Making The Leap to Longwools

Brian Larson
Longwool Breeder
Longwools’ Origin - Roman Empire

Caring for the sheep: Luttrell Psalter.
Longwools Genetically Different

Nei et al., 1972
Longwools Genetically Different

Kijas et al., 2009
Longwools Genetically Different

Blackburn et al., 2011
Classic Longwools!

Cotswold

Lincoln Longwool

Leicester Longwool
Longwool Breeds Differ

- Fleece characteristics
- Body conformation
- Colors & shapes
- Disposition
- In other words - Breed Standard!
Longwool Example
Longwool Fleece Characteristics

- Staple length
- Lock formation
- Crimp per inch
- Fiber diameter & density
- Fiber strength
- Color genes
Lock Formation
Traditional Locks are Key to Longwool Identity!
Longwool Body Conformation

- Broad chest & rib cage
- Legs on four corners on strong bone
- ‘High volume’ is key, not ‘long & tall’
- Strong-backed
- “Bulldozer” of sheep breeds
Longwool Conformation - Example
Colors & Shapes

- White & colored wool genes
- Head, ears, skin, hooves
- Legs made for walking
- Form leads to function
Longwool Color Genes
Head, Ears & Skin
Disposition

- Aware, but calm and curious
- Instinctive mothers
- Rams bold, but not aggressive
- Do not make ‘friends’ with rams
Curious & Athletic
How Longwools Thrive?

- Good quality forages
- Grain after lambing (multiple births)
- Outdoors - just shelter from heavy storms
- Temperate climate preferred
- Wool-friendly environment
Useful Portable Shelter
Good Shepherding!

- Shepherds’ instinct/observation skills
- Let sheep tell you their needs
- Offer sheep good choices
- Longwools perfect for pasture lambing
- Walk pastures frequently (w/spade)
- Fresh water & shade (campgrounds!)
Observation Skills!
Nutrition!

- Good quality pastures a must
- Frost-seed clovers
- Rotate pastures
- Feed hay on ground - new spot daily
- Ewe w/multiples - feed for milk
- Feed grain in troughs or pans
- Fresh, clean water
Feed Hay Outside!
Genetics/Selection

- Longwools mature slowly, delay final cull of ewe lambs till yearlings
- Keep 1st-timers separate from adult ewes after lambing
- Seek genetics from reliable breeders
- Cull to breed standard
- Don’t play ‘favorites’!
UK Lincoln Longwools
Quarter to Three-Quarter UK
Half-Blood UK Rams
But, You’re Bored!
Questions?
Longwool Variations

- Blue-Faced Leicester
- Border Leicester
- Romney
- Teeswater
- Wensleydale