnsheep continues to grow and reward expanding markets. There is no other sheep breed which offers such versatility and opportunity for success as the North American Finnsheep.

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The Finn fleece is in high demand by wool crafters. This photo is from a seven-month Finn lamb.