For information on any breed of sheep, from the USA or elsewhere in the world, try the Oklahoma website:

http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/sheep

Ewe breeds (good mothers, more lambs) included Corriedale, Finnsheep, Merino, Rambouillet, Dorset, Targhee.
Ram breeds (sire fast-growing market lambs) include Cheviot, Oxford, Southdown and black-face breeds.

Fine wool - wool type sheep, folds of skin on ventral neck.

1. Rambouillet

   This is a large, long-legged white sheep with flesh colored lips. It was developed from Merinos that were sent from Spain to Louis XVI, king of France in 1786 and kept in the king's hunting park at Rambouillet, near Paris. As a long wool breed, it is less prolific than many of the meat breeds.

2. Merino - white markings, flesh colored lips, medium size.

   Merinos are the most numerous fine woolled sheep around the world and in the past have been the major sheep breed in Australia. Because of selection for higher fleece weights, the skin tends to be wrinkly and invite fly strike. A surgical operation called "mulesing" involves cutting a strip of skin off the back of each hind leg so that less wool is present in that area (after healing/scarring) to be contaminated with feces and attract blowflies. Currently other techniques such as injection of sodium lauryl sulfate are being tried instead of surgery (Aust Vet J 88:483-489, 2010). See also.
This old picture shows the extreme to which man can select for increased wool production in Merinos. The very wrinkly phenotype (sometimes known as Vermont or Delaine Merino) was totally unsuited for survival on range and is no longer seen. Moist dermatitis and maggots occurred, as could be easily predicted. History tends to repeat itself, and the Firestone Farm in Michigan is trying to recreate the wrinkly Merino so we can learn this all over again.

Medium wool - mutton type sheep. Usually polled, except for Dorset Horn.

1. **Suffolk**

   This sheep has a black head free of wool and black legs. The ears are pendulous. Lambs usually have blackish wool at birth but turn white. The breed makes an excellent terminal sire for producing market lambs, but purebreds have a number of inherited problems to be aware of, including **spider lamb syndrome**, **abomasal emptying defect**, and susceptibility to **scrapie**. Radiographs from a clinical case of spider lamb syndrome show incomplete ossification of the ulna. A DNA test for spider lamb is available from Genecheck and other laboratories. Identifying possible carriers ('grey sheep', now referred to as NS sheep) before DNA testing was a challenge.
2. Hampshire

This is a very old photo of a Hampshire back when they were relatively short. Note the black face and legs, nose clean of wool.

3. Shropshire

Black face and legs, face covered with wool. This is an old picture of an old style Shropshire, when only the end of the nose was clean of wool.

This is a "modern" Shropshire, from the 2001 New York State fair. It looks remarkably like an old style Hampshire. In selecting "purebred" Hampshires and Shropshires for larger size, it has come to pass that the genetic defects of the Suffolk breed now appear in the Hampshires and even the smaller Shropshires have some very questionable pedigrees.
4. Tunis

This breed suggests a red version of a Suffolk in that the head should be clean of wool and the head and legs are red.

5. Oxford

The Oxford has brown face and legs, and a tuft of wool on its forehead (if not recently shorn, the way this show lamb is). It has both Hampshires and Cotswold sheep in its ancestry. It is a large mutton breed.

6. Southdown

The Southdown has a brown face and legs, no tuft on the forehead, and is smaller than the Oxford.
7. Dorset

Dorsets have a white face and legs and a clean nose. They are horned or polled. This is a horned dorset ewe.

This horned dorset ram has much more massive horns (the better to fight for you, my dear). If the tips of the horns curl too tightly against the head they may need to be trimmed off with obstetrical wire. The tip can be trimmed without bleeding as far back as the horn remains cool. Such an animal would not be a wise choice for a herd sire. If an owner asks for dehorning of all the sheep in his flock, tell him to find a different breed!

Dorsets are a good maternal breed. Polled Dorsets are commonly used to get more than one lamb crop a year. They figure importantly in the Finn-Dorset cross which is the basis of the STAR system of accelerated lambing (see Lecture 2). The wrinkles on this animal's face are a good clue that it is a ram.
8. **Cheviot**

The Cheviot has white face and legs. The whole head is clean, and the ears are erect.

