Judging Sheep
Steps to Judging Sheep

1. Evaluate animals from the ground up and from the rump (rear) forward
2. Rank the traits for their importance
3. Evaluate the most important traits first
4. Eliminate any easy placings in the class
5. Place the class based on the volume of the important traits
Ranking of Traits for Market Lambs

1. Degree of muscling
2. Degree of finish
3. Balance and style
4. Frame size
5. Soundness and structural correctness
Ranking of Traits for Breeding Ewes

1. Style and balance
2. Frame size
3. Soundness and structural correctness
4. Capacity or volume
5. Degree of muscling
6. Degree of leanness
7. Wool
Evaluating Degree of Muscling

To evaluate degree of muscling, pay close attention to:

1. Thickness through the center of the leg
2. Width between the rear legs when the animal is on the move
3. Length of the hindsaddle
4. Width and length of the loin
5. Grooved shape over the rack
Evaluating Degree of Muscling
- Center Leg and Base Width -

- Light muscled (narrow)
- Average muscled (average width)
- Heavy muscled (wide)
Evaluating Degree of Muscling
- Width and Length of Loin -

A wide loin is desired in market lambs.

A long loin is desired in market lambs.
Evaluating Degree of Muscling
- Length of Hindsaddle -

Greater length of hindsaddle (relative to the foresaddle) is desired in sheep
Evaluating Degree of Muscling
- Shape Over Rack -

Grooved shape over the rack is desired in sheep
Evaluating Degree of Finish

1. Lambs should be lean with an ideal backfat thickness of 0.15 to 0.20 inches

2. Degree of muscling, frame size, and stage of maturity influence degree of finish

   Watch out for short, light muscled lambs
   Fat sheep will be widest over the top

3. Lambs that are lean will be:
   Very trim over and behind the shoulder
   Extremely clean and neat through underline
Evaluating Degree of Finish

Flat, wide top

Heavy fronted

Sloppy, loose middle

Fat Alert!!

Good rule to follow: Fat sheep go last in the class
Evaluating Degree of Finish

Ideal finish

Lamb is very trim with base width is at least as wide as width of top
Evaluating Degree of Finish

Clean and trim over and behind shoulder

Trim and neat through underline

Ideal finish
Evaluating Balance and Style

Balance deals with having equal portions of width, depth, and length, with special emphasis on length:

- Sheep should be wide and deep at the rear and tight and trim through the front-end (Christmas tree shape)
- Volume of weight in leg and loin

Style deals with correctness of structure and straightness of design:

- A straight top line is desired
- A neat, smooth shoulder that blends smoothly into the neck and ribs is desired
Evaluating Balance and Style

Broken topped

Steep rumped

Heavy fronted

Deep necked

Low necked

Too heavy through middle

Nasty Sheep Alert !! (no balance)
Evaluating Balance and Style

Unbalanced

Wrong angle:
heavier in the front half than in the rear half
Evaluating Balance and Style

Nice balance
Evaluating Balance and Style

Neck too deep and low in its placement

Too open shouldered

Too open

Weak topped

Steep rumped

Poor Style
Evaluating Balance and Style

Good style points

- Straight top line
- Very high, correct neck-shoulder connection
- Level rump
Evaluating Balance and Style

Good Style Points!

- Smooth at point of shoulder
- Very high set to neck
- Clean, flat breast
- Tight over shoulders, correct angular shape
Evaluating Soundness and Structural Correctness

When evaluating soundness and structural correctness, pay close attention to:

1. Feet and pasterns
2. Hocks
3. Knees
4. Rumps
5. Shoulders
Evaluating Soundness
- Feet and Pasterns -

Not good

Too much set to pastern

Poor depth of heel (hoof-skin junction too low)

Cripple Alert!

Extreme set to pastern

Very poor depth of heal
Evaluating Soundness
- Feet and Pasterns -

Nice!

- Big, even toes

Nice feet and pastern

- Correct set to pastern
- Good depth of heel
- Foot sits flat and even on ground
Evaluating Soundness

- Hocks -

Too much set to hocks

Correct hocks

Flex and power
Evaluating Soundness
- Knees -

Knees that need improvement

Buck-knee and restricted

Knee bowed slightly inward
Evaluating Soundness
- Knees -

Good Knees

Straight and strong knee

Proper knee flex for movement
Evaluating Soundness
- Rump -

Rumps that need improvement

Short and steep rumped

Long but steep rumped

Level but short rumped
Evaluating Soundness

- Rump -

Just Right

Very long rump
design

Level rump
Evaluating Soundness
- Shoulders -

- Poor shoulder structure
- Open shouldered
- Coarse shouldered
Evaluating Soundness

- Shoulders -

Good shoulders

Tight at top of shoulder

Smooth at point of shoulder

Blends smoothly from shoulder to forerib
Example Market
Lamb Class I
Official Placing:
1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Cuts:
2 - 3 - 6