



SOAY SHEEP FACTS

Found

The Soay was firmly established in Hampshire and Wiltshire grazing on arable land. The breed has a great ability to adapt to various environments.

Description

They are tiny and hardy, primitive and shy. They have no wool on their face or legs, they are a chocolate brown or tan colour and are usually horned.

Wool

Soay Sheep fleeces range from fine to very course and they do not require shearing as they shed their fleece naturally each year. The wool is used for specialty hand knitted yarns.

Breeding

The Soay ewe is an excellent mother. Shelter is sought more readily than other breeds of sheep due to their small body size and lightweight fleece.



The BIG Sheep tourist attraction have a Ram show. The Soay sheep is one of the rams that perform and strut around on the stage in the Sheepy Shows throughout the year along side various other breeds of rams. The demonstrators educate visitors with facts about the varieties of sheep in an entertaining way.

The Soay has been successfully used in the reclamation of low fertility grazing; its light tread and ability to survive on sparse vegetation make it ideal for such work. The meat is renowned for its leanness and distinctive taste. Classified as a primitive breed, the Soay has the most primitive appearance of all domestic breeds, and is regarded as a modern day representative of the types of domestic sheep first brought to the British Isles. The breed is descended from sheep found on the island of Soay in the St Kilda group of islands off the Scottish coast. The word Soay is Norse for "sheep island" and it is probable that the Vikings found sheep of a similar type to the modern breed on the islands.