

Sheep

Celebrating America's Favorite Farm Animals with Popular Farming Series: Sheep

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An Ovine Calling

Sheep are one of America's favorite farm animals, especially among small farmers.

Not only are they adorable and lovable, they are versatile and offer many uses on the farm.

Sheep can be used to graze and clear fencerows and fields of obnoxious weeds. In addition to their grazing prowess, they also provide meat, milk and fiber that we can use to nourish and protect our bodies.

Whether you are interested in adding sheep to your flock or in starting an ovine flock, Popular Farming's Sheep has everything you need to know to start raising sheep or to tackle new adventures with your flock.

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What You'll Find

As an all-encompassing guide to raising sheep, you'll find helpful and interesting information about all aspects of ovine husbandry, breeds, breeding and lambing, daily chores, and even how to ensure your sheep have quality pasture and browse to feed on, such as the advice offered in "Pasture Perfect."

"For small sheep raisers, there are some simple rotational grazing rules you can follow to achieve pasture benefits. The Two-Ten method is a good example. In the Two-Ten method, you move your sheep into a pasture just as the grass reaches 10 inches (or the tops of your mud boots) and move them out of the pasture when the grass height has been nibbled down to two inches. Rest periods of at least 28 days will allow the pasture to rejuvenate and will kill many parasite larvae before the flock returns." –Lisa Anderson Mann

Sheep has all the information you need to get started with your ovine flock or to learn more about your existing woollies. If you haven't started your flock, you'll find a wealth of information about the myriad sheep breeds in Popular Farming's Sheep.

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Meet Your Sheep

There are a lot of possibilities when it comes to choosing which breed of sheep to raise. From sheep raised specifically for meat or milk, or only for wool, there is an abundant selection of breeds to choose from. Get a taste of the many sheep breeds in Sue Weaver's "Sheep, Sheep, Beautiful Sheep."

"So many sheep, so little time!' That's the rallying cry of America's dyed-in-the-wool sheep fanciers as they choose which breeds to add to their hobby-farm flocks. With more than 65 beautiful breeds to select from, it can be a daunting task...Border Cheviot-type sheep were established on the windswept Cheviot Hills between Scotland and Northumberland in England as early as 1372. They are short, blocky, alert sheep with wool-free heads and Roman-nosed faces accented by horse-like, upright ears ...The Cheviot's medium-wool fleece is dense, springy and resilient; its meat is mild and tasty ..."
–Sue Weaver

If you are still looking for more information about breeds, breeding, lambing or sheep husbandry, each article provides links and sources, but you can also turn to the "Resources" section for an in-depth listing of breed organizations, supply houses, veterinarian organizations, periodicals and much more.

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How To ...

From lambing to milking to making sheep cheese or recognizing an ill sheep, there's a lot to know about keeping sheep.

Popular Farming's Sheep can offer help.

Get detailed, do-it-yourself tips and on how to move and handle a flock or an individual sheep, how to bottle feed an orphan lamb as well as how to spin your flock's fiber. Also, get a veterinarian's advice on how to recognize sick flock members, as well as how to treat and prevent the most common illnesses affecting your sheep in "Flock to Good Health."

"It's the nature of sheep to accept pain with little complaint, so even if they are quite ill, it is often overlooked by many shepherds. One must become an educated and careful observer to detect and treat sheep illness in the early stages." —Clell V. Bagley, DVM

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The Renaissance Sheep

Sheep are a valuable asset for any size farm.

They provide so many resources from pasture management through grazing to milk for cheese and yogurt to meat and wool that can be sold off the farm.

Sheep provide the farmer with the resources they need to make their own value-added farm products such as cheese, yogurt, meat, yarn, woolen garments and more. In Popular Farming's Sheep, you'll find information about all of these opportunities and how you can find your niche in the sheep market. Take a look at "A Woolly Venture" for even more information about starting your own sheep business.

"Sheep are one of the most versatile livestock species for a small farm. They can produce delicious meats such as lamb and mutton; wool in many colors and qualities; and milk for cheese and yogurt. They are used for forage control and pasture improvement, and they make great youth livestock projects and pets. A farm business that features sheep as the central focus or that includes sheep as part of the total business plan can encompass one or more of the benefits of raising sheep. Planning a business, whether it is a farm business or any other type, requires several key steps." —Matt John

There's a lot to learn about ovine husbandry; Popular Farming's Sheep is loaded with information from sheep lingo to breeder resources and sheep first-aid kits—it's an essential resource for anyone interested in raising sheep.

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A Woolen World

Sheep have been vital to human life since the earliest recorded history. Learn how sheep have influenced human history.
By Sue Weaver

Sheep, Sheep, Beautiful Sheep!

With a bounty of ovine breeds, it's hard to choose just one. Find out if one (or more!) of these breeds will fit your farm.
By Sue Weaver

In Jeopardy

Heritage sheep breeds are hardy, prolific and beautiful. They're also crucial to the survival of all sheep. Can you help preserve these rare ovines?
By Arie McFarlen

The Sheep Behind the Fleece

Despite stereotypes, sheep are intelligent and curious animals that can be handled with ease if you know the right techniques. Get an expert's advice on how to understand your flock.
By Susan Schoenian

The Lambing Life

If breeding sheep is on your list of goals, review our breeding tips before you begin.
By Susan Schoenian

Pasture Perfect

The health of your pasture directly affects the health of your flock. Find out how to provide your sheep with a healthy buffet.
By Lisa Anderson Mann

Sheep Management 101

Ovine care isn't complicated, but with a few tips, daily management can be even easier. Learn how to keep your sheep happy and healthy.

By Cherie Langlois

A Wolf in Wool

Without strong defense mechanisms, sheep can be vulnerable to a number of predators. Learn how to foil the predators lurking around your pastures.

By Lisa Anderson Mann

Flock to Good Health

Sheep can suffer a variety of ailments if not managed properly. We offer a veterinarian's advice on how to treat and prevent illnesses in your flock.

By Clell V. Bagley, DVM

A Woolly Venture

Starting your own sheep business doesn't have to be a risky venture. Identify your niche in the sheep market and get started.

By Matt John

Spinning a Yarn of Your Own

From "sheep to shawl," creating your own woolen garments from your sheep's wool is a shepherd's delight and a handspinner's dream.

By Adrienne L. Shtop

"You Milk ... Sheep?"

Delicious cheeses can be made from sheep milk. Take advice from a professional cheesemaker on how to make your own delectable sheep cheeses.

By Jodi Ohlson Read

Ovine Joy

Enjoy your sheep! From orphan lambs to training herding dogs, you'll love the many ways to have fun with your flock.

By Sue Weaver

Glossary

Ovine lingo explained.

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