**Crossbred wool-type**, developed by crossing fine wool and long wool breeds

1. **Corriedale**

The Corriedale has an open face and white hairs on the face, but dark lips and hooves are preferred. It was developed in New Zealand and Australia as a dual purpose (meat and wool) sheep.

2. **Columbia**

The Columbia has an open face, less wool around the eyes, and white hairs on the face and legs. The breed was developed by the United States Department of Agriculture as a sheep suitable for western range conditions.

Long wool sheep. Wool is coarse (braid) and white.

1. **Lincoln**

The Lincoln is a large sheep, with mature ewes weighing 200 to 250 pounds. It has an open face, with a less prominent forelock than the Cotswold. The heavy locks twist into a spiral near the end. The staple length is 8 to 15 inches for one year's wool growth.

2. **Cotswold**

The Cotswold has shaggy bangs, and the lips and nostrils are black. The fleece parts along the back and falls in rather bold locks that may be 8 to 10 inches long. The Cotswold tends to be smaller than the Lincoln.
BREEDS OF SHEEP

Carpet Wool, Fur sheep

1. **Karakul** - black or brown, fat tail

These are typically black or brownish sheep and thus their fleece is popular with handspinners.

The Karakul is a fat tailed breed, a common characteristic of sheep that originated around the Mediterranean or in the Middle East. In times of plenty they store their fat in the tail, where it does not interfere with thermoregulation or feed intake. The healthy sheep in the picture caused great consternation when it was shorn, as the first guess was that a tumor or abscess was present.

2. **Scottish Blackface**

This is a very hardy hill breed from Scotland. The mature weight is 105 to 155 pounds. It has an open face, black or mottled black and white. The staple length is 10 to 14 inches for one year's wool growth. In the United Kingdom the breed is extensively crossed with rams such as the Border Leicester or Bluefaced Leicester to produce productive crossbred ewes (mules) for fat lamb production.
**BREEDS OF SHEEP**

Hair sheep can be hard to tell from goats without a chromosome count (goats have 60, sheep have 54 chromosomes). Sheep have interdigital glands and a tail that hangs down, while goat tails go up when the goat is running and goats lack the glands.

1. **Barbados Blackbelly**

"Barbies", as some of their owners call them, are prolific and well adapted to tropical and subtropical climates. They have excellent innate parasite resistance. They are believed to have evolved in the West Indies from crosses of hair sheep from Africa and wooled sheep from Europe. Both sexes are polled.

2. **Katahdin**

This is a hair sheep breed that was developed in Maine, initially to graze powerlines. It is a meat sheep that does not require shearing. It can be of any color. The wooly undercoat and some hair shed out in the spring.

This Katahdin ewe is the only one in the flock that does not shed out well. Its twin lambs are vigorous but will be sold for meat rather than as breeding stock.
BREEDS OF SHEEP

Miscellaneous

1. Finnsheep

   This dainty-appearing white sheep has a short (undocked) tail without wool on it and toothpick legs. It has medium wool but its popularity stems from its prolificacy. Litters of 4 or 5 lambs are common. Crossbreeding with a Finn will increase the litter size in the next generation.

2. East Friesian or Friesian Milk Sheep

   This dairy breed originated along the coast of the North Sea. It is very popular with owners of commercial dairy sheep flocks. It has a 'rat tail' and a white head free of wool. The ewe in the picture is a crossbred; the dairyman bought a pure Friesian ram to breed his Dorsets to, in order to improve milk production rapidly without the expense of buying purebred ewes.

3. Jacob Sheep

   The Jacob has a broad white stripe down the face and large black spots in the white fleece. These spots can fade to a red color. The Jacob is a polycerate breed (can have 2 horns or 4). The wool is coarse and the sheep is often kept as a novelty. The breed is said to originate from sheep mentioned in the bible, in the book of Genesis. Recent research using retroviruses suggests that they are indeed very different from English breeds.