



# NordWool: a Network for Nordic Landrace Sheep

*"A network for a more sustainable future in Nordic sheep farming, leveraging wool as a valuable resource while conserving genetic and cultural heritage"*

*Financed by the Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research (NKJ) for period of 2025-2027.*

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## NordGen is a knowledge, research and service center.

A Forum of experts (networks)


Hub of information

Measures to support Conservation activities

Research activities


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THE FIRST STATUS REPORT ON THE CONSERVATION OF FARM ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES (ANGR) IN THE NORDICS





Original Articles


### The status and need for characterization of Nordic animal genetic resources


Line Sass Kierkegaard , Linn Fenna Groeneveld, Anne Kettunen & Peer Berg

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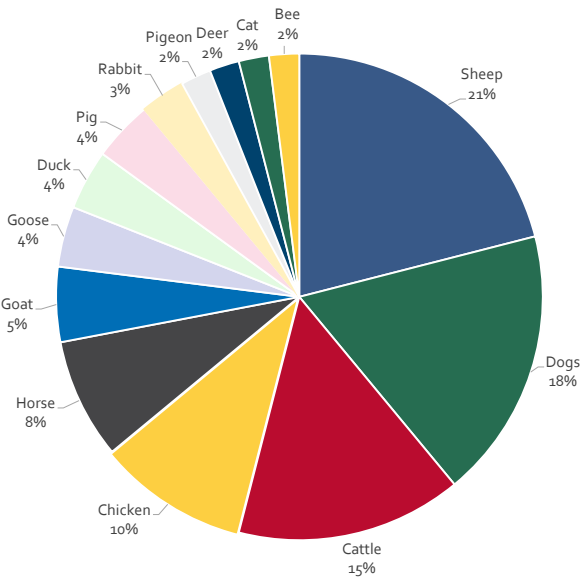
 Check for updates

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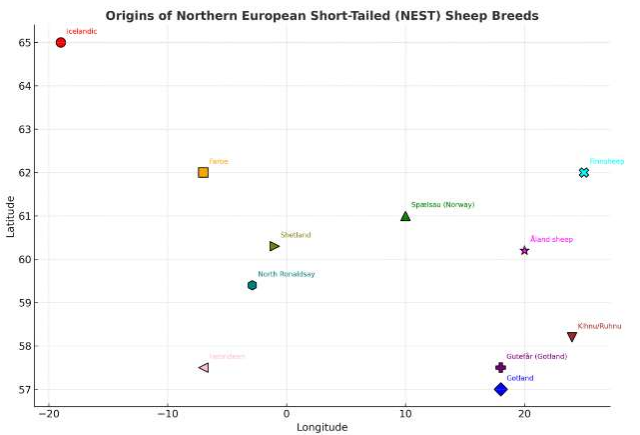
# Native breeds in the Nordic countries

Species	Number of breeds
Sheep	34
Dog	29
Cattle	24
Chicken	16



# Nordic sheep breeds – part of the Northern European short tail group (NEST)

- An old-type sheep characterized by a short or almost non-existent tail.
- More than 30 breeds in Northern Europe and the Great Britain
- Typically, smaller and harder than modern commercial breeds.
- Wool is very variable – from fine, silky, soft, easy felting to coarse, durable, water resistance, strong, elastic & often with beautiful natural colours.
- Many of the breeds are **rare or endangered**.





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## Wool potential

- Long adaptation to arctic environment, Nordic breeds possess unique characteristics, including potentially valuable properties in their wool.
- Wool of certain breeds could be used to craft waterproof materials, like sails.
- Others provide exceptionally durable fibres usable for example for industrial carpets (e.g. carpets used on ships or buses).
- There is also fine, soft wool ideal for high-quality textiles, and breeds bred for wool that give high quality pelts.

=> The breeds have a big variety of different wool types that have many uses.

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Norwegian *bunad*, the national costume

A woman in a traditional Norwegian bunad, featuring a red skirt and a white blouse with a red vest, stands in a lush, green landscape. In the background, there are steep, rocky mountains and a body of water, likely a fjord. The scene is captured in a painterly style, with soft lighting and a sense of tranquility.

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## Wool challenges

- However, the wool quality can vary greatly within a breed.
- Many industrial processors shut down in 1960's onwards leaving both the expertise and infrastructure unused.
- Wool shearing turned into an extra work step and wool itself became a biohazard.
- Wool often treated as secondary to meat production.
- Also, knowledge is scattered, and major information gaps remains: **genetic, phenotypic, and population characterization** is incomplete or totally missing.

