



AN INTRODUCTION TO BRITISH ANGORA GOATS

BAGS was formed in the early 1980s as a breed society aiming to develop the quality and viability of the angora goat in the UK.

BAGS holds the Flock Book record of registered British angora goats and organises the annual breed show within the Royal Three Counties Show at Malvern.

MOHAIR – THE DIAMOND FIBRE

Angora goats are farmed commercially for their mohair fleece. Mohair is a soft, lustrous and hard-wearing fibre with excellent dyeing properties that can be spun into yarn for use in garments and luxury textiles. It should not be confused with angora wool, which is produced from the coat of rabbits.

The angora goat is an ancient breed, with records of the use of goat hair for clothing dating back as early as the 14th Century BC. In the early 13th Century AD there is a record of goats trekked thousands of miles to Ankara by Suleiman Shah, when fleeing Ghengis Khan. Mohair, the name given to the fleece of angora goats, is derived from the Arabic word Mukhaya, meaning 'cloth of bright lustrous goat hair'.

Eventually, in the mid-19th Century, small numbers were exported from Turkey to South Africa and, a little later, to Texas and New Zealand. These animals formed the foundations of the modern national herds.

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A small number of angora goats were introduced to the UK in the late 19th and mid-20th Centuries, but more recently in the 1980's larger numbers of goats were imported from Australasia. Texan bloodlines came in 1987 via Canadian bred goats, and more recently South African lines arrived, widening the gene pool. The British Angora Goat has evolved and adapted to a different climate, whilst the quality of mohair produced has improved.

Mohair is graded by type (Kid, Young Goat and Adult), then by length, and style. Contamination by hay, straw, seed or stains downgrades the value of the fleece to purchasers. Correct shearing is important so that very short fibres are avoided and the fleece length is as uniform as possible. The fleeces of different types should be stored and packed separately.

More information on shearing and packing mohair is available on our website, or by contacting the BAGS/BMM office.