

# SHEEP FARMING

- Corriedale & Polwarth base breeds
- New breeds providing genetic diversity, finer wool and improved carcase characteristics
- 60.9% lambing
- Greasy fleece weight averages 3.95kg
- Average fibre diameter about 26 micron
- Average farm approx 6,000 sheep
- Lambing in October/November
  - Improved Nutrition
  - Improved Weather Conditions
- Shearing from September to March
  - Pre-lamb shearing September/October
  - Post-lamb (ewes) shearing in January/Feb
  - Young sheep in November/December
  - Wethers in October/December
- Majority of sheep are shorn by professional contractors, the rest by owner operators
- Wool is prepared to agreed Quality Control Standards
  - Falkland Islands Guide to Clip Preparation
  - Quality Falkland Wool
- Wool is classed on the farm on the basis of breed, age, style and quality
- Wool is classed by a mix of professional and owner classers
- Some farms will be fully internationally organically accredited to sell organic wool in 2009

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# PROJECTS

## Department of Agriculture Programmes

- Business Skills Development
  - Gross Margin Modelling
- Wool & Meat Development
  - Wool Clip Analysis
  - Sheep Genetic Improvement - introduced dual purpose breeds
  - AI/ET Programme
  - Farm Improvement Programme
  - National Beef Herd - Angus genetics introduced to provide high quality animals for sale and lease to farmers
- Fish, Animal & Plant Health
  - Veterinary Regulations
  - Oversee Sand Bay Abattoir
  - Fish Export Certification
- Biosecurity Strategy
  - Review of Legislation
  - Public Awareness Programme
  - Inspection of imported goods

## Pasture Improvement

- Rotational/Managed Grazing
- Forage Crops
- Improved pastures through cultivation
- Government assistance available to farmers (showing a 3:1 return) through the Farm Improvement Programme

## Genetic Improvement Programme

- By using a selection index the National Stud Flock and others are aiming to decrease fibre diameter, increase wool cut and improve carcase traits
- They are also being selected for easy care characteristics of open faces and parasite control
- Finer micron quickly from new breeds
 

~ Polwarth	~ SAMM
~ Dohne Merino	~ Cormos
~ MPM	~ Afrino
- Improved carcase conformation for abattoir
- Government assistance available to farmers (showing a 3:1 return) through the Farm Improvement Programme

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# Agriculture in the Falkland Islands





# INTRODUCTION

## The Falkland Islands

### Location

- 483km from South American mainland
- 1365km from Antarctic Circle
- Latitude: 51° - 53° South
- Longitude 57° - 62° West
- 2,478 Falkland Island residents (2006 census)

### Geography

- Total Land Area of 12,173km<sup>2</sup> (approx 1,217,000ha)
- 2 main islands plus 778 smaller islands
- Topographically generally hilly
- Highest point is 705 metres

## The Department of Agriculture

### Our Vision

A prosperous and self-reliant agricultural sector that creates opportunities for Falkland Islanders and is highly valued locally and internationally.

### Our Mission

To foster a viable and internationally competitive agricultural industry through integrated applied research, extension, business skills development and regulatory programmes.

### Ten Year Plan

Over the next ten years the Department of Agriculture will be working closely with farm businesses to:

- Increase breeding flock sizes and hence overall sheep production levels by
  - Increasing lambing rates
  - Improving lamb and hogget nutrition and health
- Improve the value of wool sold by
  - Reducing the average fibre diameter
  - Marketing more wool as Certified Organic
- Increasing the number of lambs, mutton and beef processed for export

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# FARMING IN THE FALKLANDS

Most of the Falkland Islands land mass is used for agriculture. Despite grazing with over half a million sheep and approaching 6,000 cattle, the land has largely retained its native plant populations.

Much of the famous Falkland Island wildlife is in harmony with farming practices, assisting with valuable nutrient recycling and green formation. These greens are interspersed throughout the more extensive native vegetation areas and are of particular relevance to animal production due to their improved nutritional value.

Wool production from dual purpose sheep is the mainstay of Falkland Island agriculture. Prime lamb, mutton and beef are growing in importance as export markets and production systems are improving.

Farming in the Falkland Islands is described as an extensive rangeland farming system. Freedom from some of the external parasites that plague other sheep farming areas, and with few production limiting diseases, Falkland Island farming is a very natural system. Similarly whilst fertilisers and lime would make a big difference to production levels, the sheer bulk of these makes large scale importation to increase soil fertility too expensive, and such inputs are mostly only used when trying to establish newly sown areas.

The environment here produces exceptionally clean, natural products, and selection to maintain whiteness in the wool over time has been very successful. Consequently the Falkland Islands does have a very good reputation for these traits in their agricultural exports. Organic certification for some is a step towards marketing these attributes internationally.

The uniqueness of the environment also throws up its challenges, and it is towards these that the Department of Agriculture directs much of its advisory and research efforts and resources.

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# FACTS

## Falkland Islands Farms

- 85 farms, mostly family owned
  - 40 East Falkland farms
  - 34 West Falkland farms
  - 11 Island farms
- 504,620 sheep - base flock Corriedale and Polwarth breeds with Dohne Merino, South African Meat Merinos, Afrinos and other breeds introduced to improve the fineness of wool and meat characteristics
- 1,636,845 kgs of wool exported
- Average fleece weight is 3.95 kgs
- 34,325 sheep to Sand Bay Abattoir
- 5,116 cattle
- 312 cattle to Sand Bay Abattoir
- 83 pigs
- 107 pigs to Sand Bay Abattoir
- 494 dogs
- 1,123,985 ha of farmed land
- 298 people living on farms
  - 170 on East Falkland
  - 104 on West Falkland
  - 24 on Islands



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