

Sheep

Ovis aries · Meat/wool breed

DIFFICULTY Easy–moderate

TYPE Livestock, kept for meat and/or wool

PRODUCTIVE LIFE Meat breeds processed 4–12 months; wool breeds shorn annually for years



SPACE

2–3m² shelter,
400m²+ grazing
area per sheep



DIET

Pasture-based,
hay in poor
conditions,
minimal grain
needed



WATER

Constant fresh
access



TEMPERAMENT

Calm, flock-
oriented, skittish
if handled
roughly

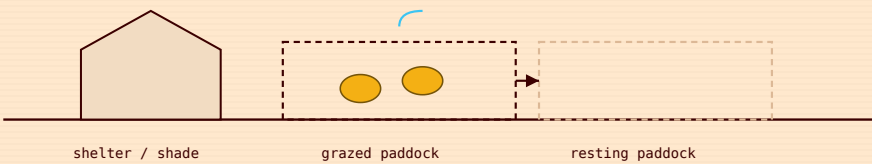


LIFESPAN

10–12 years

01 Rotate the pasture

Sheep are efficient grazers and, like most ruminants, do best on rotated pasture — moving them between paddocks improves pasture health and helps manage worm burdens.



02 Housing & setup

SHELTER	Simple shelter or shade — sheep are generally hardy and need less housing than pigs or goats.
FENCING	Standard stock fencing; sheep are less prone to escaping than goats.
BEDDING	Straw if housed overnight, though many setups rely mainly on shelter belts and shade.

03 Daily care

- Rotate grazing paddocks to manage pasture and parasite load.
- Provide hay when pasture is poor, especially over summer dry spells or winter.
- Shear annually if keeping a wool breed.
- Keep in groups — sheep are strongly flock-oriented and stressed when alone.

04 Health & problems

- **Worms** — manage with pasture rotation and monitoring; resistance is a growing issue, so avoid over-reliance on drenching alone.
- **Flystrike** — particularly in wool breeds in warm, humid weather; regular checks and shearing help prevent it.
- **Footrot** — in wet conditions; keep ground as dry as practical and trim hooves as needed.
- **Predator risk to lambs** — secure paddocks at lambing time.

05 Production & harvest

PROCESSING AGE	4–12 months for meat breeds depending on target size.
WOOL	Shorn annually, typically spring, for wool breeds.
YIELD	Roughly 40–50% of live weight as dressed meat.
STORAGE	Meat: fridge a few days, freezes well. Wool: store clean and dry until processed or sold.

06 Compatibility & considerations

GOOD WITH

Other sheep (flock animals)

Orchard grazing (light, with trunk protection)

AVOID KEEPING WITH

Being kept alone

Very wet, poorly drained paddocks (footrot risk)

NOTE

A good low-input grazing animal if you have pasture area to spare beyond the vegetable and orchard zones.