

“World’s Cutest Sheep” Only Available In Europe

People say Valais sheep are about the cutest animals on earth next to Panda bears. Unfortunately for producers who’d like to get their hands on them, they probably won’t be available in North America anytime soon.

Valais sheep are bred specifically for mountainous regions of the Alps in Europe. They’re also known as the Valais Blacknose, the Wallis Blacknose, or if you’re in Germany, Walliser Schwarznasenschaf.

Valais are a dual purpose breed raised for meat and wool. Their fleece is coarse in texture, almost white in color, and 4 in. to 6 in. long on mature animals. It’s the solid black muf of 1-in. fleece covering their nose, eyes and ears that gives them their quizzical and cute look. Some animals also have a small tuft of black fleece below the knees on their front legs. The adult rams and ewes of the breed both have horns that in some instances are flat and spiraling.

Scottish farmer Raymond Irvine paid

\$90,000 for 10 ewes and a ram that he intends to breed at his farm in Moray. He also spent \$8,000 on closed circuit TV cameras and guard dogs to protect the valuable sheep from thieves and intruders. He was surprised just a few days after taking delivery of the ewes that one of them gave birth, the first Valais born in Scotland.

Although the animals aren’t available in the U.S., that hasn’t stopped a Facebook user from setting up a page called “BlacknoseSheepUSFanClub”. It has nearly 8,000 “likes” and on it you’ll see hundreds of Valais sheep photos snapped presumably on small farms in the Swiss Alps.

The USDA says at the present time live animals, embryos or semen for this unique breed aren’t allowed in the U.S. due to a concern about transferring the Schmallenberg virus, which was first identified in 2011 in various ruminant animals in the Netherlands, Germany and other European countries.



With a solid black muf of 1-in. fleece covering their nose, eyes and ears, Valais sheep have a quizzical and cute look. They’re bred for mountainous regions of the European Alps.

The central nervous system virus results in aborted fetuses, births of deformed or stillborn lambs, and infected adults showing fever, loss of appetite and eventual death. The USDA is monitoring the virus and says as of June, 2014, the ban for importing Valais is

still in place.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Valais Blacknose Sheep – US Fan Club; <https://www.facebook.com/ValaisBlacknoseSheepUSFanClub#>

Rebuilt “M” Fits His Farm Just Right

Take a quick glance at the Farmall “M” in Mike Bauer’s yard and you’ll quickly do a double or maybe even a triple take. Chances are good that of the 290,923 M’s that Farmall built from 1939 to 1952, none of them looks like this one does today.

First you’ll notice that it has 38-in. rear wheels with matching solid rim wide band duals. Next you’ll notice a wide front with oversized 8-in. wide rubber tires. Bolted underneath the front frame are brackets with suitcase weights usually found on Farmalls in the 706/806 vintage. On the right side of the engine is a conglomeration of pumps, belts, hoses and reservoirs that rival those on a high tech, self-propelled sprayer.

“I didn’t want to pay thousands of dollars for a new tractor just to get features that I could add myself,” says Bauer. “The M is one of the most dependable and versatile tractors ever built, and this one does everything I need it to do.” Bauer reconfigured the main bearings with those from a 656 International so his M now has 60 rather than 38 horsepower. The duals give him extra flotation in his softer peat ground and there’s not a lot of extra stress on the axles. The 4 wheels on his 6-row planter match the wheel spacing on the tractor.

One of the biggest additions to his M is the high-volume double vane hydraulic pump that delivers 32 gpm flow. It’s mounted to the frame on the right side of the motor. Power to operate the pump is delivered by belts that run off a double V pulley connected to the front of the crankshaft. One vane of the pump is used for power steering and the other feeds through a 3/4-in. auxiliary valve that controls 3 dual-acting remotes. Bauer built a 15-gal. stainless steel hydraulic reservoir that has an internal cooling system much like a radiator. “I’ve never had a problem with overheated or foaming oil with this system because stainless

is much faster at dissipating heat than steel,” says Bauer.

At the rear of the tractor, Bauer reconfigured the hitch from the axle-mounted factory model to a reinforced 3-pt. connection that mounts to the axles, the tractor frame and to the old drawbar pivot point under the tractor. It’s made from 1 by 3-in. cold-rolled barstock. He also raised the drawbar so the hitch pin is 6 in. closer to the pto spline. Now there’s less stress on his planter pto shaft. Getting onto the driver’s platform is easier with the step pads mounted on the left side of the hitch.

Sitting on the driver’s seat is a far cry from sitting on the old single-spring models found on factory-built M’s. Bauer added a second spring and replaced the round metal factory seat with a cushioned model from a 105 Deere combine. “Those fancy hydraulic or air spring seats don’t have anything over this one,” says Bauer. The operator station has a triple hydraulic valve mounted to the right of the steering column and the hydraulic system gauge mounted on the left. Large mirrors like those found on semi-tractors are mounted on both fenders, giving Bauer a full view of the equipment operating behind. The 6 hydraulic couplers are mounted to the side of the right fender. The tractor also has a 12-volt electrical system with additional lights.

“About the only thing this doesn’t have is a cab, but that’s not a big concern of mine,” says Bauer. “Whenever I’m planting, the weather is nice, so the only source of irritation is dust, and that washes off.”

Bauer is in the process of rebuilding other M’s with even more options. One of them will have a Cat. II 3-pt. hydraulic hitch. Another will have a rebuilt motor from a Case combine. Others may have stronger gearboxes and larger engines, whatever a customer might want. “It doesn’t take a lot of time to add these features,” says Bauer, “and



Mike Bauer’s Farmall “M” has plenty of unusual features, including 38-in. rear wheels with matching solid rim wide-band duals.



Right side of engine is fitted with a conglomeration of hydraulic pumps, belts, hoses and reservoirs (left). On back, Bauer rebuilt the hitch into a reinforced 3-pt. connection.

it’s certainly way less expensive than buying a much newer used tractor, most which still need a lot of work.”

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