

## FRANK LANGRISH:

Udimore, East Sussex-based farmer Frank Langrish uses Southdown rams across about a third of his flock of 3500 Romney ewes producing lambs for local butchers and mainstream retailers.

"Butchers are big fans of our Southdown sired lambs as the meat is well marbled, making it tender and succulent, and the carcasses have a high meat to bone ratio."

"This means they aren't paying for waste and with the consistent conformation offered by Southdown sired lambs they and their customers know what to expect."

And with Mr Langrish running a large flock in a traditional system on old permanent pastures, the breed's natural vigour and ability to finish off poorer forage is essential. "Southdowns lamb easily and their lambs are always up and sucking quickly whatever the weather, even on our exposed coastal grazing."

"When it comes to finishing the lambs I find they finish rapidly off low quality grazing, with carcasses up to 21kg."



## EASTON COLLEGE:

The natural vigour of Southdown sired lambs has been demonstrated in a recent trial at Easton College, Norfolk, where the breed recorded significantly lower lamb mortality than two mainstream terminal sire breeds.

The trial, designed to compare lamb growth rates to eight weeks, found that just 6% of Southdown sired lambs died by that age, compared to more than 10% for Suffolk sired lambs and 20% for Texel sired lambs in the same trial.



- High meat : bone ratio & great flavour
- Easy lambing – ideal on ewe lambs
- Lambs finish easily off grass alone
- Robust rams that do not melt away
- Performance recorded rams available

## NICK PAGE:

Tupping ewe lambs is an increasingly popular practice, but making it successful relies on careful management, good stock selection and ensuring you have the right rams to do the job.

For Chichester, West Sussex-based flock manager Nick Page who looks after more than 1200 ewes for Goodwood Estates, lambing ewe lambs helps ensure they are better mothers as shearlings and provides an additional income from North Country Mule ewe lambs purchased each autumn.

"Central to this, though, is having the right breed of ram and for me that's a Southdown every time. They're great rams for ewe lambs, being easily lambed and quick growing off milk and grass," explains Mr Page.

Crucially, with moderate birth weights and neat heads and legs, the Southdown cross lambs are easily born, with very few of the hogs requiring assistance at lambing," he adds.

"That helps ensure the ewe and lamb bond isn't broken by us having to intervene and means the hogs have the chance to be the best mothers they can be.

"We can slaughter Southdown cross lambs at a variety of weights from 18kg up to 22kg at optimum fat classes, providing a range of joint sizes suited to our different customers.

I really wouldn't want to use any other ram on the ewe lambs, the Southdown is the perfect ram for the job," says Mr Page.





## JOHN BISHOP:

Southdown rams fit very well in to the 1000 acre organic system managed by John Bishop in Berkshire, producing lambs to a high specification for Sainsburys.

"We chose Southdown rams as we wanted a finishing tup capable of producing lambs of good conformation, and the Southdown rams produce a meaty animal right the way through with lambs that flesh up well, not a load of bone."

The farm has been using Southdown rams for over five years, putting them across 500 Suffolk cross ewes. "The rams are robust, they are worm resistant and good on their feet. They are also long lived, and do not melt away like other breeds."

All lambs are finished entirely off grass with no supplementary feeding. Some lambs are sold early at 15-17kg and grade exceptionally well. Later lambs get away at 21kg, still grading with excellent E and U carcasses. "This proves that the Southdown is capable of producing a lamb of good conformation through a range of weights."

"The past few years have been tricky for the lamb producer, but the Southdown cross lambs always have good conformation and grow particularly well throughout the season."



## JOHN SCOTT:

Tain, Rosshire-based John Scott uses Southdown rams on his ewe lambs for their ease of lambing and vigour at birth. "Also, due to our location, the weather can be fairly rough at lambing and the head cover and tight skins of the Southdown cross lambs really help with lamb survival."

When it comes to lambing hogs Mr Scott wanted a lamb which would thrive. "Its important that the lamb doesn't drag the hogg down too, as this can compromise their ability to get back in good condition ready for tugging as shearlings," explains Mr Scott.

"This is where the Southdown really wins for me over other breeds. The lambs are quick to thicken up and carry a good cover of flesh at every stage of their development. They really grow well off milk and grass, but don't demand too much of their dam, meaning she also has the chance to continue growing and maintain body condition too," he explains.

"The Southdown cross lambs are good shapey lambs and their early finishing nature and the fact they carry flesh at all weights means we can sell them to suit our needs. The Southdown lambs worked out well in 2015 and we sold about half of them at 16 weeks old straight off their mothers to Woodhead Bros abattoir at Turriff, with these averaging about 19kg deadweight. "



## Seeing is Believing



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