

Recently Registered Breeds of Sheep in India

Dr. Vidhi Modi, Dr. Mayank Darji, Dr. Hirali Koladiya, Dr. Digvijay Mane and
Dr. A.R. Ahlawat

Department of Animal Genetics and Breeding, CVSc & AH, Kamdhenu University, Anand

[DOI:10.5281/Vettoday.15245317](https://doi.org/10.5281/Vettoday.15245317)

Introduction

Sheep (*Ovis aries*) are domesticated ruminant mammals raised for their meat, milk, and wool. Sheep breeds can be classified as general-purpose breeds, specialized dam breeds, and specialized sire breeds. They have been developed to adapt to various environmental conditions influenced by latitude and altitude, and to meet human needs for clothing and wool. Sheep are short-day breeders. In India, a total of 10.25 million tonnes (BAHS, 2024) of meat is produced from sheep, contributing 11.13% to the overall meat production. The total wool production in the country is 33.69 million kilograms (BAHS, 2024), showing a 0.22% increase compared to the previous year. Rajasthan is the highest wool-producing state, contributing 45.94% of the total wool output. According to the 20th Livestock Census, the total number of sheep in India was 74.26 million in 2019, representing a 14.1% increase over the previous census. Of these, 4.09 million are exotic breeds and 70.17 million are indigenous. Total 46 indigenous breed of sheep is registered by ICAR-NBAGR. In that, following 3 breeds were registered in the last five year.

S r N o.	Breed	State	Accession Number
1	Kajali	Punjab	INDIA_SHEEP_1600_KAJALI_14044
2	Macherla	Andhra	INDIA_SHEEP_0100_MACHERLA_14045

		Pradesh	
3	Kheri	Rajasthan	INDIA_SHEEP_1700_KHERI_14046

1. Kajali Sheep

❖ General information

- Mainly a mutton purpose breed.
- Native name derived due to black circle around the eyes.

❖ Distribution

- Kajali is distributed in Sangrur, Barnala, Ludhiana, Moga and adjoining districts of Punjab.

❖ Physical characteristics

- Two colour variants of this breed one is black with complete black or black-brown or brown body with about white tail and second is white with black or dark brown circle around the eyes and in the face with varying degree.



[Kajali Sheep Male]



[Kajali Sheep Female]

- Average birth weight is 4 kg.
- Average adult weight is about 57 kg in males and 43 kg in females.
- It produces white or black/brown coloured coarse wool (0.8 – 1kg).

❖ Reproductive performance

- The females show sexual maturity at about 10 to 12 months of age
- The age at first mating in rams is about 12-15 months as reported by 66.10% sheep breeders and 69.09% of farmers reported about 12-18 months as age at first breeding in females.
- The main lambing season is January to March and minor is from August to October.
- The breeding life of ewes is reported to be 7 to 8 years by 62.75% sheep farmers.
- The litter size is single but 38.71% farmers reported that twinning varied from 5 to 10 % in their flock.

❖ Economic performance

- The sheep are generally shorn twice a year during the month of February-March and August – September

2. Macherla Sheep

❖ Distribution

- Macherla sheep is famous for its mutton.
- It was distributed in the villages adjacent to Krishna River in Guntur, Krishna and Prakasham districts of Andhra Pradesh and Nalgonda district of Telangana.

❖ Physical characteristics

- Macherla animals are medium to large in size with coat colour mainly white with large black or brown patches in the body, face and legs, which is the characteristic of this breed.

- Females are polled and males are horned. Females have small horns.



[Macherla]

- The average flock size of Macherla sheep in the present study is 134.31 ± 4.6 and the minimum flock size of the genetic group is 50.

❖ Reproductive performance

- The female show sexual maturity at about 12 month of age and age of first lambing is reported as 18 to 24 month by 63.33% farmer with an average 80 to 85% annual lambing.
- The Macherla sheep are comparable and differentiated from the established sheep breeds of India because of the distinct phenotypic pattern and good productive and reproductive performances.
- The local Macherla sheep can be characterized by its strong and heavy body size, attractive coat color, high lambing percentage, and good adaptability to local climatic conditions.

3. Kheri Sheep

❖ General information

- It is carpet wool sheep of Rajasthan is considered to have originated from a

crossbred base with unknown levels of inheritance of Marwari, Malpura and Jaisalmeri sheep of Rajasthan.

❖ Distribution

- It is primarily distributed in the Nagaur, Jodhpur and Tonk districts of Rajasthan.



[Kheri Sheep Male]



[Kheri Sheep Female]

❖ Physical characteristics

- Male have very short horns and females are polled.
- Kheri sheep has evolved owing to their ability to walk long distance and to survive on limited amount of coarse feed.
- It is medium to large in size and relatively heavier than Marwari sheep.
- Animals of this breed have a black-brown face, sometimes extending to the neck or appearing as spots on the legs, with a white body.
- Roman nose with long dropping ear with ear ridge long tail reaching up to hock.

❖ Reproductive performance

- Males are used for mating at 12–18 months of age, while females are bred at 20–24 months.
- A ewe in an average delivers 8–10 lambs over its lifetime.

❖ Economic performance

- Kheri animals are shorn twice or thrice a year with total greasy fleece production of about 1.5 kg per annum.
- Animals of this breed are reared for meat as well as wool production.