Fresh From The Hills
Naturally Reared, Naturally Delicious
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The Blackface Breed is the most numerous breed in Britain accounting for over 1.7 million ewes, representing 11% of the British Pure-bred Ewe Flock.

Source: 2003 Breed survey

With the ability to fit into any farming situation, Blackface Sheep are one of the hardiest breeds in the country. They’re reared on the hills and glens throughout the UK with the majority found in Scotland where they have created and continue to manage the dramatic landscapes for which we are famed. The outstanding qualities of the breed are:

- Survivability
- Adaptability
- Versatility
- With an unrivalled ability to produce sweet flavoured, high quality tender meat.
Traditionally Reared

The breeders of Blackface Sheep are amongst the best stockmen in the world and have years of experience and skill in raising this pedigree breed.

The Blackface Sheep Breeders Association (BSBA), with 1,360 paid up members, is not only promoting and marketing the breed but is at the forefront of trying to ensure that hill farming has a viable future.

The BSBA supports research work on genetic selection on hill farms in Scotland and Northern England looking to improve carcase quality, while retaining the characters required for survival and efficient hill production. As well as this there are breeders involved in both Sire Reference groups and breed improvement projects.
Breed origins

The breed undoubtedly emerged from the genetic umbrella of “horned” sheep from which also sprung the Swaledale, Rough Fell and other localised types such as the Lewis and Mayo Blackface.

The Blackface is at the summit of the pyramid of stratification of the British Sheep Industry. The hills produce a reservoir of females which are drafted to marginal or upland farms either as ewe lambs or five or six year old ewes, where they are either pure bred or crossed with a Bluefaced Leicester to produce the ever popular Scotch Mule Ewe, or a Border Leicester to produce the Greyface Ewe.

The Breed has stood the test of time, responding to changing market forces within an established network that will ensure the continued popularity of Blackface Sheep for many generations to come.

“Blackface Lamb is the sweetest meat you can buy.”
Lady Claire Mcdonald
Award-winning cook & food writer
Kinloch Lodge, Isle of Skye
Naturally Delicious

Blackface Lamb has a growing following of admirers and advocates throughout the UK all of whom champion Blackface Lamb for producing meat that is Succulent, Tender and Flavoursome.

It's a nutritious and versatile food supplied by BSBA members to strict assurance schemes offering complete reassurance to consumers. It's naturally lean nature makes it very popular with the modern housewife, and in 2003 'The Independent' newspaper published a survey where Blackface Lamb was voted number 15 in the '50 best British foods'

What makes it better?

As Blackface Lamb are reared by extensive grazing on species rich moorlands throughout the UK they have included in their diet of some of the UK's most delicious herbs, grasses and berries, which in some areas include: heather, bilberries, white clover, meadow buttercups, purple moor grass, radishes, and mustards such as Lady's Smock.

Naturally good for you

Recent research carried out in 2006 compared lamb reared on a variety of pasture types, the Lamb (Blackface Lamb) reared on species-rich moorland pasture has higher Vitamin E and Omega 3 fatty acid levels than those reared on semi improved grassland*

Vitamin E is an important fat soluble vitamin and antioxidant which helps the body avoid certain serious medical conditions such as alzheimers, cancer, cataracts and heart disease. Omega 3 fatty acids are an essential nutrient to ensure normal growth and development.

* "Effect of pasture type on lamb product quality". FM Whittington, R Dunn, GR Nute, RI Richardson and JD Wood Division of Farm Animal Science, Department of Clinical Veterinary Science, University of Bristol, Langford, North Somerset BS40 5DU and The Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research, North Wyke Research Station, Okehampton, Devon EX20 2SB

Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall
Food writer & Broadcaster
River Cottage, Dorset
Naturally in demand
BSBA members across the UK are selling increasing volumes of Blackface Lamb through independent butchers and direct through farmers’ markets. Where possible it is being clearly labelled as ‘Blackface Lamb’ and as part of a campaign to support members secondary labelling and information leaflets on the breed and with traditional recipes are being developed.

There is growing evidence that clearly labelled branded products, sold direct from a reputable source can command a premium price.

Naturally honest
A simple and clear campaign is being created by the BSBA to engage with consumers who are increasingly interested in where their food is coming from and how it is reared.

Blackface Lamb is produced by BSBA members in such a way that there are no hidden secrets to the rearing process. In fact there is an attractive and evocative story to be told about Blackface Lamb and their farmers that consumers are genuinely interested in. The evidence of which can be seen at the growing number of sales through farmers markets and independent butchers

- Blackface Lamb - Fresh from the Hills

Naturally available
As a traditional breed, Blackface Lambs naturally mature later in the season, therefore retain their flavour and succulence well into the New Year. Availability is typically from November to March.
Blackface Sheep Breeders Association

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