

# VALLEY FIBER ARTS GUILD

## WORKSHOP SERIES 2024-2025 SHEEP BREED STUDY

### Breed: Manx Loaghtan

The Manx Loaghtan breed is a rare British breed native to the Isle of Man, located in the Irish Sea between Great Britain and Ireland. According to online sources the Manx Loaghtan is thought to be the closest surviving relative to the now extinct Jersey sheep breed. In our breed study, the Castlemilk Moorit is a cross bred descendant of the Manx Loaghtan, with both breeds having the signature "moorit" fleece color and similar characteristics.

This breed is mainly raised for meat, and is part of the Northern European short-tailed sheep breed family. This breed is a small sheep, with short tails and are fine-boned. These sheep usually have four horns, but are also found with two or six horns.



Picture credit: Wikipedia

Their signature "moorit" color refers to the brown fleece color that often contains hues of red. The ends of their fleece can be sun bleached resulting in a two tone fleece. The Manx sheep tend to have a higher coating of lanolin. These fleeces are usually moulted or rooed (plucked) rather than shorn. The staple length of these fleeces are typically 2 1/2" to 5", much easier to work with than the 1/2" staple length of the Castlemilk Moorit.

This fleece is considered a soft and durable fiber. Preparation techniques include picking and carding, or combing if the staple is long enough. Manx fleeces have been used historically in the making of Manx tartans and fabrics.

The fleece we are working with was sourced from a farm in Oxford, United Kingdom.