

Interesting Facts about Fine Fleece Shetland Sheep “The Wee Wonder!”



- Shetland Sheep are a small, hardy breed originating in the Shetland Island in the northern part of Scotland.
 - Rams weigh 90-150 pounds. Ewes are smaller at 75-100 pounds.
 - Shetland Sheep on the islands enjoy a long cool winter with a short mild summer (temperatures are rarely above 77 degrees).
 - Island Shetlands graze on a flora which is dominated by Arctic-alpine plants, wild flowers, moss and lichens. There are grass meadows but trees are scarce. They thrive in most areas of the US.
 - Many Shetland ewes have twins, triplets and a few even have quads. They are easy lambers and make great mothers.
 - Shetland Sheep are great for young shepherds as they are easy to handle and many love attention. They are real “Tail Waggers!!” and love having their chins scratched.
 - Shetlands have 11 colors in black, brown and white with many different shades and have 30 different patterns and markings.
 - Shetlands eat only 1/2 to 1/3 as much hay as a commercial-sized wool/meat sheep.
 - Shetland sheep provide healthy, grass-fed, mild tasting gourmet quality meat. These sheep can hold lamb-like quality until they are at least 3 years old.
 - Shetland Rams can be horned or polled (no horns). Ewes are generally hornless but can also have horns.
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- Henry VIII (1491 – 1547) insisted that his hosiery be made from fine Shetland wool.
 - Queen Victoria (1819 – 1901) wore and commissioned fine hosiery and shawls made from Shetlands wool.
 - Lightweight warm Shetland jumpers (sweaters) were worn to the top of Mt. Everest by Hillary and Tensing in 1953.
 - Fair Isle sweaters were originally made from Shetland wool yarn and the technique originated on one of the Shetland Islands named Fair Isle.
 - Fine Shetland yarn is used to make the famous Shetland Islands Wedding Ring Shawls. This lace shawl is so delicate that one can draw it through a wedding ring.
 - Fine Fleece Shetland yarn is routinely used to make very soft and warm sweaters, socks, scarves, gloves and mittens.
 - Fine Fleece Shetland fleeces generally have a staple length of 2-6” (but should not exceed 7”), are dense, with crimp/wave. These fleeces can have a smooth silky or cottony feel and produce excellent yarn with lots of “life.”
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- ✓ The Fine Fleece Shetland Sheep Association (FFSSA) supports the 1927 Shetland breed standard and Appendix A, which is validated by historical documentation of this heritage breed.
 - ✓ FFSSA members utilize micron testing to insure the quality of wool products.
 - ✓ FFSSA maintains a fleece performance registry of qualified Shetland sheep.
 - ✓ In the U.S., NASSA maintains a Shetland Sheep Registry. The Shetland Sheep Society and the Shetland Flock Book Society are found in the United Kingdom.