

THE PROSPECTS OF SHEEP BREEDS RAISED IN LITHUANIA

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Summary. The present state of sheep breeding should be comprehensively analysed before integration to the European Union. It is very important for sheep bred in Lithuania and their production to meet the requirements of our home market and these of the EU. In 1995-2000, biological and farming qualities of local coarsewooled sheep raised at the Lithuanian Institute of Animal Science, also Blackface Lithuanian, Darkheaded Latvian and Ostfriesian sheep raised at the breeding enterprise "Šeduvos avininkystė" were studied, including the following characteristics of the sheep breeds: fertility, milk production, chemical composition of milk, growth rate of lambs, quality of meat and wool. The highest fertility (1.7 lambs) was determined in local sheep, highest wool production (3.8-5.0 kg) - in Ostfriesian, highest meat production - in Blackface Lithuanian (dressing percentage of lambs 44%) and Darkheaded Latvian (dressing percentage 44.2%) sheep. Concerning future membership in the EU and the present demand for mutton, it is recommended to breed Blackface Lithuanian and Darkheaded Latvian sheep.

Keywords: sheep, Lithuanian local coarsewooled, Blackface Lithuanian, Darkheaded Latvian and Ostfriesian breeds, fertility, production and chemical composition of sheep milk, lambs, meat, wool.