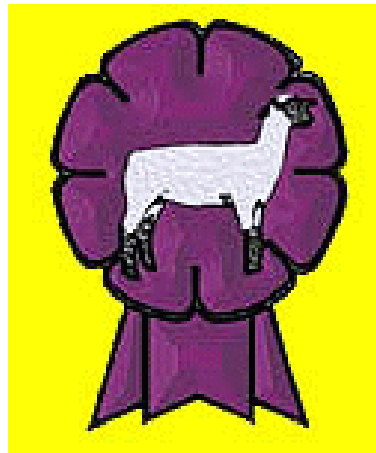




# Show Lamb Selection



RICH CO. EXTENSION

**UtahState**  
UNIVERSITY



Darrell Rothlisberger  
Rich County  
Extension Agent  
**BREEDS OF SHEEP**

There are many breeds of sheep. Here are a few that are used in junior market lambs



**Col  
bia**

**um**



**Su**

**ffolk**



**Rambouillet**



**Ha  
hir**

**mps  
e**



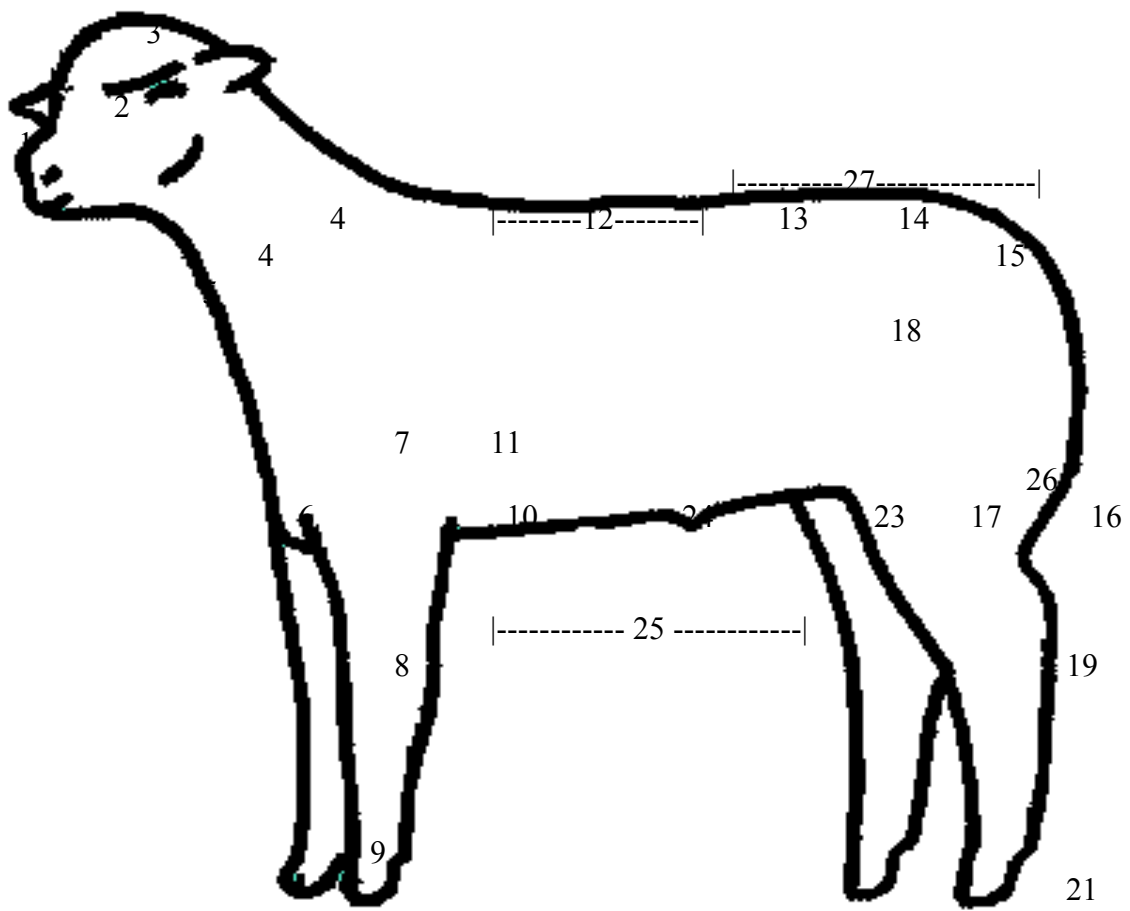
**Dorset**



**Southdown**

## PARTS OF THE SHEEP

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Face          | 15. Dock            |
| 2. Forehead      | 16. Twist           |
| 3. Poll          | 17. Leg             |
| 4. Neck          | 18. Hip             |
| 5. Throat        | 19. Hock            |
| 6. Breast        | 20. Pastern         |
| 7. Shoulder      | 21. Dew Claw        |
| 8. Forearm       | 22. Foot            |
| 9. Cannon Bone   | 23. Hind flank      |
| 10. Fore flank   | 24. Sheath or Naval |
| 11. Heart Girth  | 25. Underline       |
| 12. Rack or Back | 26. Stifle          |
| 13. Loin         | 27. Hindsaddle      |
| 14. Rump         |                     |



