



South African sheep breeds: Pedi

SCOPE: This Info-pack provides a brief description of the Pedi sheep breed.

KEY WORDS: Type, Origin, Description, Production, Products, Distribution, Numbers.

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Type

Indigenous fat-tailed meat breed.



Photo: Grehenheimpedi.co.za

Origin of the breed

The fat-tailed Pedi sheep arrived in South Africa between 200 and 400 AD with the Bapedi people who migrated southwards into Limpopo Province and settled in the area south of the Soutpansberg.

In the mid-1980s an effort was made to ensure the survival of this indigenous breed. A flock of Pedi sheep was established and maintained at the Stellenbosch Breeding Station in Sekukhuneland in Limpopo Province. A second flock was established for recording and evaluation purposes on the farm Delftzyl near Roedtan, also in the Limpopo Province. These two herds, as well as a herd at the Mara Research Station in the Limpopo Province, are still being maintained.

The Pedi club of South Africa was established in 1998 and applied to be recognised as a breed society in 2006 under the name Pedi Breeders' Society of South Africa. Registration as a breed

society was delayed when it became apparent that a group of Bapedi people also wanted to register a breed society. The two groups got together and a common constitution was agreed upon. It was also agreed that the breed shall be known as the Bapedi sheep, in keeping with the breed's origin.

Description

A relatively small framed sheep with a typical symmetrical respiratory type build (flat, shallow body and long legs). The breed is a naturally polled hair sheep with a wedge shaped fat-tail. The length of the tail can vary with a maximum length between the hocks and the hooves. A typical wedge shaped fat tail that is broad at the base and narrows carrot-like to the tip. Some animals have a shorter top part that turns upwards towards a thinner terminal tip. Spiralled tails are not acceptable.



Photo: Thabamanziranch.co.za

The most common colour is white with a red-brown head - as a result of selection for this trait in the foundation flock at Stellenbosch Breeding Station. A large variety of colours occur, varying from uniform brown through white with a red to

brown head to a variety of brown and white or black and white patterns to all black. In Pedi sheep black is genetically recessive. The hair is generally short with a cashmere type under-coat, especially in winter. Young sheep tends to have longer hair with more woolliness. They lose this as they get older.

Production norms

Pedi sheep mature at an early age and can be mated at an early age.

Pedi weights

Trait	Weight
Ewes (kg)	35 – 45
Rams (kg)	50 – 70

Products

- Meat - The carcass is regarded as a fat-tailed type. Pedi meat is lean because the fat is mainly located in the tail. Pedi meat is tasty because they are slaughtered at a later age.
- Fat tail - External fat is mainly located in the tail, which is used in processed meats.
- Skins – High quality skin.



Photo: lmg.clasf.co.za

Normal production environment

- Sub-tropical bush veld to semi-arid savannah.
- Most of the Pedi sheep in South Africa are found in the Limpopo province.



Photo: Farmersweekly.co.za



Photo: Farmersweekly.co.za

References

This info-pack was compiled from various sources of information. The text may contain extracts from the following:

Ramsay, K., Harris, L. & Kotzé, A., 2001. Landrace breeds: South Africa's indigenous and locally developed farm animals. Farm animal conservation trust, Pretoria
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