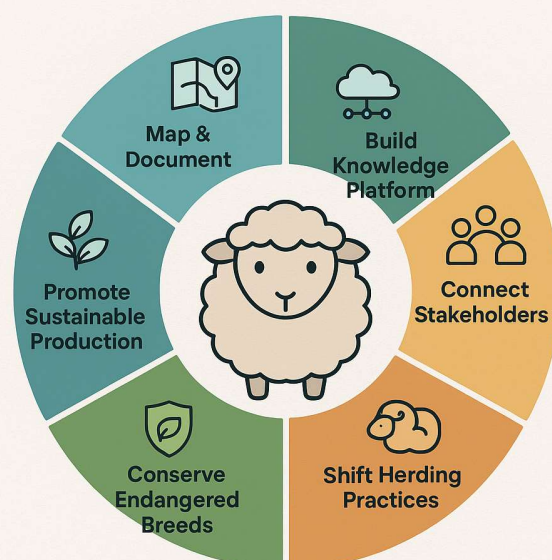
=> No dedicated platform -> limits recognition & use.



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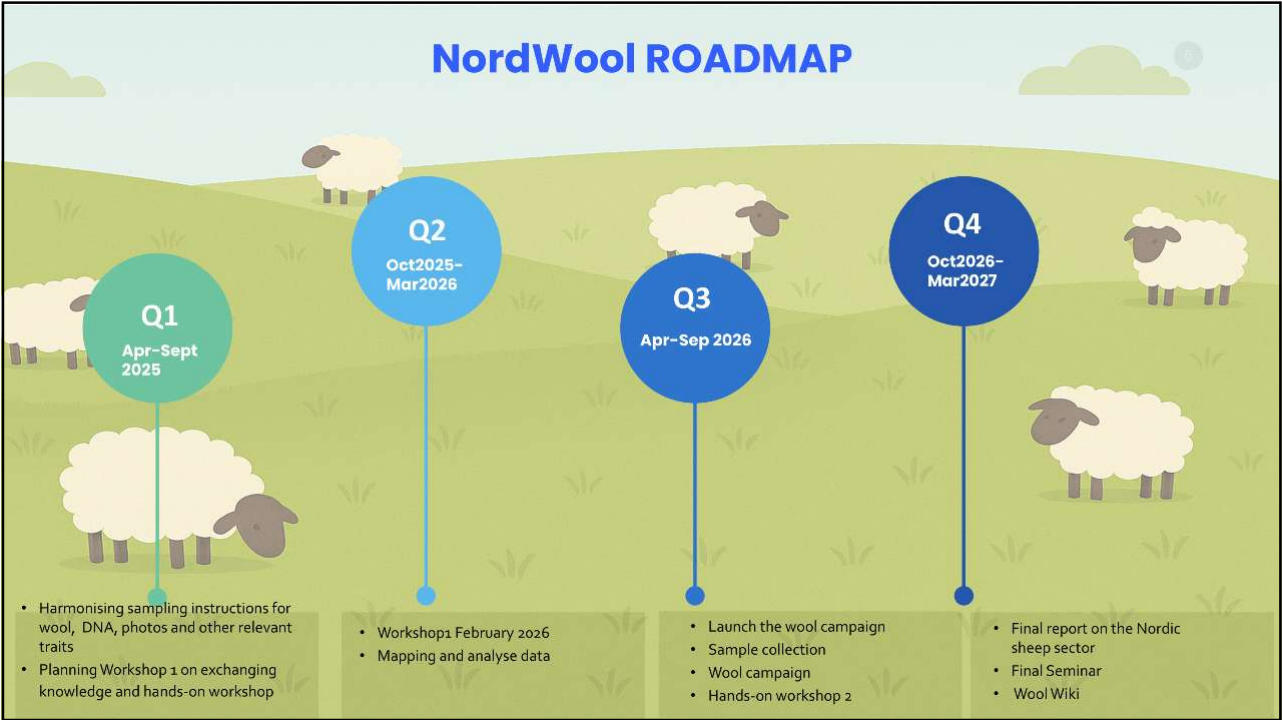
## Network to promote and sustain native sheep wool

- Map and document Nordic sheep breeds and their wool traits.
- Build a knowledge platform to collect and share data.
- Connect stakeholders: farmers, breed societies, spinneries & genetic experts.
- Support sustainable management: shift practices to value wool alongside meat.
- Boost recognition and market value of Nordic wool.
- Conserve endangered breeds and preserve cultural heritage.
- Establish a wool sample bank & woolwiki.



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**Thank you for  
your attention!**

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