

Exmoors are considered a good breed for beginners in sheep farming because they tend to be self-sufficient.



UK Sheep Breed Seeing Revival

Exmoor Horn Sheep are a quintessential U.K. breed that has inhabited the hills of North Devon since the Middle Ages.

"The breed's hardiness and ability to thrive on rough grazing are direct results of this long adaptation to the exposed upland landscape," says David Butt, Chairman of the Exmoor Horn Sheep Breeders Society. In fact, the breed is so integrated into the Exmoor National Park that its grazing habits have shaped the surrounding terrain.

Exmoor Horns are considered a dual-purpose upland breed of sheep.

"They're efficient converters of rough forage and are well suited to low-input systems," says Butt. "Their distinctive horns in rams and clean, white appearance also make them visually very recognizable."

They're considered docile sheep that almost always make good mothers and milkers. The rams make excellent sires and are highly sought after for crossbreeding. In

fact, Exmoors are regarded as a good breed for anyone new to sheep, as they tend to be self-sufficient.

Despite centuries of significance, Exmoor Horns only received official breed status in 1906. This step aimed to prevent interbreeding that could dilute the traits that made the sheep unique: a medium-length, medium-fine fleece; stocky, muscular bodies; and the ability to thrive on moors with freezing winters.

The Exmoor Horn Sheep Breeders' Society was established in 1906 and held its first registered sale and exhibition in Winsford, Somerset, in 1907. At that time, 1,200 ewes were auctioned at an average price of 42 shillings each.

The sheep's preferred grazing lands give the meat a distinctive flavor that once earned it the title of "the finest mutton of Victorian England." But as modern tastes have shifted, this bold flavor is seen as less of an asset. That's a fact the Mutton Renaissance Club of Great Britain is eager to change. They hope that increased interest in traditional mutton will help the breed make a comeback.

Spinners and crafters are also increasing the popularity of this breed by buying and using Exmoor Horn wool in their projects. Exmoor wool produces a high-quality fleece with excellent color and a good staple length,

making it ideal for socks, pullovers, jackets and outerwear. Many also use it successfully for carpets and mattresses.

The push for larger farms after WWII led to more commercial breeds replacing the Exmoor Horn. While the 1908 Flock Book records listed 132 members and 25,000 pure Exmoor Horn sheep, the 2005 records showed a decline to 82 flocks and 19,000 registered ewes. Those numbers are starting to rise again as new members join and establish pedigree flocks.

"Interest has been steady, particularly among farmers looking for hardy, forage-based systems and those involved in conservation grazing," says Butt. "The Exmoor Horn is not just a productive sheep but also an important part of the cultural and agricultural heritage of the Exmoor landscape."

"Supporting native breeds like this helps preserve genetic diversity and maintain the character of traditional British upland farming systems. For anyone farming marginal land or looking to simplify inputs while maintaining performance, the breed is well worth consideration."

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Vintage Stained-Glass Fire Screens Still Popular

In the era before central heating, fireplaces were the heart of the home. It's not surprising that open flames often posed risks indoors. The fire screen was introduced as a device placed in front of fireplaces to prevent stray sparks from causing trouble. Because of their prominent position in the room, fireplace screens also became decorative elements.

The 18th century saw fire screens crafted from various materials, including wood, leather, wicker and papier-mâché. Paintings, fabric coverings and embroidered designs all enjoyed periods of popularity, and stained-glass screens became popular in the late 1800s.

Stained-glass fireplace screens offer an easy way to bathe rooms in jewel-toned light. For those lucky enough to have a fireplace facing a window, the effect of a stained-glass fire screen is especially enchanting. Sunlight filters through, changing the reflections on the floors and windows throughout the day.

True vintage pieces carry a sense of history and craftsmanship, with hand-cut shapes and subtle imperfections that set them apart from mass-produced décor. Online, you can find options ranging from \$160 to \$2,500 and more at auction.

At the higher end, there's an Art Nouveau

fireplace screen in the Tiffany style from around 1910. It's currently listed on eBay for \$2,500. In contrast, a 1920s model in the country house style (price not listed) looks distinctly modern because of its multi-sized circles of vibrant stained glass. Metal scrollwork around the edges offers plenty of space for dancing flames to catch the light.

Fireplace screen designs vary by era. Victorian and Edwardian styles, for example, typically feature intricate patterns and rich colors, with motifs such as geometric borders, stylized blossoms, scrollwork, and saturated reds, greens and blues.

