

NORFOLK HORN

Summary

Originally developed on the grass heaths of East Anglia, the Norfolk Horn was saved from the brink of extinction in the 1970s by a special breeding programme which utilised Suffolk and in some cases Swaledale sheep. The 'new' Norfolk Horn retains the ability to forage widely and thrive on poor quality pastures. Accordingly it is a breed with much potential for expanding use within conservation situations.

Hardiness – a relatively hardy and thrifty breed.

- *Able to withstand exposed conditions* – developed in East Anglia to withstand cold, dry winters and hot summers.
- *Active* – adapted to ranging over poor quality pastures and heathland.
- *Thrifty* – copes with sparse conditions and relatively tolerant of dry unproductive vegetation types.

Physical Attributes & Husbandry – routine husbandry required.

- *Handling* – generally easy to handle, although older rams can be awkward. Can be worked with a dog.
- *Appearance* – both sexes are strongly horned; rams have heavy spiral horns. The fleece is short stapled, close, white wool. The black or dark legs and face are free from wool.
- *Fencing* – standard stock fence plus single top wire sufficient.
- *Breeding* – milky, prolific ewes with good mothering ability. The breed has a low incidence of lambing difficulties.
- *Size* – medium size. Average weight of adult ewes 72kg and rams 92kg.
- *Tails* – long-tailed, usually docked.



Kerry Long

Grazing Characteristics - appears to have good browsing potential and its ranging behaviour is likely to ensure grazing impact is well distributed, particularly on large sites.

- *Grazing ability* – limited details available; see site details overleaf.
- *Browsing ability* – limited details available indicate good browsing ability. See site details overleaf.
- *Impact of ranging behaviour* – well distributed impact on vegetation expected.

Interaction with the Public – may be suitable for use on public access sites.

- *Reaction to people* – can be friendly and docile when regularly exposed to humans.

Marketability – as a rare breed there is a market for breeding stock.

- *Meat* – tender and with good flavour as both lamb and mutton.
- *Lambs* – grow well on grass to reach slaughter weight with minimal additional feeding.

Sites where Norfolk Horn sheep are in use & contacts

SITE NAME	HABITAT	DETAILS AVAILABLE	CONTACT
Rough Down Common The Boxmoor Trust	Calcareous grassland. 5 ha.	A small SSSI. Grazed in autumn with Belted Galloway cattle as well as Norfolk Horn sheep to maintain and improve condition.	Phil Pennington 01442 240938
Westbrook Hay Farm The Boxmoor Trust	Chalk grassland re-establishment on former arable. 50 ha.	Grazed all year with 50 Belted Galloway as well as 150 Norfolk Horn sheep owned by the Boxmoor Trust. Sheep effective at browsing trees and shrubs, maintaining and improving vegetation structure and developing a vegetation mosaic. Occasional pneumonia, loss of condition and fly strike. Supplementary feeding with sheep nuts January to March.	Phil Pennington 01442 240938
Other contacts:		Expanding flock of c200 Norfolk Horns. Grazed on common land and better pasture. Do very well on poor vegetation. Love eating leaves, especially Oak but do not damage the trees.	Mrs Penn 01397 898656
		Norfolk Horn Breeders Group	Phil Pennington 01442 240938 Mrs Kerry Long The Old Rectory Anmer King's Lynn Norfolk PE31 6RN
		Rare Breeds Survival Trust	024 7669 6551

References

WADE-MARTINS, P (1993) *Black Faces: a history of East Anglian Sheep Breeds*. Norfolk Museums Service/ Geerings, Ashford.