



## Sheep

### Curriculum links:

- **Science** Living things  
Environmental awareness and care
- **Geography** Human environments
- **SPHE** Myself and the wider world

### Lesson objectives:

To revise material covered in previous modules. To make students aware that there is more than one breed of sheep and to explain their digestive system. To create an awareness of the many different products that sheep provide us with.

### Teacher guidelines

It is suggested that teachers ensure that students are familiar with the vocabulary and concepts introduced in the previous modules before starting this lesson.

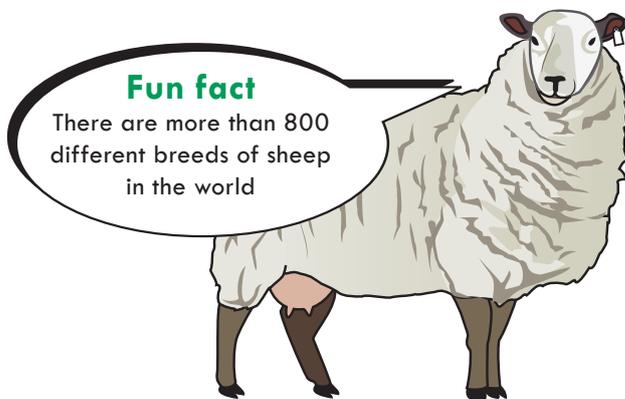
### Keywords and concepts introduced in previous modules:

ewe ram lamb bleat flock wool meat fleece shear shorn  
sheepdog hooves lambing spring grazing fodder

Sheep provide us with wool, meat and milk for making cheese. A sheep's fleece is shorn once per year in the spring. Farmers must trim the sheep's hooves and dip them to prevent disease. Lambs are born in spring and they feed from their mothers' milk for about 14 weeks. When there is not enough grass for the sheep to graze, the farmer gives them extra food called fodder.

### Keywords for this lesson:

breed products mutton ruminants chewing the cud



#### Fun fact

There are more than 800 different breeds of sheep in the world

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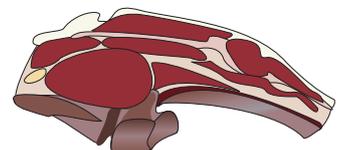
Sheep are one of the oldest farming animals in the world and have provided us with meat, milk, wool and leather for 11,000 years

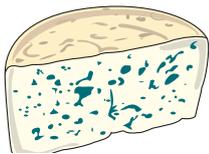
### Sheep breeds

There are many different breeds of sheep in Ireland and they fall into two categories, hill/mountain breeds and lowland breeds. The lowland sheep are concentrated mainly in the centre of Ireland while the hill sheep are located in the coastal counties of the west and in Wicklow. Most breeds of sheep in Ireland do not have horns, but there are some which do, mainly in the hill/mountain areas.

### Products from sheep

Sheep give us meat, milk, wool and leather. The meat from a sheep is called **lamb** or **mutton**. Many meals can be made from sheep meat. Lamb is the main ingredient used in traditional Irish stew. Many Christian, Muslim and Jewish religious festivals include a meal based on sheep meat. Roast lamb on Easter Sunday is a tradition in many countries, including Ireland.



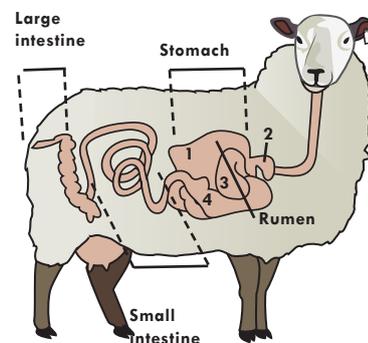


Sheep's milk is rarely used for drinking, as it has a very strong taste. Instead, it is used to make cheeses such as Feta and Roquefort. Sheep provide us with wool and their hides are used to make soft leather. Sheep skins can also be preserved and sold to be used to make coats, rugs and gloves.



## Ruminants

Sheep, cows and goats are **ruminants**. They have a special type of stomach that allows them to eat grass. A ruminant's stomach has four pockets. The animal swallows grass very quickly and hardly chews at all. This fills up the rumen, the biggest pocket in their stomach. Rumination takes place later, which involves bringing the food back into the animal's mouth where it can be chewed again. This is known as "**chewing the cud**".