Art Nouveau designs, in contrast, emphasize flowing lines and natural forms. Curving vines, peacocks and stylized female figures appear in soft, muted colors, often arranged in asymmetrical layouts.

The Art Deco style features bold, geometric shapes. Sunbursts and contrasting colors, including black-tinted glass, are common.

Finally, Gothic and Medieval Revival fire screens will resemble a church window. They feature rich, saturated colors, pointed arches and heavy metal framing.

There's no reason to feel limited by your house's architectural style. Stained-glass fire screens provide an authentic glow to period-

style homes and also bring unexpected charm to eclectic, minimalist and even brick-heavy industrial spaces. Best of all, they add visual interest to what would otherwise be a dark, empty space when the fire isn't lit.

Determining whether vintage stained glass is authentic is a skill best left to experts. Still, a few clues can help identify a piece's age. Authentic antique stained glass may have waviness or air bubbles in the glass, slight variations in color and texture between panes, and a patina on the metal.

While antique stained-glass fireplace screens are beautiful, they require careful handling around heat and fire. Their materials can be fragile, especially as they age. It's safest to keep the screens several inches away from direct flames to prevent the hottest part of the fire from touching the glass. This also helps ensure good airflow between the firebox and the screen. Over time, excessive heat can stress the glass and solder joints, leading to cracks and warping.

When selecting a vintage fire screen, carefully assess your specific needs. Whether the fireplace is functional or decorative influences the choice of materials. Fireproof models should be built solidly, have stable feet, and feature a design that maintains a safe



Photo courtesy of www.tangibleinvestments.com

True vintage pieces can sell for hundreds of dollars, with some reaching \$2,500 or more at auction.

distance between the flames and the glass.

Make sure the screen is stable and unlikely to be knocked over, especially in homes with kids and pets. If necessary, discreet supports or brackets can help secure the frame. Regularly inspect for loose joints and hairline cracks, particularly in high-heat environments. Additionally, it might be wise to keep a simple metal guard near the fireplace to catch sparks, with the stained glass set further back for decorative purposes.

Belted Galloway cows weigh 1,000 lbs, while bulls reach 1,600 lbs. They're considered "light grazers" that thrive on coarse grasses other breeds avoid, making them well-suited to marginal land.



Belted Galloway Cattle Offer Better Grassfed Beef

Belted Galloway, a Scottish heritage breed, is making a name for itself across the United States. Known for the white belts around their bodies, Galloways can be finished on grass, producing lean, flavorful meat. Better

still, their hardiness and gentle temperament make "Belties" a favorite among beginning and hobby farmers worldwide.

This ancient breed originated in the rugged hill country of southwestern Scotland, a

region that favors hardy livestock. Animals come in black, red or dun with a white middle, likely reflecting shared origins with the Galloway. Breeders suspect the distinctive white belt stems from an infusion of Dutch Belted blood in the 17th or 18th century. Throughout the early 1800s, the breed was standardized and optimized for efficiency on rough forage, maternal care and high-quality beef.

As a medium-sized breed, Belted Galloway cows weigh 1,000 lbs, while bulls reach 1,600 lbs. They're considered "light grazers" that thrive on coarse grasses other breeds avoid, making them well-suited to marginal land. This means they require proportionally small amounts of feed per kilogram of body weight, making them efficient livestock.

This hardy breed tends to be highly resistant to disease and genetic problems, including pink eye, insect infestations, and foot problems. They're naturally polled and will prevent horn growth in virtually all breeds they're crossed with.

Their hardiness is especially pronounced

in winter, as Belted Galloways are known for developing shaggy "double coats" that help them stay outdoors year-round, especially in cold, rugged climates. This fur prevents the buildup of thick subcutaneous fat, resulting in leaner cuts with higher-than-usual levels of omega-3 fatty acids. Belted Galloways have higher levels of intramuscular fat and vitamin B nutrients, leading to less marbling. Still, it's less gamey than other grass-fed beef, and many buyers find it a better eating experience.

The U.S. received its first Belted Galloways in 1950, brought in by Harry A. Prock of Whitemarsh, Pa. Since then, imports of the breed have been limited, resulting in a relatively small national population. The Belted Galloway Society in the United States was founded soon after. Today, the breed is popular across Britain and Ireland, as well as in Australia, America, Canada and Switzerland.

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