

RESTITUTION OF VALUABLE CHARACTERS OF THE DECLINING POLISH SHEEP BREED
"WRZOSOWKA" WITH REGARD TO FECUNDITY AND COAT UTILITY

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The report discusses the investigations upon some valuable properties of the declining old Polish sheep breed *Wrzósówka* concerning fecundity and sheepskin utility.

Before 50 years the *Wrzósówka* breed composed 1/4 of the sheep population of the North-East region of Poland and was characterized by the following useful parameters: live weight of single born lambs amounted to 1,8 kg, of twin born lambs to 0,9 at weaning to 14,4 kg and in ripe age to 34,6 kg. The fecundity amounted to 150-184 per cent at 22 per cent of single born lambs, 72 per cent of twin born lambs, 52 per cent of triplets and 0,8 per cent of quadruplets. The yield of greasy wool of grey colour in the tint from brown to fair in a yearly regrowth amounted to 1,3 kg at a staple length of 9,5 cm after a regrowth of 1/2 year. The anatomic composition of the fibres in the coat amounted to about 70 per cent down fibres and 30 per cent medullated fibres, shorter than the down fibres.

At present observations in the breeding methods are carried out on 477 sheep in the *Experimental Station of the Institute of Zootechnics* at Czechnica. The data obtained for a period of 5 years (1971-1975) in comparison with those obtained before 50 years show an increase of live weights of about 15-25 per cent, however a distinct fecundity decrease of about 25 to 30 per cent took place at a smaller intensity of about 50 per cent twin-born lambs and triplets. Nevertheless the results obtained till now indicate the possibility of fecundity restitution, improvement of the quality of coat assigned to artistic tissues and of the pelt to the production of sheepskins, at a simultaneous maintenance of a high vitality and immunity of this breed from new diseases. A further adequate mating of these animals at a comparatively high percentage of rams in relation to the ewes will permit to maintain in the breed examined its different properties without parallel not only in other breeds and breeding varieties in Poland but also — as may be supposed — in the majority of old European breeds.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROLIFIC BREED OF SHEEP

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The paper describes the development, over a ten year period, of a new breed of sheep — *the Cambridge* — designed to combine high prolificacy with other attributes of British breeds. The development was based on an initial screening of 12 British sheep breeds on the basis of individual ewe prolificacy and the incorporation of a small proportion of genes from the *Finnsheep* breed. Following the initial screening the foundation population has been improved by within population selection largely based on the selection of ram lambs on their dam's prolificacy and the culling of ewes on their own early performance. Generation length has been minimised by the use of rams only as ram lambs and of severe culling of ewes at three years of age.

The breed is being further tested and multiplied by the cooperation of several commercial breeders and trials are in progress to assess the value of the breed as sires of crossbred ewes for commercial slaughter lamb production. Results so far indicate that a mature pure bred ewe performance target of almost 3 lambs born per ewe lambing is being achieved in practice and that this should lead to a substantial increase in lambs sold per ewe and overall profit in crossbred ewes sired by rams of this breed.

ERGEBNISSE DER ZERLEGUNG VON LAMMERSCHLACHTKÖRPERN
MIT VERSCHIEDENEN ANTEILEN FINNISCHER LANDRASSE

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In den Jahren 1975 und 1976 wurden insgesamt 167 Schlachtkörper von Lämmern mit unterschiedlichem Finnanteil in Fleisch, Fett und Knochen zerlegt. 119 Lämmer wurden in Einzelmast mit pelletiertem Kraftfutter bei unterschiedlichem Mastengewicht und 48 Lämmer nach Gruppenmast im Alter von 125 Tagen geschlachtet.

Die Einbeziehung der *finnischen Landrasse* in Kreuzungsprogramme führt zu Veränderungen im Schlachtkörperwert. Schlachtkörper und die Keulen nehmen gegenüber schwarzköpfigen