## WHY SHOW JUNIOR LIVESTOCK?

The junior livestock program is a unique opportunity to use live animals to develop youth. Youth learn something about agriculture and livestock production and develop an appreciation for the livestock industry, but the main objectives are to teach life skills and help youth become productive citizens of our society. The experience of youth owning and working with animals, being responsible for their care, health, and growth, and exhibiting them in a competitive environment is a tremendous character building process. Junior livestock projects help develop life skills such as; leadership, communication, decision making and problem-solving. Character building, record keeping and the development of personal responsibility are other skills youths can develop as a result of their involvement in the broad range of programs in junior livestock.

## MUSCLE

Select show lambs with good expression of muscle. Pick a lamb that has firm, hard muscle tone in the legs, loin, and rump, where the higher priced cuts are located. Look for muscle from different views and areas.

### From the Rear

**Leg** - The widest portion should be through the center of the leg or stifle area. A larger outside muscle right above the stifle joint is very desirable. A muscular lamb will stand and walk wide. This requires good

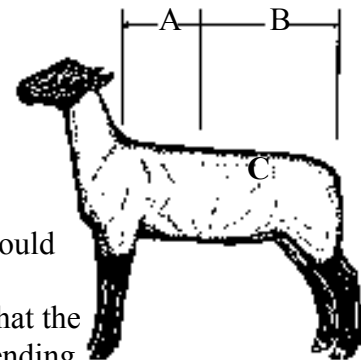


development of inside leg muscle. A lamb can stand wide and not have a lot of inside muscle. They may just be structurally wide. Be sure to check for inside muscle.

**Top** - A lamb needs to be wide across the top. The loin needs to be large and muscular. Look for a large rib cage which indicates a lot of capacity. Width is an indicator of muscle. However, be sure to feel your lamb to be certain that it is not fat. Feel down the back bone to determine the expression of the loin muscle. A good indicator of muscle will be those young lambs that you can feel a groove down their top. This is like feeling the groove between your fingers when they are close together.

### From the Side

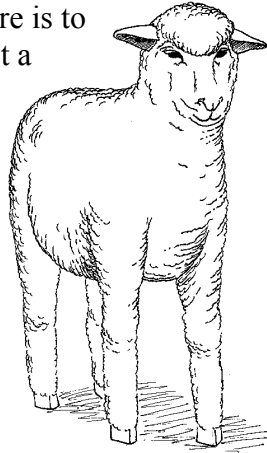
Choose a lamb that has proper length in the areas of the higher priced cuts, legs, loin and rump. The back portion of the top or hind saddle (B) should be longer than the front part, rack or back (A). To calculate this, measure from the last two ribs to the pin bones, (where the tail connects to the body). This should be two or more inches longer than the front part, depending on the lambs size.



Length of the loin is important. Measure from the last two ribs to the hook bone (C). Length and width of the loin are important. Short bodied compact animals are undesirable. Be careful not to get carried away with length. If you select a lamb that is too long it may be weak topped.

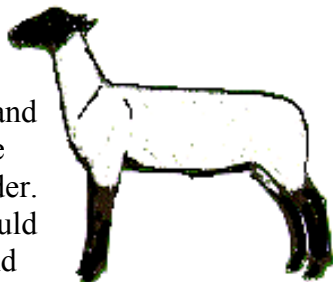
### **From the Front**

A bulging muscle from the knee to the shoulder is desirable. Large bone circumference of the cannon bone is a gauge of muscle, too. The larger the bone the more area there is to attach muscle to. Select a lamb with a relatively long, thick cannon bone. The shoulder should be slightly prominent. Avoid getting a lamb with too large a shoulder as this will take away from a smooth, balanced appearance.



## **STRUCTURAL CORRECTNESS**

Show lambs should be correct in their skeletal or bone structure. The lambs neck should be erect and extend out of the top of the shoulder. The top line should be long, level and



straight. The legs should have a large circumference or diameter of bone. It's pasterns should be strong, and it should stand with it's feet and legs wide apart. When it walks it should move with long, smooth steps, and track out wide. Do not select lambs that are open shouldered, weak topped and have steep rumps.

## **STYLE AND BALANCE**

These two characteristics describe how a lamb blends together. The front and rear ends should match. Looking at the lamb from the side view, it should have a clean, trim chest. The shoulder should be smooth while the top line needs to be long and level. A trim middle is desirable. Because lambs are shown with less than 1/4 inch wool. It is desirable that they have a tight, wrinkle-free hide.



