



WILTIPOLL BREED STANDARDS



Introduction

This document provides a single source for the management, identification and assessment of the Wiltipoll Breed and is a tool to assist visual assessment.

All Wiltipoll Sheep must be the progeny of a Wiltipoll Sire and Dam and meet the breed Description and Standard to be called a Wiltipoll. A “Stud” Wiltipoll sheep must have a recorded pedigree of Sire, Dam and Sire of Dam. Breeding history is recorded and registered with ASSBA (Australian Stud Sheep Breeders Association) and any Stud sheep sold must be eligible for ASSBA registration.

Wiltipoll Stud Breeders’ purpose is to supply quality rams and breeding ewes to other breeders, both Stud and Commercial. Stud breeders are the custodians of the Wiltipoll genetics for the breeds future and therefore adherence to the Breed’s standards an imperative. Photos in this breed standards are of both commercial and stud sheep.

Provision of a pedigree does not mean a sheep is worthy of Stud status. It is the stud breeder’s responsibility to ensure that all stud sheep meet the Wiltipoll Breed Standards and are eligible for registration.

Breed Standard Purpose

- To provide Wiltipoll purchasers/vendors details of a true Wiltipoll sheep
- Be a guide for independent assessor to determine the quality of a Wiltipoll sheep
- To define the Wiltipoll features to identify superior sheep
- Provide a single source document for ASSBA, Media and breed comparisons
- Align all Wiltipoll breeders with a consistent set of descriptors and measurements

Breed Standard Document Control

Maintaining and communicating the Breed Standard document is the responsibility of Wiltipoll Sheep Breeders Association Inc. The document is controlled by the WSBA Committee Secretary and any changes require approval of the Committee.

Version 1.0 – Approved at 15th February 2022 Committee meeting.

Standards

Wiltipoll sheep are a polled, large framed, lean and well-muscled cleanskin meat sheep developed in Australia in the early 1990's using reliable wool shedding and polled genetics.

The Wiltipoll breed has a fleece similar to other short wool meat breeds that fully sheds in spring. Wiltipoll is an established breed with a sound history of successful breeding see "History of Wiltipolls".

1. Identifiable Characteristics
2. Breeding Characteristics
3. Conformation and Appearance

1. Identifiable Characteristics

1.1 Polled

Wiltipoll sheep, as the name suggests, are fully polled with a depression in the bone of the skull at the horn site. A Keratin scur or bony knob, no more than 5mm above skull profile, may be evident however no scur is preferred.



Depression in horn site



Keratin Scur

1.2 Shedding

Wiltipolls are an easy-care breed and are fully, clean shedding which means no crutching, no shearing and reduced need for external parasite treatment. Adult (two tooth and over) Wiltipolls must shed their fleece fully from late winter to early summer (timing is influenced by seasonal conditions, nutrition and geographic location). Lambs should be fully shed, by early summer, the year following their birth.



Fully shed lamb



Flock of fully shed ewes

1.3 Calm, Intelligent Disposition, Easy to contain

The calm temperament of a Wiltipoll is an excellent trait of the breed.

They are easily mustered without the need for dogs.

Wiltipolls will become accustomed to bikes/vehicles/people and learn not to be disturbed by their presence.

Well-handled sheep will show no instances of fence/yard jumping and will display a natural tendency to stay in their allocated paddock.

Wiltipolls move calmly without generating stress amongst the mob.

Ewes with lambs demonstrate a strong desire to stay with and guide their lambs when mustering.



A flock of commercial ewes

1.4 Hardy and Thrive in Wide Variety of Terrain

With a water source and shelter, Wiltipolls are suitable to most areas of Australia for producing prime lamb.

Wiltipolls excel in both wet and dry country, adapting to conditions and surviving well on rough, scrubby feed as well as lush pastures.

Wiltipolls are very adaptable and will browse a variety of food sources to maintain successful breeding and growth rates.



2. Breeding Characteristics

2.1 Seasonal Breeders

Wiltipoll ewes are seasonal breeders and generally only come into season late January to May. This is influenced by the length of daylight hours and latitude.

2.2 Rams are virile and active breeders

Wiltipoll rams have vigour and good stature to service ewes and retain condition while working and finish the season in good form. As a guide a flock of 50 mature ewes (in good condition), in a relatively contained area with an experienced ram should achieve a 99% conception rate in a 6-week joining period (with ewes cycling).

