

Breed Standard for the Australian Dorper and White Dorper Sheep

The aim of the Dorper/White Dorper breeder is to produce a robust, well muscled, fertile animal with good conformation. Such an animal will be able to produce lambs which meet both the specifications of the Australian market as well those of export markets without difficulty. To do this, the lambs must be able to reach a 23 kilogram carcass weight with low inputs, high meat yields and not have excessive fat. The following standards will assist in achieving this aim.

Temperament

Animals that show signs of aggressive behaviour in the yards are not preferred. The sheep should have a good temperament which is conducive to easy handling in the yards and paddock.

Cover

The breech and belly should be clean of wool. Woolly areas below the tail are not preferred. A covering of fine hair or soft short wool is preferred, whereas a covering of coarse hair is to be avoided if possible. A fully shedding animal is not necessary. It is important however that the the pizzle and area below the tail are clean of wool.

Size

As one of the the major attributes of the Dorper / White Dorper sheep is their early finishing ability, fast growing sheep that reach killing weights early an early age are preferred above all others. Stud breeders should always be alert to the requirements of their customers and breed the type of sheep which will fulfill those needs.

For example breeders of the Australian Dorper and White Dorper for customers in the Pastoral areas will find that their customers require sheep with stretch and a reasonable amount of lift in order to perform well in their environmental conditions. However excessively tall sheep without well defined muscle should be avoided.

Conformation

The ideal sheep should be well balanced in appearance and move easily and feely. The shoulders should be well placed and not excessively broad, as this can lead to lambing issues. The shoulders should come down straight however a little inward shape is tolerable. Any animal with outward development of the shoulders or knuckles should be culled. The hooves should be square and not long. Animals with rolled back feet, splade front feet or over developed hooves should be culled. The head and body of a ram should be of a masculine appearance, whilst the ewe should have feminine qualities. An overly muscled ewe, to the point where she has lost her feminine appearance should be avoided.

The rump should be well muscled with a well developed inner and outer twist. A V or pinned inner twist should be avoided.

Fat

Localised excessive fat on the sheep should be avoided. The animal should be firm to handle.

Colour

Dorpers:

The ideal is for a white bodied animal with the black colour confined to the neck and head area. However small black spots on the body and legs is permissible. White feet, teats and brown around the eyes is undesirable.

White Doper:

The ideal is a white sheep, with full pigmentation around the eyes, under the tail, on the udder and the teats. A limited number of other small coloured spots, both black and ginger, is permissible on the ears and underline.

Fertility

The development of the male and female reproductive organs should be suitable for high fertility, easy lambing and good mothering ability.

With all this in mind sheep should be bred that have:

- Stretch
- A balanced appearance
- A quiet nature
- A shedding coverage
- The ability to walk long distances.

They must have all these attributes whilst producing high quality lambs with low enterprise inputs.