

A Brief History

Sheep are one of the oldest domesticated animals in the world. Sheep have provided milk, meat and clothing to people for more than 10,000 years. Sheep production was well established during biblical times and sheep farming is man's oldest organized industry. Wool was the first commodity of sufficient value to warrant international trade.

Sheep were introduced to America when Columbus made his second voyage, including sheep among his livestock he took to Cuba and Santo Domingo. In 1519, when Cortez began the expedition which could open Mexico and the western United States, he took with him the offspring of Columbus' sheep as a walking food supply.

After the pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, they bought 40 sheep from the Dutch on Manhattan Island. Domesticated sheep were used by colonists primarily for wool for home-produced textiles and, to a lesser extent, meat. By 1664, the sheep population had grown to 100,000.

As settlers moved west during the 1800s, they took with them flocks of sheep from the eastern seaboard. Most of these sheep were of English breeding, more suited to producing lamb than wool.

Today the U.S. sheep industry is one of the most complex industries in animal agriculture. Sheep provide lamb and mutton (mature sheep) meat for consumption, wool and pelts for textiles, milk from an emerging dairy sheep industry, and play a role in medical and scientific research.

Surprising Things You May Not Know About Sheep and Wool

- In 1999 when an oil spill occurred near Phillip Island, Australia, the Phillip Island penguins were fitted with wool sweaters. The sweaters helped maintain the penguins' body heat and prevented them from being poisoned by the oil.
- Some of the world's most famous cheeses were originally made from sheep's milk: Roquefort, Feta, Ricotta, and Pecorino Romano. Sheep's milk is also made into yogurt, butter, and ice cream.
- Sheep are used in stem cell research. Their blood is an ideal medium for culturing bacteria.
- Using nanotechnology, scientists are using wool proteins to create new wound dressings, bone graft implants, and medical sutures.
- Along with goats, sheep are the best livestock to use to control unwanted vegetation, such as noxious weeds and invasive plants. In fact, President Woodrow Wilson grazed sheep on the White House lawn.

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Serving the Indiana sheep industry since 1876

Indiana Sheep Facts

Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture

Sheep in Indiana

Farms and Sheep

	2002	2012	Change
IN Farms	2,105	2,109	+ 4
IN Sheep	61,620	54,675	-11%
US Farms	73,841	88,338	+14,497
US Sheep	6,341,799	5,364,844	-15%

In Indiana in 2012, there were 2,109 farms that produced 54,675 sheep. During the same year, there were 88,338 farms across the United States producing a total of 5,364,844 sheep.

Indiana Wool Production

	2002	2012	Change
Sheep shorn	42,000	38,000	-10%
Yield Lbs.	280,000	255,048	-9%

The average weight of one fleece is 6.7 pounds, which is approximately enough wool to make one men's wool suit.

Indiana Lamb/Mutton Production

	2002	2012	Change
Lbs.	3.9 million	4.4 million	>12%

In 2012, Indiana produced 4.4 million pounds of lamb/mutton valued at \$6,128,000.

Sheep Products

Lamb is a food you can feel good about eating because today's lamb is a lean, tender meat with delicate flavor. It's low in fat, a good source of high-quality protein and an excellent source of vitamins and minerals such as vitamin B12, niacin, and zinc.

Meat – Popular Cuts¹

Shoulder chop	Require shorter cooking time making for quick, flavorful meals
Loin chops (aka T-bone chops)	One of the most readily available cuts in 3- to 4-oz. serving sizes
Rack	Makes an impressive presentation with 8 chops/rack.
Ribs (Denver Rib)	One of the most cost-conscious cuts, great for grilling and BBQ
Ground	Mellow and mild, a perfect substitute for ground beef
Shanks	Lean and big on flavor, a popular slow-cook choice braised in broth
Boneless leg (BRT leg)	Most versatile and leanest of cuts, try roasting, kabobs, grilling
Bone in leg	Favorite holiday cut, the bone adds flavor and richness
Kabob/stew meat	Readily available trimmed and cubed from leg or shoulder

From Wool and Hides

Sheep wool and hides also provide significant products used by a number of American industries. These by-products are used in the manufacturing of many consumer items. For example, lanolin is used in adhesive tape,

¹ Source: American Lamb (<http://www.americanlamb.com/lamb-cutting-board/>)

printing inks, motor oils, and auto lubrication as well as in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

Lanolin	Leather goods
Yarns	Felt
Worsted fabrics	Wool fabrics
Upholstery	Pelts, such as shearing
Insulation	Artists' brushes
Drum heads	Sports equipment, for example tennis & baseballs



Barbecue pulled American lamb shank on crusty rolls

And, More!

Sheep are used to produce numerous dairy products including ice cream and cheeses. Sheep manure is useful as fertilizer for nitrogen, potash, phosphorus and other minerals. Horns are used in crafts and other products.