

Clun Forest

Clun Forest sheep originated in the Welsh/English borderlands in the mid-19th century. They are one of the sturdy hill breeds, able to do well with natural grazing in challenging environments. They come from the same part of the world as, and are related to, the Shropshire.

Cluns arrived in North America in 1970, by way of Canada. They have quietly spread from there throughout the continent and developed a devoted following among both shepherds and fiber folk, the former for the breed's ability to thrive in a variety of environments and the latter for the quality of the fiber, which is versatile and pleasant to work with.

Although the Clun Forest is not one of the six classic Down breeds, it shares many of those breeds' attributes, including a dark face and legs and a mid-grade fleece that can be prepared in many ways and used for a variety of purposes.



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Where some of the Down breeds' faces are clean (wool-free) and some are partially or almost fully covered with wool, the tops of Cluns' heads have a nice "crown" of white wool.

Clun Forest wool tends to be consistent through all or most of a fleece, and thus can be easy

to sort. Staples are moderate in length and the matte-surface wool embodies a lot of bounce and elasticity. It is usually fine enough to be workable next-to-the-skin, although it is more resilient than super-soft. It is usually spun woolen, although it can be fun to use as a worsted yarn.

Fleece weight	4½–9 pounds (2–4 kg), generally 4½–6½ pounds (2–3 kg).
Staple length	2½–5 inches (6.5–12.5 cm), generally 3–4 inches (7.5–10 cm).
Fiber diameters	Most resources indicate 25–28 microns, although the American Sheep Industry Association notes 28–33 microns. This may reflect environmental differences or breeding preferences.
Lock characteristics	Dense locks and blocky staples with either blunt or somewhat pointed tips. The defined crimp shows up well in the fibers, and may (or may not) also be obvious in the locks.
Natural colors	White, with no kemp or colored fibers.



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