



Wensleydale

HISTORY:

The origins of many sheep breeds are shrouded in guess work and mystery, but the Wensleydale sheep have the unique distinction of identifying not only the foundation ram, named Bluecap, but also his parentage. Bluecap was born in 1839 in North Yorkshire from a Leicester ram and a longwool ewe from the River Tees region. His qualities that identified the breed were his blue skin and large body with a heavy fleece. The breed was not named until 1876 when it became required to participate in the Yorkshire show.

Although the breed was developed primarily to provide rams for cross breeding, the wool is among the finest of the longwool breeds and is a highly sought after fleece.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

Wensleydale sheep have a very striking appearance. They are the largest of the British breed sheep with distinctive blue skin on face, ears and legs. The ears are slightly elongated. They have a forelock of wool on the top of the head and long ringlet wool locks. They are hornless.

Fleece Facts:

Wensleydale wool is very uniform throughout the entire fleece. The wool is a high luster longwool and described as very silky. The most distinguishing characteristic of the Wensleydale wool is the absence of kemp. This makes the yarn from Wensleydale wool very shiny, silky and soft. It has a lot of the same characteristics as mohair.

Specifications:

- Micron count: 30-36
- Average yield – Between 65-80%
- Average fleece weight: 7-20 lbs
- Average staple length: 7-12"

Notes and Project Ideas:
