

## BODY MEASUREMENT OF RAMNAD WHITE SHEEP REARED IN FARMING CONDITIONS

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**Abstract** – Ramnad White is a medium sized and hardy mutton type sheep. The body colour is predominantly milky white with black colour in the extremities. Males have thick curling horns and females are polled. The data on body measurements of Ramnad White sheep maintained at TANUVAS, regional Research and Educational Centre, Pudukkottai were analysed. The least squares means for Height at withers, body length, heart girth, ear length and tail length were  $71.02 \pm 0.37$  kg,  $62 \pm 0.38$ ,  $77.04 \pm 0.40$ ,  $11.05 \pm 0.11$ ,  $7.08 \pm 0.10$  in males and  $66.80 \pm 0.31$  kg,  $57.12 \pm 0.21$ ,  $72.24 \pm 0.19$ ,  $10.12 \pm 0.25$ ,  $6.12 \pm 0.13$  respectively in females.

### INTRODUCTION

Ramnad White is a popular mutton type sheep found in southern part of Tamil Nadu. Body colour is predominantly milky white with black patches in the extremities. Males have thick curling horn and females are polled. Sheep of this breed are medium in body size and well known for their tolerance to hot climate, disease resistance and survival under harsh climatic conditions. Ganesakale and Rathnasabapathy (1973) and Acharya (1982) reported that Ramnathapuram and adjoining areas of Tirunelveli districts are the distribution areas of Ramnad White Sheep. The breeding tract lies between  $9^{\circ}05'$  and  $9^{\circ}50'$  N latitude and between  $78^{\circ}10'$  and  $78^{\circ}29'$  longitude. Ramnad White sheep is a breed of sheep having unique economic and Cultural importance with special adaptation characteristics to the drought prone area of Pudukkottai district. Pudukkottai district Possess 2.17 Lakhs of Sheep population with indigenous sheep population of 2.03 Lakhs (19<sup>th</sup> Livestock census, 2012). The current population size of sheep in the district has reduced by 72.63% when compared to 18<sup>th</sup> Livestock census, 2007 (7.94 Lakhs).

The population of Ramnad White sheep in breeding tract was 15.4 Lakhs (18<sup>th</sup> Livestock census, 2007) which has drastically reduced to 7.1 Lakh (19<sup>th</sup> Livestock census, 2012 and ICAR-

NBAGR). Previous study revealed that less than 500 breedable females could only be enumerated as pure Ramnad White in their home tract. There was a real shortage of quality rams in its home tract for breeding. The declining population trend is alarming as the breed is in critically endangered category and may become extinct soon if suitable measures for its conservation are not employed immediately. The information of body measurement is limited. An attempt was made to study the body measurement of Ramnad White Sheep in its native tract

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data used in the study includes biometric traits observed on 80 adult Ramnad White Sheep. A flexible tape rule was used to measure the parameters *viz* height at withers (HAW) distance from the base of hoof to the highest point of withers. Body length (BL) distance from point of shoulder to the point of tuber ischii; Heart girth (CG) body circumference around the chest just behind the elbow joint and ear length from base of ear to tip of the ear, Tail Length from base of tail to tip of the tail were calculated for this study.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the descriptive analysis are presented in

**Table 1.** Pooled over mean, standard deviation (SD) and standard error (SE) of body measurements of Ramnad White sheep (n=80)

S.No	Body measurements	Male	Female
1.	Height at withers	71.02±0.37	66.80±0.31
2.	Body length	62±0.38	57.12±0.21
3.	Heart girth	77.04±0.40	72.24±0.19
4.	Ear length	11.05±0.11	10.12±0.25
5.	Tail Length	7.08±0.10	6.12±0.13

Table 1.

Males had higher body size with respect to Height at withers, Body length, Heart girth, Ear length, Tail Length as compared to female. Body measurements are comparatively lower compared to previous studies as reported by Ganesakale and rathnasabapathy (1973). Among the body

measurements, chest girth was the highest value and it was followed by height at withers as reported by (Ravi Murugan *et al.*, 2009).

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