

Historic-Foundation & Multi-Bloodline Composites

KARAKUL SHEPHERDS ALLIANCE ~ *where the flocks gather*



Six Winds Karakuls
~~ an MBC Line (Multi-Bloodline Composite) ~~
*Linebred on Glotflety & Hindi Historic-Foundation lines & Anakus MBC,
with genetics from Tina Jacobs & Deborah Hunter-Simon*

Joe's story, narrated to Deborah Hunter

Appearance: fine to medium-boned and mid-size stature, although has had large-framed meat-types; lustrous facial hair; long ears, but has families of short-eared Karakuls; some rams have medium-size horns, most rams polled

Selected for: Temperament, fleece, conformation; all around sturdiness & classic beauty in full fleece

Character: Tractability, people-friendly Karakuls; but wild ones do show up

Colors: about ~1/3 black, gray or gray roan with black or gray spots is a common color, several dark brown, a few pure whites and a color called Idaho black (see note below); not many spotted lambs, red is rare

Fleeces: selected for hand spinners and felting crafts

Landrace conditions: high desert, elevation 5,300 feet; hot dry summers, cold snowy winters

Shepherd input: all tails left intact; low-input, some antibiotics when necessary; pasture in summer, grass-alfalfa hay in winter, a bit of grain occasionally-wheat & barley; not wormed often (went 6 years, indicating some parasite resistance)

Dates established/prevalent: 1989 – 2020, 31 years

Number of years isolated: 2005 to 2020, 15 years of genetic isolation

Current Status: As of Dec 2020, Six Winds Karakuls have been dispersed to three smaller flocks in California, Washington, and Idaho. The first two will breed Six Winds pure to maintain the bloodline.

Total - (as of dispersal) 40 Karakuls; about 50+ Navajo-Churros & 30 Amerasian crossbreds (developed for long, single-coated fleeces)

Bloodline Characteristics: several large working supernumerary teats; rare color *Black with pink skin*, named Idaho Black—lambs appear brown with pink nose-eyerims, fade gray as adults; yellow eyes; many good teeth in aged sheep

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History

- 1989 Stevensville, Montana – Priscilla Antrim, first 3 Karakul ewes, later 7 more
- 1989 Fort Collins, CO – 1st ram *Joshua*, white with dark red spots, horned
- 1992 Rice, WA – Julia DeVlieg, 4 ewes, 4 different bloodlines (1 elf-eared, *Goose*)
- 1998 Springport, MI – Deborah Hunter-Simon, 1 ram *Han*, 2 ewes, 2 bloodlines
- 2000 January 1, Goldendale, WA – Tina Jacobs, ~20 ewes (1/2 to 1/3 of flock)
- 2005 Gibbon, NE-Joe Schukar, rose-gray polled ram *Jocko*, 100% Hindi

This was the last Karakul sheep brought into Joe's flock. From 2005 to 2020 Six Winds was genetically isolated from other Karakuls.

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### **Why did you choose Karakuls? What first caught your eye about them?**

*Being fascinated with and having traveled to Nepal, I read a lot of Central Asian books, several written in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's first half. In Beyond the Caspian, by Douglas Carruthers, ©1949, there is a picture of 5 black Karakul rams resting with a camel in a town square. Those sheep captivated me.*

### **Over the years you have selected for tractability, people-friendly Karakuls, do you sell the 'wild' non-personable sheep?**

*I try to sell them to auctions only, but it's a gamble if no Muslims are there that day, as they pay higher prices.*

### **What do you like most about your Karakul flock now?**

*Their resilience. Karakuls have resilience, even compared with Navajo-Churros. I have more Churros only because they twin more often. The Karakuls have a toughness, a capacity to spring back and recover quickly. And I get lots of pipe curls in the lambs. That beauty makes it all worthwhile.*

### **What else would you like to add?**

*The California ghost flocks are managed by eccentric shepherds. Karakuls are a 3,000-year-old breed. They can disappear without a trace, but they'll be back!*

~Joe Billman, Six Winds Karakuls, Arco, (central-southeast) Idaho  
written by Deborah Hunter  
narrated on July 10, 2019, Joe's 86<sup>th</sup> birthday