

Frequently Asked Questions on Grading Up and Recording Katahdins



If I have a purebred Katahdin that has no papers, can I get him/her inspected and then registered?

No. If registration or recordation papers on the animal or its parents cannot be located or were never issued, for registry purposes the animal is treated the same as if it were a different breed. This is only fair, because the purpose of a registry is to record and report the pedigree of animals as a service to inform breeders of lineage and purity.

No matter how much a sheep “looks” like a pure Katahdin, without registration papers its ancestry is unclear and it has less breeding value than a registered animal. However, such sheep—especially ewes—can be valuable to use in upgrading programs because they already have hair coats and perhaps other easy care qualities that Katahdins are noted for. Many breeders are grading-up by starting with a base of commercial Katahdin ewes and recording lambs from each generation.

KHSI has an “open flock book.” What does this mean?

Since its establishment in 1985, KHSI has had an open flock book, which means that percentage-blood Katahdins can be recorded in the KHSI registry and registered Katahdins can be generated through the use of registered rams or ewes mated to non-registered animals. In the most common upgrading and recordation method, a registered Katahdin ram is bred to any group of ewes and the offspring are recorded in succeeding generations at $\frac{1}{2}$ (50 percent), $\frac{3}{4}$ (75 percent) and $\frac{7}{8}$ (87.5 percent). To become a registered animal, the 87.5 percent or greater animal requires a hair coat inspection.

The greater the genetic diversity within a population, the greater the selection potential for performance improvement. Allowing upgrading benefits the breed through the introduction of new gene combinations, the incorporation of heterosis (hybrid vigor) and opportunity for expansion in breed numbers. The challenge presented by an open flock book is some degree of decreased uniformity and predictability in the breed population. Breeders especially benefit from the open flock book by being able to use good, productive ewes to make economical and efficient progress toward development of a flock of hair sheep that is recognized by the KHSI Registry.

I have a flock of commercial woolled ewes. What general issues should I keep in mind in using Katahdin rams to “breed the wool off” and record offspring?

Select rams whose performance and conformation reflects what you are aiming for in your eventual high-percentage Katahdin ewe flock. Rams with clean-shedding “A” coats are advised in order to reduce non-shedding wool in offspring. Breeders in upgrading programs should also be mindful of preserving and enhancing Katahdin signature traits for reproductive efficiency, such as fertility, prolificacy, mothering ability and parasite resistance. Selection for genetic resistance to scrapie is becoming increasingly important. It is important to consider using Katahdin rams that are tested to be QR or RR at Codon 171, particularly with black-faced ewes.

To record animals takes advance planning. Some information must be collected at lambing and lambs need to be tagged or tattooed for accurate identification shortly after being born. For recordation, the registry will require a birth date and type of birth (i.e. single, twin, triplet), as well as the registration and tag numbers of the ram used and the tag numbers of the ewes.

How many generations does it take to grade-up from a non-registered animal (an animal without a paper) to a registered animal?

It takes at least three generations of mating to registered Katahdin rams to create a fully registered Katahdin, provided that it is inspected with an A or B hair coat as a yearling.

In the case of rams, the dam of a recorded 7/8 ram must also be inspected and have an A coat for the ram to enter the flock book as registered.

What is the difference between a Certificate of Registration and Certificate of Recordation?

A fully registered Katahdin has a white Certificate of Registration paper. A recorded animal has a blue Certificate of Recordation paper. In the case of 7/8 (87.5 %) animals, they can be recorded as lambs if desired and then inspected for registration after one year of age and can receive a white paper if inspected with an A or B coat.

Can a breeder record animals that are less than 50% Katahdin?

The KHSI registry does allow this. Recording percentage animals with less than 50% Katahdin has less value, if the primary breeding objectives are to obtain fully registered Katahdins. Typically, grading up involves the use of a fully registered Katahdin ram on ewes that are unrecorded or recorded at 1/2 (50 percent), 3/4 (75 percent) or 7/8 (87.5 percent). A 25 percent animal, for example, is much more difficult to use in moving toward registered stock—usually stalling or slowing the process—than are animals of higher recordation status percentages.

If I use a 75 percent recorded Katahdin ram lamb and breed him to registered Katahdin ewes, will the offspring be registerable?

This is a common question. The offspring can be recorded at 87.5% and following a hair coat inspection by a KHSI certified inspector, the offspring can be fully registered. This is just the same as if a registered ram had been bred to 75 percent recorded ewes. If the 75 percent ram is bred to 75 percent ewes, the offspring can be recorded as 75 percent.

I have 50 percent recorded Katahdin ewes and want to use my high-performing 75 percent Katahdin recorded ram. Is this a good idea? What would the offspring be recorded as?

