

# BEULAH SPECKLED FACE

## Summary

The Beulah Speckled Face is a medium-sized white sheep, with distinctive black speckles on the face and limbs. Traditional to the Welsh hills, the Beulah is a hardy breed well suited to grazing unimproved grass in exposed areas. A popular breed for use on nature reserves owing to its ability to maintain good condition on poor forage.

**Hardiness** – A hardy breed, well suited to year-round grazing on unimproved forage.

- *Hardy* – traditionally used at altitudes of between 1000 and 1500 feet. Capable of lambing outdoors and producing hardy lambs with a very low level of hypothermia-related mortality.
- *Maintains good condition* – flocks of wethers or ewe lambs retain condition whilst grazing minimal forage. Pregnant ewes and those with lambs at foot have higher nutritional demands, but still do well on unimproved grass.

**Physical Attributes & Husbandry** – a low maintenance breed requiring minimal husbandry if kept in free ranging situations.

- *Self-sufficient* – like all hill breeds, the Beulah is capable of looking after itself with low levels of human input.
- *Hooves* – in high, relatively exposed conditions on unimproved pasture, foot rot is rare and hooves should only need trimming once a year in these conditions, but more frequently elsewhere.
- *Fly-strike* – not prone to this condition unless grazed on over-lush pasture.
- *Intelligent* – very capable of learning behaviour patterns and thus can be easily managed with either good dogs and/or a feed bucket.
- *Lambing* – ewes will produce more lambs (160-170%) if on slightly better grass during the autumn. Both ewes and lambs will benefit from some supplementary feed during winter and better grass in the spring.
- *Handling* – should not wander if it has sufficient keep, although can be difficult to contain once it has learned to get out; escape leaders should be removed before they teach others. Strong dogs are necessary to handle this breed.
- *Fleece* – fairly long fleece, so occasional sheep, particularly first winter lambs with long wool can become tangled in Brambles.



Tim Beech (Natural England)

**Grazing Characteristics** - a useful breed for maintaining unimproved grassland.

- *Grazing ability* – prefers the sweeter grasses and herbs.
- *Browsing ability* – will take summer growth of some shrubs and may strip bark during winter.

**Interaction with the Public** – not particularly nervous, therefore quite suitable for sites with public access.

- *Reaction to dogs* - the Beulah will generally ignore dogs, although, ewes with young can and do attack dogs.

**Marketability** – a popular commercial breed.

- *Meat* – produces a lean, marketable carcass.
- *Breeding stock* – increasingly in demand for use in conservation grazing.

## Sites where Beulah Speckled Face Sheep are in use & contacts

SITE NAME	HABITAT	DETAILS AVAILABLE	CONTACT
<b>Aston Rowant</b>	Chalk downland, mixed scrub and Beech woodland.  325 acres	Currently graze approximately 200 sheep (ewes, wethers and lambs) autumn and winter, although kept on site year round.	Clare Collier 01844 351833
<b>Old Winchester Hill</b> Hampshire  English Nature	Chalk grassland.	Breed used to reclaim under-grazed swards during the 1970's and have been kept for maintenance ever since. Grazed at anything between 0.5 and 3 sheep per hectare depending on herbage vigour. On less vigorous swards to avoid flowers being eaten, grazed September – March. Feed blocks given in winter to aid condition retention.	Barry Proctor 01489 878536
<b>Martin Down</b> Hampshire  English Nature and Hampshire County Council	Lowland dry grassland and chalk heath.	All year round grazing since 1980. Around 120 ewes and wethers. Moderately easy to keep. Occasional problems with eye infections. Moderately successful at grazing grassland and chalk heath with scrub.	David Burton 01980 620485
<b>Lullington Heath</b> Mount Calvin? Castle Hill?	Chalk Heath & downland.	Around 110 animals, mostly wethers with small breeding flock. All year round rotational grazing of three NNRs.	Tim Beech 07971 974394
<b>Queen Elizabeth Country Park</b> Hampshire  Forest Enterprise and Hampshire County Council	Calcareous grassland and scrub (160 ha) included within country park.	Breeding flock of 221 ewes grazed all year. Sheep managed on contract by local farmer. Few cases of fly strike every year on poor pasture. Lambing percentage ranges between 120-160%. Ignore dogs, but once chased become nervous. Browse on new growth of thorn and other scrub species.	Tim Speller 023 9259 5040
<b>North Warren</b> Suffolk  RSPB		Beulah Speckled face sheep used June – September on Heather heath which cattle do not graze.	Rob Macklin 01728 688481
<b>Ashdown Forest</b> East Sussex  The Conservators of Ashdown Forest	Heathland.	All stock owned and managed by commoners. Infrastructure (fences, gates and cattlegrids) managed by staff.	Chris Marrable 01342 823583
<b>Sandlings</b> Suffolk  Suffolk Wildlife Trust, National Trust and the RSPB	Acid heath, heath and acid grassland.	150-200 breeding ewes and lambs since October 1989. Permanent and electric fencing. Scrub control and general maintenance grazing.	Sandlings Project 01394 388431
<b>Thrislington Plantation NNR</b>	Magnesian Limestone grassland.	19 ewes and 10 wethers. Winter grazing from October to March.	John Hope 0191 5860004

## References