

## N-CSA Membership

The Navajo-Churro Sheep Association (N-CSA) was formed in 1986 to preserve and promote this truly All-American breed.

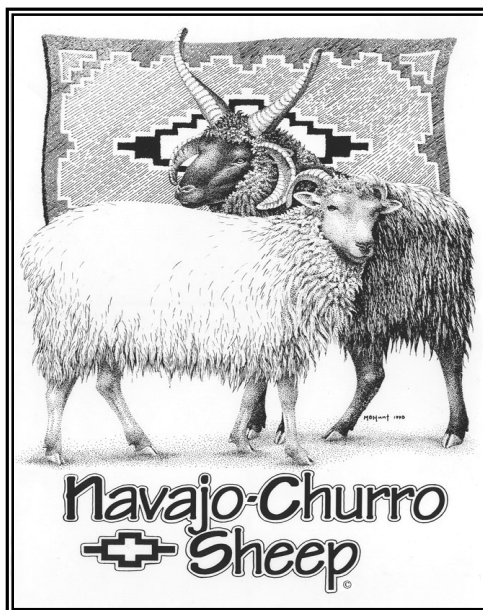
Membership in the Navajo-Churro Sheep Association is \$25/year. For membership information check the Association webpage at [www.navajo-churrosheep.com](http://www.navajo-churrosheep.com).



N-CSA membership benefits:

- ◆ The Catch Pen (quarterly newsletter)
- ◆ Flock Book of Registrations & Transfers (annually)
- ◆ Breeders Listing
- ◆ Web Site Information
- ◆ N-CSA Products
- ◆ Annual Meetings

Join us in conserving and promoting this threatened breed that still provides wool for the nation's fiber artists and food in many homes and restaurants.



- ◆ Membership 150-200
- ◆ Sheep registered — 5,000+
- ◆ Six Zoos or Farm Parks curate Navajo-Churro Sheep
- ◆ American Sheep Industry is working to preserve Navajo-Churros
- ◆ American Livestock Breeds Conservancy Lists N-C as Threatened
- ◆ Slow Food USA designated N-C as a high quality food threatened with extinction
- ◆ Dine' be' iina', Inc. is a partner in preservation and promotion of N-C

Navajo-Churro Sheep Association  
1029 Zelinski Road  
Goldendale, WA 98620

## Navajo-Churro Sheep

Classified as threatened by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.

One of the oldest domesticated sheep breeds in North America.

Considered sacred and a way of life (Sheep is Life) by the Navajo people



Navajo-Churro Sheep Association

[www.navajo-churrosheep.com](http://www.navajo-churrosheep.com)

## Breed History

America's first domestic sheep arrived over 400 years ago with the Spanish explorers and settlers. The history of the churra importation and distribution is fascinating and complex. Navajo-Churro sheep are descended from those original Churra (later corrupted to "Churro" by American frontiersmen).

Livestock, including sheep, came in 1494 when Spain established colonies in the Caribbean and then in Mexico. The first Churras came into the Southwest with early explorers (Cortez and Coronado) but it is felt that most of these sheep were used for food by the explorers.

In 1598, Don Juan Onate' brought settlers and 2,900 sheep that formed the initial colonization of the Southwest. During this period, the Pueblo Indians were hired and enslaved to herd livestock and to weave textiles. The Dine' (the Navajo people), living on the edge of Spanish occupation, acquired a few sheep and horses by trade and probably raids. They nurtured their acquisitions and expanded their flocks.

The Navajo were such good shepherds that by 1930 the Navajo herds had grown to 574,821 sheep. The large number of sheep, goats, horses and cattle was problematic for the severe drought conditions of the 1930's, so the U.S. government conducted a stock reduction. Roughly 30% of each household's sheep were slaughtered by government agents and thrown into arroyos or burned.

About this same time it was decided by the U.S. Government to "improve" the Churros. They were crossed with many different breeds of sheep only to discover that resulting animals did not do well on the un-improved range and their wool did not meet the weavers needs.

By 1977 the "old type" Navajo sheep had dwindled to less than 500 head. A number of motivated individuals along with the Navajo Sheep Project began work to revitalize and save the breed from further depletion. The breed association and registry was formed in 1986.



## Breed Information

The Navajo-Churro sheep is a small, long tailed sheep with a double coat of wool. The locks are long, tapered and open. Legs and faces of adults are free of wool.

The sheep have a strong flocking instincts and are very intelligent. Most Navajo-Churro are a-seasonal breeders and mature early so two lamb crops per year are likely if rams are left with the ewes year round. The ewes lamb easily and are fiercely protective. Twins and triplets are not uncommon. Ewes seldom require assistance of any kind in lambing. Both ewe and lamb seem to know each other instantly. The lamb suckles within 10-15 minutes and is ready to travel by the mother's flank within that same short time.



N-CSA Ram # B3052-02 DCN-C Dakota

These sheep with their long staple of protective top coat and soft undercoat are well suited to extremes of climate. The Navajo-Churro is highly resistant to disease, and although they respond to individual attention, they need NO pampering to survive and prosper. The flavor of the meat is incomparably superior, with a surprisingly low fat content

Because the Navajo-Churro is so colorful, so adaptable and produce a superb coarse wool, the limited population is highly prized by U.S. sheep breeders and artisans. The yarn is extremely durable for use in rugs, saddle blankets, cinches, carrying bags and outer garments.

Currently the registry is open and sheep may be registered if they conform to the Breed Standards. Sheep may be registered by Mail-In (preferable) or an On-Site visit. They must be 12 months or older to register. Forms are available from N-CSA.

## Breed Standard

### General Description:

Navajo-Churro sheep are coarse, long woolled sheep for use as wool, meat and dairy animals. They come in all colors from white through every shade of the natural tones. An unimproved breed, they are frequently long legged with narrow bodies and show little inclination to put on fat. The sheep should have sound legs and straight top line, which tends to slope to the dock in more primitive individuals. They can be horned or polled with little wool on the poll and none on the cheeks, around or below the eyes or on the nose. The belly should have little or no wool. There should be no wool on the front or back legs.

### Size:

Mature ewes — approximately 85-120 pounds

Mature rams — approximately 120-175 pounds

### Fleece:

The wool is classified as coarse and is composed of three distinct types of fiber. The fleece is open and has no defined crimp. The inner coat measures 3-5" ranging from 10-35 microns and makes up 80% of the fleece. The outer coat measures 6-12" measuring 35+ microns and makes up 10-20% of the fleece. The outer coat is responsible for the drapy appearance of the animals. The third fiber is kemp and cannot exceed 5% of the fleece. The fleece is high yielding with low grease content.

### Horns:

Animals can be horned or polled in either sex. Multiple horns (2-6) are not uncommon.



N-CSA # A3169-02 CNF Roulon Gardner