During breeding season, rams will likely display a chevron pattern of skin wrinkles on the forehead. An experienced ram may lose up to 30% body weight over a 6-week joining.



Ram displaying chevron pattern



9-month-old rams

2.3 Multiple births

Wiltipolls achieve a high percentage of multiple births which equates to increased returns. A flock of Wiltipoll ewes joined at 19 months and older ewe can achieve a lambing rate of 180%. While quads are rare, triplets are not unexpected, twins are the normal. Ewes successfully raise multiples without the need for intervention.



2.4 Strong maternal instincts

The strong maternal instincts of a Wiltipoll are a particular trait of the breed. Wiltipoll ewes display strong mothering traits i.e., not abandoning lambs, leaving newborn lambs unattended or feeding at a large distance from lambs

2.5 High Growth Rates

Wiltipolls are large, heavy, fast-growing lambs that meet the demand for a high yield carcass. Wiltipolls are lean and well-muscled with wethers achieving a 55kg live weight at Fat score 3 by 6 months and ewe lambs achieving 56kg at fat score 3 by 10 months. A live to carcass rate of over 50% at condition score 3 is expected. Wiltipoll lambs are relatively small at birth (4.0kg average) however are tough and hardy, growing very quickly.



3–4-week-old lambs

3. Conformation and Appearance

3.1 Large Frame

Wiltipolls are a large frame meat sheep breed and rams have vigour and good stature to service ewes.

Ewes will produce large frame offspring with high potential for quick weight gain.

Wiltipolls have large pelvises for easy lambing. The Wiltipoll ewe size enables more resources for nurturing their lambs in poor conditions.

- Ram height at back (mature ram) to 750mm plus
- Mature working ram, condition score 3 to 130kg plus
- Ewe height at back (mature ewe) to 700 mm plus



Ram 15 months

3.2 Cleanskin

Wiltipoll skin is pink and ticking may become evident as animals age. No ticking is preferred.



3-year-old ewe with some ticking



Over 5-year-old ram with no ticking

3.3 Head

Large and broad, during breeding season rams will likely display a chevron pattern of skin wrinkles on the forehead.

Butting scars on mid forehead are normal and not to be considered a fault and are due to the normal behaviour of rams paddocked together.



3.4 Nose

Slight roman profile is typical of a Wiltipolls appearance

3.5 Dark facial pigments

Dark pigmentation on nose and around eyes preferred and can reduce the risks of skin cancers / skin damage

3.6 Ears

Long and broad and not carried erect. Some minor black spotting is typical of a Wiltipolls appearance



3.7 Neck

Medium length, strong, flexible and well set. Rams should not display a beard

3.8 Shoulders

Well set and oblique. The width of shoulders to be less than width at rear. Narrower at shoulder than rump facilitates easier lambing.

3.9 Chest

Deep and wide with well sprung ribs. Shoulder and chest length to be no more than two thirds of the body length measured from where the neck meets the shoulder to the dock.

Meat value is in the rear one third of the sheep i.e., rump and loin. A sound chest cavity is essential for a robust sheep that can handle all climatic conditions.

3.10 Back and loin

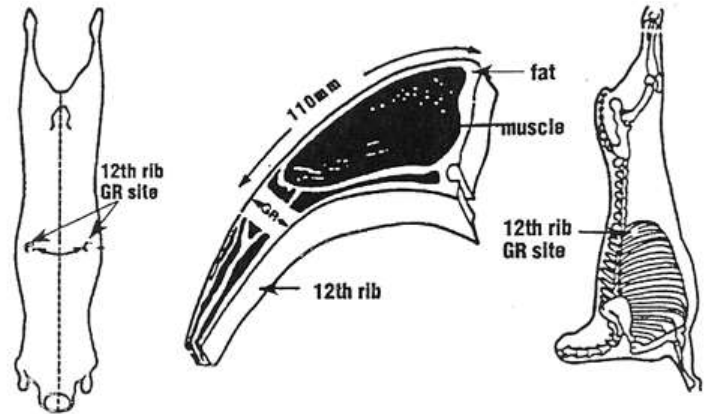
Well filled and muscled, strong level back (may be slightly raised to the rear).



