

# VALLEY FIBER ARTS GUILD WORKSHOP SERIES 2024-2025 SHEEP BREED STUDY

## Breed: Castlemilk Moorit

In October we learned about the Leicester Longwool, a very long staple wool with a beautiful luster. This month we are on the opposite side of the fiber world with the shortest staple we will work with,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Reviews indicate it can be spun, so let's rise to the challenge!



Picture credit: heartandsoil.blogspot.com

The Castlemilk Moorit sheep breed is also known as Castlemilk Shetland, a rare breed originating in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. This particular breed is a mix of 4 other breeds to include Manx Loaghtan, a breed we will study in March 2025.

The breed was created at Castlemilk estates as a decorative breed in 1927 by Sir John Buchanan Jardine, who was known for his preference for brown livestock and experimenting with breeding. "Moorit" refers to the fleece color of light tan to reddish brown, hence the breed's name was born.



Picture credit: Castlemilk Moorit Sheep Society

The fleece is usually moulted or rooed (plucked) rather than shorn. The picture above shows the breed fully fleeced. Both sexes of the breed are horned, although a ram's horns are much heavier than an ewe's horns. The fleece should be a uniform brown color with hues that can range from reddish brown, to tan, to chocolate. Spots in the fleece are undesirable on this breed, other than along the face where white and black marks which are normal.

There is a Castlemilk Moorit Sheep Society that specializes in this breed and their website details the DNA history research of the breed creation. The fleece we are working with was sourced from a farm in Goshill, England.