

Life Cycle SHEEP

FERTILIZATION

A ram will breed naturally or provide semen for artificial insemination.



GESTATION

A ewe (female sheep) is pregnant for approximately 138 to 149 days. Ewes most commonly give birth to one or two lambs.

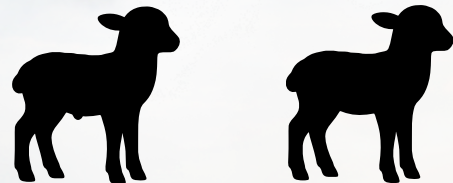


LAMBING

A ram lamb may be kept intact for breeding purposes or castrated before six weeks of age, becoming a wether.



Lambs typically weigh 8 to 12 pounds at birth. After birth, lambs may undergo docking, which shortens the tail to improve health and welfare.



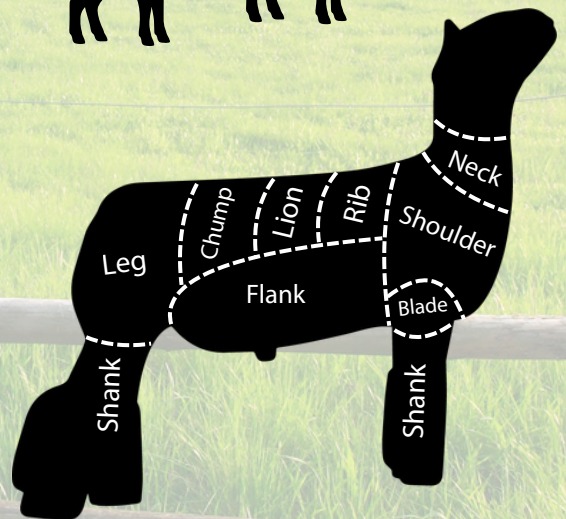
GROWING

Wethers and ewes may be managed together while being raised for meat production. Sheep receive feed that supports healthy growth and development.



FINISHING

Lambs are typically finished in 6 to 8 months, reaching full market size. The breed influences muscling and marbling, affecting the flavor and texture of the meat.



TERMINOLOGY:

Artificial Insemination (AI)-A process where semen is placed into a female animal to start a pregnancy without natural breeding.

Breed-A group of animals with similar characteristics that are passed down from parents to offspring.

Docking-The shortening of a lamb's tail to help improve health and cleanliness.

Ewe-An adult female sheep.

Ewe Lamb-A female sheep that is less than one year old.

Finishing-The final stage of growth when sheep are fed and cared for until they reach the desired market size.

Gestation-The period of time when a ewe is pregnant and the lamb is developing before birth.

Lamb-A sheep that is less than one year of age.

Lambing-The process of a ewe giving birth to lambs.

Market Lamb-A lamb that has reached the size and condition needed for sale or processing.

Marbling-Small amounts of fat within the meat that help add flavor and tenderness.

Meat Sheep-Sheep raised primarily for meat production.

Mutton-Meat from a sheep that is older than one year of age.

Nutrition-The food and nutrients animals need to grow, stay healthy, and produce meat, milk, or wool.

Ram-An adult male sheep.

Ram Lamb-A male sheep that is less than one year old.

Wether-A male sheep that has been castrated. Wethers are often easier to manage and are commonly raised for meat production.

Wool-The fleece grown by sheep that is used to make clothing, blankets, and other textiles.

Yield-The amount of usable meat, wool, or milk produced by an animal.

Quick Reference

Female Sheep: Ewe → Ewe Lamb

Male Sheep: Ram → Ram Lamb → Wether (if castrated)

Life Cycle Stages: Breeding → Gestation → Lambing → Growing → Finishing → Market

Sources:
<https://familyfarmlivestock.com/is-your-lamb-is-ready-to-butcher-3-things-to-check/>
<https://www.sheep101.info/index.html>
<https://thegroundedhomestead.com/post/raising-sheep-for-meat>

