



Valais Blacknose Sheep Buyers Guide

Valais Blacknose sheep are highly valuable animals, and as with all livestock, quality can vary significantly. High prices and strong demand mean that buyers should take particular care to ensure that any animals or embryos they purchase are genuine, healthy, and properly registered.

This guide has been created to help you make informed, responsible purchasing decisions with confidence.

Stock Selection and Viewing

- View stock in person where possible - Always try to arrange a viewing appointment before paying a deposit. Deposits are often non-refundable.
- Ask to see the parents - Request to view the dam and sire if they are available.
- Check health records - Ask when the sheep was last vaccinated and wormed. All sheep should be on the annual Heptavac P Plus programme and wormed regularly.
- Assess health and conformation - Examine the four "Ts": teeth, toes, teats, and testicles. These should all be in good order. The sheep should have bright eyes, move freely, and show no signs of lameness. Do not buy a limping animal.
- Confirm weaning age - Lambs should generally be at least 4–5 months old and fully weaned. Bottle-fed or orphan lambs may be younger, but confirm they are thriving before purchase.
- Embryos and recipient ewes - Ensure both Embryo Transfer (ET) donor parents are fully registered and DNA-profiled. All embryos should be recorded with Grassroots, and their parentage should be visible in the online registry. Avoid embryos with unverified parentage, as offspring cannot be registered.
- Health certification - If purchasing MV-accredited or specific genotype stock, request the appropriate certification.
- Non-breeding options - If you do not intend to breed, a wether (castrated male) is often a sensible choice. Wethers are generally good-natured and easier to manage. An unregistered animal may also be suitable for non-breeding homes (see registration status below).
- Ask questions - Trust your supplier but never feel pressured to buy. If an animal does not meet your expectations.
- Avoid buying from photos - Online images rarely show true quality or condition. Always assess the overall sheep in person where possible.
- Research your seller - When buying from a website or social media page, perform background checks and, if possible, speak to other breeders or Society members.

Pedigree Certificates and Registry

- All pedigree Valais Blacknose sheep must be registered with Grassroots.
- Always verify that the animal matches the details on its Grassroots registration certificate.

- If a certificate is unavailable, record the ear tag number(s) and contact Grassroots to confirm registration status prior to purchase.
- It is advisable to request this information before viewing or negotiating.
- Grassroots contact:
 - Email: agency@grassroots.co.uk
 - Telephone: 01392 270421
- The address on the Grassroots certificate should match the location where you are buying or collecting the animal (except for auction sales).

Collection and Transfer of Ownership

- Both buyer and seller must hold a valid CPH number, and the seller must complete the appropriate movement licence.
- Inspect the animal carefully on collection to ensure you are completely satisfied with its health and condition. Raise any concerns immediately with the seller.
- If an animal is being delivered, it is advisable to check the ear tag number to ensure it matches the animal you have seen/agreed to purchase.
- The seller should provide:
 - A printed or digital copy of the pedigree certificate
 - Any other relevant documentation (e.g., scrapie or MV test results)
- Transfer of ownership - can be done in the following ways.
 - The buyer completes the Transfer of Ownership section on the certificate and posts/ emails it directly to Grassroots.
 - The seller completes the transfer through their online Grassroots account.
- If the certificate is unavailable, record the ear tag number(s) and contact Grassroots. They will liaise with the seller to confirm the transfer.
- Once processed, Grassroots will email a new ownership certificate.
- Most breeders offer after-sales support - don't hesitate to ask for advice.

Important Things to Be Aware Of

- Registration status - Animals intended for pedigree registration should be fully registered, while non-pedigree animals may be sold unregistered. Only the breeder can complete registration. Buyers cannot later register an unregistered or birth-notified animal after purchase, and offspring bred from an unregistered animal are not eligible for registration. Buyers should confirm the registration status of any animal before purchase so they can make an informed decision.
- Breed standards - To show your animal, it must meet official breed standards as set out in the Valais Blacknose Society's Constitution and Breeding Programme.
- Pedigree registration - Males should meet breed standards. Breeding from mis-marked pedigree ewes and Spitti females is permitted.
- Ear tags - No ear tag, no sale. By law, all sheep must be tagged. The EID tag is a lifelong identifier and must never be removed or replaced. Removing a tag renders the animal unregistered and untraceable.
- Missing paperwork - Lack of documentation may indicate the sheep is not registered, not a pedigree animal, or may have been stolen.
- Listed non-breeding animals - Castrated and Spitti males may be listed on Grassroots as non-breeding and issued with a "Listed - Non-Breeding" certificate upon breeder request or simply logged as birth notified.
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Breeding” certificate, or they may simply be logged as birth notified. Breeders are not required to provide a non-breeding certificate.

- No breed-up programme - There is no official breed-up programme for Valais Blacknose sheep in the UK. Crossbred animals cannot produce registerable offspring.
- No polled variety - All Valais Blacknose sheep, both male and female, are horned. There is no such thing as a naturally polled (hornless) Valais Blacknose.
- Always verify registration - Check every potential purchase in the Grassroots Online Registry to confirm pedigree parentage.
- Be cautious of pricing - If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Imports

If purchasing sheep from outside the UK, ensure full compliance with Valais Blacknose Society import rules before purchase.

Imported animals must:

- Be fully registered by an EU Zootechnically recognised registration authority.
- Have a Zootech pedigree certificate showing three generations of registered pedigree ancestors.
- Be registered with Grassroots by the importer within six months of arrival in the UK.

You will need to provide copies of:

- Export documentation from the source country
- Import documentation from the UK (or Irish) ministry