

## Historic-Foundation & Multi-Bloodline Composites



KARAKUL SHEPHERDS ALLIANCE ~ *where the flocks gather*

J Kambar Farm Karakuls  
~~ MBC-Linebred for non-fading dark red fleeces,  
and Foundation TAMU whites~~

Interest in sheep and the fiber arts for me began almost simultaneously in 1980. As my engagement in spinning, weaving and felting expanded, so did my attention to the natural-colored wools, particularly the red and brown shades. However, I was disheartened with the fading characteristic of the fleece color from lamb to adult, going from a brilliant auburn to a soft cream within the first shearing. As I researched different breeds, I discovered that Karakuls have a recessive brown color. A call to Julie DeVlieg, the registrar of the American Karakul Sheep Registry, provided a place to start and located a breeder with red Karakuls securing several ewe lambs, my focus established.

The foundation sire for my flock was Stanwood, a Hagerman [blood]line ram purchased as a 5-year-old proven sire with a dark red adult fleece from Jan and Lou Wilt in 1987. For nearly 10 years, Karakuls with red legs and faces with fleece colors ranging from apricot, mahogany, and red from a range of different ewe breeding lines were gathered from various flocks across the country including Page Jacobs, Julie DeVlieg, and Joe Schukar, to enrich the flock genetics. This Multi-Bloodline Composite formed the foundation before integrating line breeding for color retention. At one time the flock number was up to about 80 breeding ewes. Using proven sires and dams later into their productive life, the lines were slowly strengthened by their progeny who exhibit a distinct color retention that traces back to the original Stanwood line.

Through the years Karakuls in shades of gray, black, and white were added to provide a wide natural color wool pallet for fiber artists. The white Karakuls were acquired from various breeders and bloodlines, most notably, a TAMU ram from Jeff Black [acquired] in 1995 [named *Arnold's Son*, who continued to sire white lambs late in life]. When circumstances lead to a reduction in flock numbers, the red line was retained along with a small group of white Karakuls. The main focus remains on those that continue to exhibit shades of red. Additional priority is given to those individuals that exhibit traditional Karakul traits including carriage, adaptability, instinct and size.

In the vintage Karakul literature regarding the inheritance of color, brown karakuls, the ginger reds, deep brown to light tan and everything in between are referred to as Kambar. What a wonderful definition of what has been pursued in the color of our flock, with lambs born in shade variations of mahogany, chestnut, through deep rich red. And there is the satisfaction in observing the sheep following shearing, to continue to observe color into the adult fleece. So the name J Kambar Farms was chosen, ushering in a new chapter to our sheep story.

~Leslie Johnson, J Kambar Farm Karakuls,  
Oklahoma City, (central) Oklahoma, March 2023