



Valais Blacknose Wool

A Valais's wool is an important characteristic and is uniformly white, well balanced over the whole body, thick and full on legs whilst natural and long on the head exhibiting the sheep's robust frame.

Fleeces vary greatly between individual animals and on average grow about 30cm (12 inches) each year. However, it rarely reaches that length as shearing is performed twice a year, resulting in 12.5 to 15 cm (5 to 6 inches) staple length. A minimum 10cm staple length is required for showing.

When shorn fleeces based on 6 months growth approximately weigh:

Lambs 1-1.5 kg

Ewes 2.5 -3kg

Rams 2.5 – 3kg

The fleece in lambs is soft to touch but becomes coarser as the sheep matures. The Swiss grade approximately equates to 28-38 microns depending on age and gender. Fibre diameter generally finest in lambs and coarsest in adult males (average micron of 38 in mature sheep and 28 – 30 in lambs)

Use

Although thought to be mainly a carpet grade wool, Valais Blacknose wool can be blended with finer wools to achieve a softer fibre depending on the intended use and end product. It has also proved great for felting and is favoured for spinning due to its long staple length.

Flystrike

With the weather starting to warm up remember to take measures to protect your flock against fly strike. Areas to watch are around the sheep's horns, their hooves, and around their rear ends. If you spot any signs of fly strike i.e., flies buzzing around and landing on an area of a sheep, lameness, stamping, nibbling/skin irritation, loss of wool or if you can already see eggs and/or maggots, immediately clean and treat the infected area accordingly. There are multiple products available i.e., Crovect, Spot on but CliK Extra is longer lasting and provides 16 weeks' worth of protection.