This can be a way to use or introduce desirable genetics. However, it does make the process more complicated and lengthens the time to move toward fully registerable Katahdins. For example, a 75 percent ram mated to 50 percent ewes results in 62.5 percent offspring (instead of 75 percent offspring if a registered ram had been used). If mated to a registered ram, such 62.5 percent ewes can produce 81.5 percent offspring, which are still one generation away from registerable 87.5 percent animals even if a registered ram is bred to them.

I know a breeder who has excellent rams of another breed and I would like to use one on my registered Katahdin ewes to improve a particular trait in my flock. Is this allowed in recordation?

Yes, KHSI recordation policy does allow the use of a ram of another breed. In the case of registered Katahdin ewes bred to such a ram, the crossbred lambs can be recorded as 50 percent. A 50 percent son bred back to registered ewes results in 75 percent offspring.

When does an animal need inspection and how do I request inspection?

Ewes of 7/8 Katahdin blood are eligible for registration upon inspection after one year of age, if the previous

generations have been recorded. Ewes must be classified as a coat type A or B to be registerable; if they are classified as coat type "C," they can be identified in the flock book as recorded.

Similarly, rams of at least 7/8 Katahdin blood must also be inspected after one year of age and be classified as a coat type A or B. In addition, upgraded rams must have a dam inspected with an A coat.

Inspections are requested through the KHSI Operations office by May 15 of each year and are conducted during the summer and no later than October 1. The KHSI inspector verifies the animal's identity, checks it for any gross defects, and classifies the coat and poll type. The owner submits the papers to the registry office with a fee payment for a permanent registration certificate.

Katahdin breeders can become inspectors with two years of KHSI membership and passage of an inspector training class, which certifies the inspector for three years. Permanent inspector certification requires passing another training class a minimum of three years after the first and continuous KHSI membership. Inspector classes are usually offered twice a year at various locations. Inspectors assist KHSI by inspecting other flocks and are entitled to inspect their own animals as well.

Only animals that are 75 percent or greater according to the KHSI Registry flock book can have hair coat type recorded in the registry.

Glossary of Terms

Note – There are multiple uses of these terms. We in KHSI use definition 1 in each case. But put in the second definition to note other common uses. Many breeders use Registered, Purebred and Fullblood interchangeably. Others distinguish between a Registered and a fullblood.

Commercial- A sheep that is not registered. A commercial Katahdin usually refers to a sheep that is of 100% Katahdin ancestry but is not registered. A second definition includes sheep that are either unregistered Katahdins or crossbred Katahdin.

Registered – A Registered Katahdin is listed in the KHSI flock book as 100% Katahdin. Registered sheep of other breeds are listed as 100% in their flock books. The KHSI Certificate of Registration is white.

Recorded- A Recorded Katahdin is an animal that is listed as a percentage animal by the KHSI Registry & Flock Book. Note: A Recorded Katahdin may have all Katahdin ancestry, but if a grand-dam or dam is not Registered it is can not be registered as a 100% Katahdin. It may be Recorded with the KHSI Registry. Or a Recorded Katahdin may be the offspring of a Registered Katahdin and a Registered Suffolk and be Recorded at 50% Katahdin. The KHSI Certificate of Recordation is blue. The percentage according to the KHSI Registry is listed on the Certificate.

Grade – Used in two manners. Some use this to designate a commercial Katahdin that is not Registered. Others use it to designate a crossbred Katahdin.

Crossbred- Has parents of two or more breeds. Typically, animals that are 7/8 or greater blood of one breed are not considered crossbred, but of that breed. Some breeds of livestock designate animals with less than 15/16 or 31/32 are crossbred.

Purebred- Used in two manners. KHSI will use the 1st definition. 1) Designates an animal that is of one breed. 2) Some Breed Registries and breeders reserve the "purebred" designation for only those animals that are Registered and 100%.

Full-blood- Used in two manners. KHSI will use the 1st definition. 1) Designates an animal that is of one breed. 2) Some Breed Registries and breeders reserve the “full-blood” designation for only those animals that are Registered and 100%.

Percentage – Used in two manners. A percentage Katahdin may refer to either 1) a Katahdin that is grading up to 100% in the KHSI Registry or 2) a cross-bred Katahdin that may be in a grading-up program.

“Up-grading” versus “grading up” – Up-grading will be used in this document to indicate that the breeding goal is to bringing in genetics from another breed or composite to improve a genetic parameter in their Katahdin flock or the breed. A breeder who used highly parasite resistant Florida Native ram on his/her Katahdins and then selected only those offspring with superior parasite resistance to record and eventually register is “up-grading”. A breeder who starts with a flock of commercial Katahdins or registered/commercial ewes of another breed and sequentially breeds them and their offspring to Registered Katahdin rams and eventually registering the 7/8 (87.5%) offspring is grading up.