## The story of wool



Firstly, the shearer must shear the sheep. The wool they collect must then be washed. It then needs to be combed to make sure all the fibres run in the same direction. The fibres are then twisted to make long strands of wool, which can be rolled up into a ball. This wool can then be dyed any colour.

## Lanolin

Washing wool removes an oil, called lanolin, a natural substance which helps keep their wool waterproof. Lanolin, or wool wax as it is also known, is commonly blended into moisturisers and balms to be used for eczema/dermatitis, and used in cosmetics (make-up). It can also be used to make Vitamin D supplements which can be then be added to breakfast cereals and dairy products. This is known as fortification, and commonly done to foods in countries where sunlight is not readily available.

### Did you know?

There are approximately one billion sheep in the world!

## Suggested activities

- Photocopy the activity sheet on page 44
- Ask the students to research recipes using mutton and lamb
- The EWE and YOU Game:
  - Each student has cards labelled "Ewe" and "You". The teacher calls out several statements. The students should hold up "You" for statements that apply to humans and "Ewe" for those that apply to sheep. (Some statements will apply to both sheep and humans)
  - Examples: "Ewe" bleat; "You" sing; Ewes have no upper teeth; You eat meat; Ewe have hooves; You have two legs; You/Ewe live in family groups; You/Ewe are mammals; You/Ewe feed your young on milk; You/Ewe have four limbs; You were in your mother's stomach for nine months; You/Ewe play
  - Challenge the students to create other statements and test each other
- Research the different breeds of sheep in Ireland (e.g. Suffolk, Texel, Cheviot). Find out what breeds are most popular in each county. Mark these on a map of Ireland.
- Make a poster showing the wool-making process
- Research religious festivals where sheep meat is served as part of the main meal
- Discuss the interrelationship and interdependence between people, animals and plants and the fact that we rely on farming for food. (see 'The Irish farmer' page 2)

## Learning outcomes:

At the end of this lesson students, should be aware that there are many different breeds of sheep, that sheep "chew the cud" and that many different products come from sheep.

## Additional resources:

- [www.agriaware.ie](http://www.agriaware.ie)



# Sheep

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



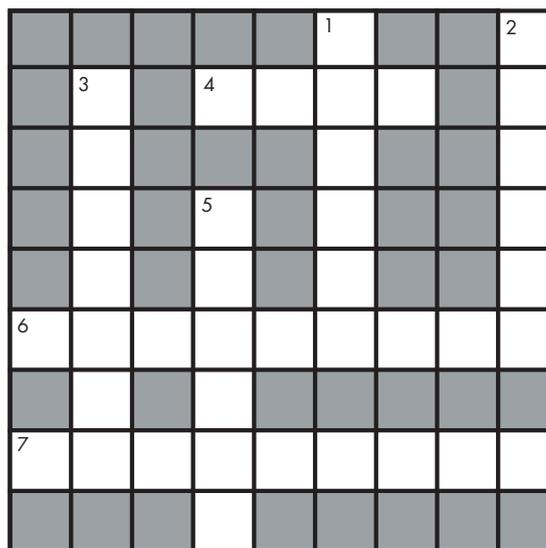
## 1 Use the clues below to discover the products that come from sheep:

**Across:**

- 4. The product that comes from sheep which is used to make cheese (4)
- 6. The product that comes from sheep which is used for rugs, coats and gloves (9)
- 7. A traditional Irish meal which uses Lamb as the main ingredient (5,4)

**Down:**

- 1. These can be made from sheepskin and we wear them on our hands (6)
- 2. Sheep meat (6)
- 3. This material comes from sheep and is used to make shoes and coats (7)
- 5. A product made from milk (6)



## 2 Use the key to break the code and read the story on sheep

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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**Example:** ? > @ @ } ? + ? ;  
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- (5) \$ > @ @ ? @      (6) ! Σ & ? ?      (7) \$ > @ © @ #

There are many different (1) \_\_\_\_\_ of Sheep in Ireland. They fall into (2) \_\_\_\_\_ categories: Hill or Mountain Sheep and Lowland (3) \_\_\_\_\_. The (4) \_\_\_\_\_ we get from Sheep is called lamb and mutton. We also get milk, which is used to make (5) \_\_\_\_\_. Sheep, Cows and Goats are ruminants. They have four stomachs, which means that they can eat (6) \_\_\_\_\_. After swallowing, the sheep bring the food back up for it to be (7) \_\_\_\_\_ again. This is called chewing the cud.

\* To be used with teacher guidelines, page 8