



**DOHNE**

*Solutions*

## **TEMPERAMENT**

Temperament is the character or disposition of an animal. Within the sheep population, as with humans, individuals vary with their temperament, from quiet and calm, to aggressive, flighty or nervous. Some Dohnes have given the breed a reputation for having poor temperaments.

Historically, some strains of Dohnes were imported from South Africa with some temperament issues.

Temperament is a characteristic that is important but often overlooked when choosing sheep (particularly Rams) for your flock. Priorities are given to Wool production and Meat production. Many people overlook the temperament of the sires and ewes used in the sheep flock.

Sheep with “flighty” temperaments have negative impacts on your farm’s infrastructure (shearing shed windows etc, yards and fencing) and your very precious human resources.

A large unpredictable (or “flighty”) ram or ewe can cause costly injuries to you, your employees or your sheep handling professionals (shearers).

At Glen Holme we have long held a belief that a flighty animal is a poor converter of food to sale-able product and can also be a safety risk. Our policy is to cull these animals. We have been known to remove a purchased sire and all his progeny from our flock if the temperament is not right. We actively select for quiet sheep.

Our Dohnes are large, heavy animals, and safety for all who work with them is a priority, we need to only have sheep with good temperaments.

We have people who speak to us at Field days and tell us that they already have Dohnes – and they like them. Some voice concerns about the temperament of their flock. We get told stories of flighty Dohnes. Others notice how quiet and settled our display sheep are.

At Field Days we allow, and even encourage adults and children to touch our animals. This is a good demonstration of docility. The photograph below was taken at a field day. The children and ram had not previously met.



Often our display sheep are brought in from a mob of sheep in a paddock, selected, and loaded for travel the next day. One day later, the sheep are in a small pen as part of our display. They have gone from being part of a mob in a paddock, to being handled and examined by interested parties in just over 40 hours.

Good temperament can be chosen through the sourcing of your rams. Temperament is passed on genetically, and whilst there is not an immediate saleable product from temperament as there is for wool and meat production, there are benefits in selecting animals with a good temperament. This becomes profitable for your operation when you consider safety of your human resources, and ability to retain shearers, your infrastructure in fences, yards and windows in sheds etc. Not to mention the wasted energy for nervous or flighty behaviours or the poor conversion of feed to product.

Glen Holme Dohnes place a high priority on placid temperaments in our sires and ewes. We are becoming known for our genetically quiet sheep.