



British Wool Marketing Board

The **Teeswater** breed is native to the Teesdale area of County Durham. Like many of the British longwool breeds the Teeswater was subject to breed improvement during the 19<sup>th</sup> century but it remained a relatively localized breed until the 1920s. The breed became more widely known as the sire of the Masham crossbred and enjoyed a period of great popularity.

## Key Characteristics:

**Size-** Large- ewes– 90kg, rams-120kg

**Looks-** The Teeswater is a long and tall sheep but the most striking aspect of the breed is the fleece. The head is off white or grey in colour with dark markings around the nose and ears. The fleece is long, fine and curly with a characteristic topknot over the face.

**Uses-** Crossing sire, specialist wool production.

**Hardy-** The Teeswater is fairly hardy and can cope with most conditions.

**Long lived-** Can produce lambs at up to 10-12 years old.

**Lambing %-** Very prolific breed- a flock under the correct management can achieve 250%.

**Birth weight-** Medium sized lambs. Lambs are quick to rise.

**Crossing- ram-** The principal use for the Teeswater is in the production of a crossbred ewe, the

Masham. The Masham is the result of a Teeswater ram on a Dalesbred, Swaledale or Rough Fell ewe, although other hill breeds have been used as well. The resulting Masham ewe is prolific, highly maternal, hardy and well able to produce good lambs when put to a Terminal sire. The Mule has become the dominant halfbred in the British sheep industry but the Masham would be a good choice for ewe breed on a lowland sheep enterprise.

**Specialist wool production-** The wool of the Teeswater is in demand with hand spinners and a possible small scale enterprise could be created selling the wool or making wool products.

**Meat-** The Teeswater is a lean sheep and has well developed hindquarters. The lambs can be taken up to 30kg deadweight without getting overfat<sup>1</sup>. Purebred lambs can reach 19.9kg at 8 weeks old<sup>2</sup>.

**Wool-** Staple length 20-30cm. Fleece weight 4-6kg. Quality 32s-36s

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust is the leading national charity working to conserve and protect the United Kingdom's rare native breeds of farm animals from extinction. We rely on the support of our members, grants and donations from the public to raise the £700,000 a year needed to maintain our conservation work with rare UK native breeds of farm animals. Visit [www.rbst.org.uk](http://www.rbst.org.uk) to see how you can help.

More information available from the Teeswater Sheep Breeders' Association- [www.teeswater-sheep.co.uk](http://www.teeswater-sheep.co.uk) or 01947 840924

<sup>1</sup> Most information taken from Teeswater Sheep Breeders Association +publicity material.  
<sup>2</sup> Efficiency Estimates of UK Sheep Breeds- J.Vipond