Ram Lamb with straight strong back

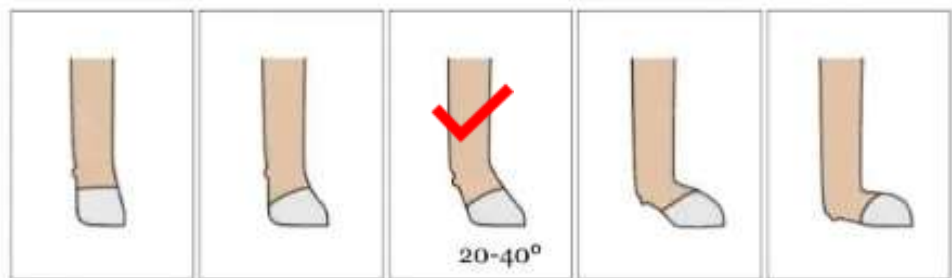
3.11 Hindquarter

Large, well-muscled with a wide pelvic area and back level or slightly raised to the rear with well filled and muscled loin and hindquarter. Wiltipoll lambs being relatively small at birth combined with a large pelvis in ewes, reduces birthing issues.



3.12 Pasterns

Well angled hock and strong pasterns. Weak pasterns and incorrectly angled pasterns result in uneven hoof wear and an increased need for foot paring



3.13 Legs

Strong and set well apart with an alert well balanced stance, front legs well balanced and not knock-kneed. Rear legs set well apart with a well filled twist.

Well-muscled legs and good stance are essential for breeding.

3.14 Feet

Wiltipolls have excellent feet suitable for all paddock conditions. Black hooves are preferred but older sheep will tend to stripe or white without detriment.

Hooves should not be overgrown or folded under. Well-formed and self-wearing hooves minimise trimming and other hoof care procedures.



Description of a Wiltipoll Sheep

Background

Wiltipoll sheep are a polled large framed lean and well-muscled cleanskin meat sheep developed in Australia in the early 1990s using reliable wool shedding and polled genetics. The Wiltipoll breed has a fleece similar to other short wool meat breeds that fully sheds in spring. Key characteristics of the Wiltipoll that make it a first choice for purchasers looking for an easy care large meat sheep are:

- An established breed with reliable meat sheep performance.
- Complete wool shedding.
- Strong maternal instincts and high lambing percentages.
- Wiltipoll ewes are seasonal breeders which allows rams to run with ewes at other times.
- High growth rates for lambs including multiple births.
- Calm, intelligent disposition and easy to muster.
- Easy to retain with basic sheep fences.
- Rams are virile, alert and active performers.
- Hardy sheep that thrive in a wide range of Australian climates.
- Excellent feet suitable for all paddock conditions.
- Fully polled (no horns).
- Suitable for organic style operations.

Appearance:

Head

- **Horn sites**
 - **Male** has depressions in the bone of the skull at the horn sites. One or both depressions may contain a keratin scur or bony horn knob not to protrude more than 5mm above the skull profile.
 - **Female** – similar to male but with a narrower skull profile.
- **Eyes** bright and full with dark pigmentation around the outer edge.
- **Nose** slight Roman profile with dark pigmentation.
- **Ears** long and broad and not carried erect. May have some minor black spotting.

Neck and Shoulders

- **Neck** - medium length, strong and well set.
- **Shoulders** – well set and oblique. Width of sheep at shoulders to be less than width at rear.

Body

- **Chest** - deep and wide with well sprung ribs.
- **Back & Loin** – Level back. Well filled and muscled loin.
- **Hindquarter** – Well muscled large hindquarter with a wide pelvic area consistent with easy lambing.

Legs, Pasterns and Feet

- **Legs** – Strong and set well apart with an alert well balanced stance.
- **Pasterns** – well angled hock and strong pasterns.
- **Feet** – Dark pigmentation preferred but older sheep will lose some pigmentation from their feet without detriment.

Skin and Wool

- **Skin** – Pink with no black ticking in lambs and two-tooth sheep. Increased black ticking in the skin is normal in older sheep.
- **Wool** – Wiltipoll sheep do not require shearing. They shed their fleece during the spring of their first adult year.

Breed Contact

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