COLORS and MARKINGS of NORTH AMERICAN FINNSHEEP

In determining the color of a lamb it is important to examine pigmentation of the skin as well as wool color. Since the appearance of wool color may also change with age, length of fleece, and sun exposure it is best to record color at birth and again at several weeks of age.

COLOR

WHITE: The lamb will display white wool, pink skin, and hooves which are white, black, or streaked.

BLACK: Black lambs display black wool, black hair on legs and face, and black or dark skin.

BROWN: Brown lambs display brown wool (light, medium, or dark hues), brown hair on legs and face, and reddish skin.

GRAY: Gray lambs are born with black wool. Fiber tips retain the birth color as the new wool growth becomes paler in color until the process is complete, usually after the 6th to 8th month of age.

FAWN: Fawn lambs are brown at birth. Fiber tips retain the birth color as the new wool growth becomes paler in color until the process is complete, usually after the 6th to 8th month of age.

MARKINGS

BADGERFACE: The badgerface pattern is visible at birth. In Black Badgerface lambs the underside of the jaw, the throat, brisket, belly, legs, and under the tail are all black. Upper parts of the body (fleece areas) are light to medium gray. Ears are black inside and badger stripes are visible along the sides of the face. At birth there may be tan spots in the fleece area resulting from pheomelanin which disappear as the lamb gets older. Brown Badgerface lambs are marked in the same way, but with the darker pigmentation showing as brown and the lighter fleece area showing as a paler fawn color.

PIEBALD MARKINGS: Piebald is a recessive marking which results in irregular white spots on the fleece portion of a colored sheep. The appearance can vary between large areas of color and small dotted areas of ticking (referred to as Dalmatian spotting), or a combination of both types. It can exist in common with any other color or pattern except white. Areas of pink skin produce the white wool while the darker fleece grows from either gray skin (black/white piebald) or liver colored skin (brown/white piebald). Since Piebald is not an actual pattern, the markings on each sheep may vary considerably.

HST or HEAD, SOCKS, & TAIL: This more recently defined marking is commonly found in North American Finnsheep. It is represented by white markings on the head, legs, and/or tail of an otherwise solid colored Finnsheep. Facial blazes, crowns, and panda eye spots are typical of this marking. It should not be confused with Piebald (which displays patches of white and color in the fleece areas as well).