



Sheep – Breeds in Afghanistan

info sheet

Breed	Location	Main characteristics	Main Use	Lactation	Reproduction
Karakul	Northern Provinces from Badghis to Takhar, with the highest concentration in Balkh, Jawzjan and Faryab.	Very hardy breed. Big and long body, long legs, fallen pelvis, long rump/fat-tail with the shape of S in the end, and long and fallen ears. Black and gray are the main colors. Average live weight of ewes: 42-45 kg (range 40-55 kg), rams: 50-60 kg (range 50-90 kg). Turkmen and Uzbek are the main Karakul breeders.	Pelts (lambs), wool (adults)	Lactation period: between 120-130 days, up to 40-45 kg of milk.	Birth rate: 70-85%, twinning: 5-8%.
Ghaljai	Southern Provinces of Ghazni, Paktia, Zabul and Kandahar.	Medium body size, fat tail. Body weight of ewes: 35- 45 kg, rams: 35- 50 kg. Usually white fleece, but colors also occur. The wool is a mixed of coarse and fine. The annual greasy fleece weight of ewes is 1.5-2 kg and that of rams is 2.5-3 kg.	Meat, wool.	Lactation period: 120-130 days, up to 35-45 kg of milk.	Birth rate: 70-75%, twinning: 0-2%. Crossbreeding: with Merinos results in the sheep Baluchi , good quality carpet wool.
Arabi	Nearly all Northern Provinces, but also in Kabul and the provinces north of Kabul.	Large-farmed sheep of 45-50 kg body weight, good mutton conformation and fattening ability, fat-rumped. Mainly black with a white stripe along the forehead. Brown and white also occur. Wool is short, coarse, poor quality. The greasy fleece weigh is 1.2-1.7 kg.	Meat (mutton)	Between 130-140 days, up to 45-55 kg of milk.	Birth rate: 65-80%, twinning: 0-2%
Turki	North-eastern Provinces of Parwan, Kapisa, Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz and Baghlan. Known as "Afghani" in Pakistan.	Very resistant breed that can live in desert areas with poor quality feed. Large body size, good mutton conformation, body weight of 50- 55 kg. Tall with thin and long legs, long and deep head, bulgy nose bone, long or short ears, thick skin, high percentage of fat, fat-rumped. Brown wool, thick and short, in small amounts, with no commercial value.	Meat (mutton)	Lactation period: 130-140 days, up to 55-65 kg of milk.	Birth rate: 75-80%, twinning: 8-10%
Baluchi	Nimroz Province and southern parts of Helmand and Kandahar. Also neighboring regions of Pakistan and Iran	Well adapted to the arid range and desert areas and produces good quality carpet wool. Medium-sized sheep with average body weight of 34-36 kg, fat tail. The annual greasy fleece weight is 1.3-2 kg.	Wool	Lactation period: 120-130 days, up to 35-40 kg of milk.	Birth rate: 60-75 %, twinning: 0-1 %
Hazaragie	Mountainous region of central Afghanistan.	Small to medium size, body weights of ewes between 28-35 kg, fat tail. Reddish-brown wool reduces its value for carpet manufacture. The sheep are kept inside during winter.	Meat	Not available	Not available
Gadik	Badakhshan and parts of the Eastern Mountains (Noristan and Kunar).	Body weight of ewes is 25-28 kg, fat tail. Wool is among the finest in Afghanistan. The annual greasy fleece weight is 1-1.8 kg.	Wool	Lactation period: 120-130 days, up to 30-35 kg of milk	Birth rate: 65-75%, twinning: 0-1%
Kandahari, Farahi or Herati	Western Provinces	Good forager that makes efficient use of poor rangelands and desert-like areas. White colored breed, medium-size, fat tail. Body weight of ewes is in the range of 40-60 kg. Wool is among the best qualities for carpet production in Afghanistan. Annual greasy fleece weight is 1.2- 1.6 kg.	Wool	Lactation period: 120-130 days, up to 35-40 kg of milk	Birth rate: 65-75%, twinning: 0-2%

Prepared by Maria Paz Santibanez, Hussain Sharifi and Mark Bell, 2012

Reference: Yalcin, B.C. 1979. The sheep breeds of Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. Cited in: First Draft Country Report on the Status and Perspectives of the Animal Genetic Resources Development and Conservation in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, by Dr. Mustafa Zafar, <http://www.fao.org/>

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