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### **American Lamb – From Pasture to Plate**

Sheep, one of the oldest domesticated animals, have provided meat, wool and milk to people throughout the world for thousands of years.

Today, there are approximately 82,000 sheep operations in the United States. Sheep are produced in all 50 states. However, the largest sheep-producing states are located in the west while smaller flock operations are generally found in the eastern part of the country. There are approximately Insert number sheep operations in Insert state name.

American shepherds provide their lamb with sunshine, access to clean water and shade, clean bedding and vegetarian diets free from hormones, meat and meat by-products. Guardians – typically dogs, donkeys or llamas – play an important role in the herding of sheep and protecting them from predators.

Sheep grazing patterns are adapted to the seasonal availability of natural forage. In addition, sheep are used to help control weeds at farms, ranches and parks, reducing the need for chemicals and gas-powered machinery. For example, many California sheep ranchers are collaborating with California vineyards to use sheep to naturally clear the weeds beneath the grapevines. Sheep eat woody and broadleaf plants as well as tall weeds and grasses, making them useful for reducing the dangers of wildfire in parks and forests.

Depending on the quality of the range, some lamb are marketed directly from the pasture while others are grain-finished for 30 to 90 days before being processed.

American Lamb is either USDA inspected for wholesomeness or inspected by state systems which have requirements equal to those of the federal government. Almost 100 percent of USDA graded American Lamb will grade Choice or Prime.

American Lamb is available fresh – up to 10,000 miles fresher than imported product - helping to cut down on the fossil fuels needed to transport the meat from overseas.

Thanks to sophisticated breeding and nutrition programs, American Lamb is mild and delicate in flavor.

“American Lamb producers are committed to raising and supplying high quality lamb,” said Megan Wortman, executive director of the American Lamb Board. “From pasture to plate, American Lamb meets the highest standards for flavor and freshness.”

For more information about the sheep industry as well as recipes using American Lamb, visit

[www.americanlamb.com](http://www.americanlamb.com).

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