



Karakul Sheep Conservators – Recommendations for MANAGING BLOODLINES

The Alliance is making Karakul Bloodline Conservation a priority.

The reasons are best summed up in *Managing Breeds for a Secure Future*^[1] "The bloodlines within a breed can be very important reservoirs of genetic variation, and managing these within the overall breed is important to long term breed survival.... it makes sense for a breed association to work to effectively conserve all of the component bloodlines of a breed." Here is a basic outline for Bloodline Conservators.

Types of Bloodlines:

Historical, 20th century, many no longer distinct
Foundation, 21st century, descendant from Historical lines
MBC & Linebred, 21st century (MBC - Multi-Bloodline Composite)

Conserving
Historical and Foundation lines:

1. To manage the Bloodline to fall within the identified range of historical parameters. Known histories, traits, and qualities will be collected from sources knowledgeable about the original breeders and sheep. This information will be assembled into *Bloodline History & Characteristics* for each line, to be offered as a guide for selection criteria.
2. To aim for the goal of *uniformity* in Historical and Traditional lines.
3. Management and selection should be appropriate for the Bloodline being managed. Some bloodlines will maintain their traditional genetic heritage by being in environments that challenge the sheep, to retain their adaptive traits and productivity.^[2] Example—most breeders currently managing Historical Karakul bloodlines live in the same general area where the line was developed a century ago. Similar locations and environments make the maintenance of bloodline traits more straightforward.
4. Since these lines were developed in North America over more than a century, all efforts should be toward their maintenance as American Karakuls, excluding the New Zealand (NZ) bloodline.

Developing
MBC and Linebred lines:

1. To manage and continue to develop Karakul flocks for one or more production traits, examples: hardiness, size, tails, color, wool, behavior, disposition.
2. To aim for the goal of *performance* in Composite or Linebred Bloodlines.
3. Management and selection should be towards producing a flock of outstanding individuals based on selection of traits for use, production, performance, or beauty.
4. Since these lines were developed in the 21st century, the NZ line could be useful in certain flocks. It should be noted that NZ percentages over 3% are tracked as NZ and not American Karakuls.

References:

1, 2. Sponenberg, D. Phillip, Donald E. Bixby 2007. *Managing Breeds for a Secure Future: Strategies for Breeders and Breed Associations*. Pittsboro, NC: American Livestock Breeds Conservancy*. Pages 35, 185 *(Name shortened to The Livestock Conservancy (TLC) in 2013)

For Bloodline definition or explanations of MBC (Multi-Bloodline Composite), Isolated or Line-bred designations please read our [Bloodlines](#) webpage, or our [Traditional Flocks](#) paper under the [Registry](#) tab.