The most noticeable lamb in a pen holds its head up and looks long and straight with a level hip. It's walk is proud and wide based with a thick leg.

## **LOOK FOR POTENTIAL**

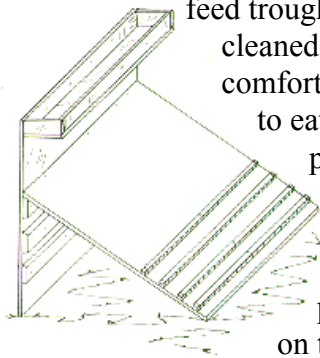
Select a lamb that shows good potential. Large framed, long bodied lambs, with a long neck, cannon bone, and thick loin show the most potential for growth. Lambs that are long in the loin and level in the rump have an advantage over others in the show ring.

# FEED TROUGH OPTIONS

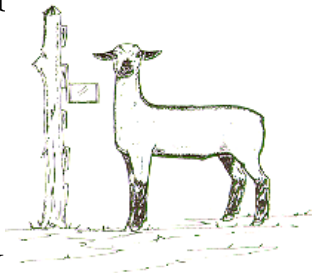
Here are several ways to feed a project lamb. These can aide in the development of leg and loin muscle.



Feeding off the ground will keep lambs from stepping in the feed and feed troughs will be easily cleaned and will be comfortable for the lamb to eat out of. Some producers feel that feeding on an incline will promote rectal prolapse. Feeding on the ground may cause lambs to show a



break behind the shoulders. Use the feeding method you feel will be the best for your program.



## NUTRITION

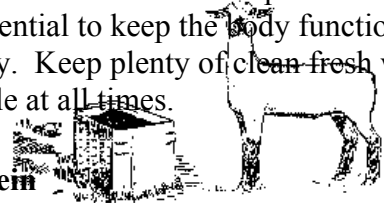
### Feed Rations

It's not the brand name that is important, but the protein, fat, fiber content of the feed, as well as palatability. Five basic nutrients are required for feeding show lambs and all livestock. They are water, protein, carbohydrates and fats or energy, minerals and vitamins.

There are commercial lamb feed ration or a person can mix their own.

### • Water

Water is the most important nutrient. It is essential to keep the body functioning properly. Keep plenty of clean fresh water available at all times.



### • Protein

Protein requirements for lambs vary depending on their stage of development. Young, fast-growing lambs need rations with protein levels of 16 to 18 percent. This is important for development of the proper muscle mass. When lambs are getting fat and close to market, protein levels can be 11 to 12 percent. Lambs that are fed more protein than they need convert it to energy. This is very expensive, so only feed the lamb the protein requirements it needs for their stage of development.

### • Carbohydrates and Fats (or energy)



The body needs energy for necessary bodily functions. Grain and protein supplements are high in energy, while hay contains less carbohydrates and fats (energy). Be sure to have the proper energy for your lambs development. Talk to your feed companies nutritionist.

### • Minerals

Salt (sodium chloride), calcium and phosphorus are



important minerals. Have free choice loose salt, and loose trace minerals available at all times for show lambs. Calcium and phosphorus are essential for proper growth and development. A ration should be 2.5 parts calcium to 1 part phosphorus. x **Be cautious of the Copper level in sheep rations.**x They can't handle the levels of copper that cattle can. Too much copper can kill sheep. Ask your vet what signs to watch for that indicate copper toxicity.

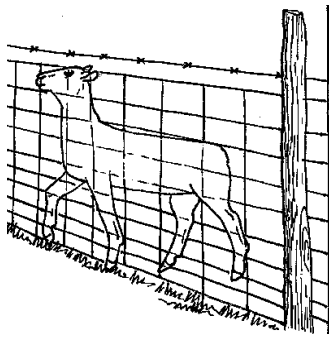
### æ Vitamins

Lambs require very small amounts of vitamins. If lambs are receiving alfalfa hay or pellets in their diet, vitamin A should not be a problem. It is a good idea to give your lamb a shot of Vitamin B complex to help them stay healthy and stimulates appetite.

## EARLY CARE OF NEW LAMBS

When preparing to bring a lamb home be sure to check the pen for any sharp corners or obstacles. Feeding two or more lambs together has several advantages:

- They will settle down better in their new home
- They will eat better due to competition.



## STARTING YOUR LAMB ON FEED

For the first few days allow the lambs to get used to their new home. Start the feeding routine slowly.

Feed some good quality grass, sorghum or alfalfa hay. Don't feed grain for the first few days if they have not previously been fed grain such as creep feed.

Start feeding grain in small amounts and allow the lambs digestive system to get used to the concentrated grain. This should be about 1/4 to 1/2 pound of grain per day. Allow lambs 15 minutes to finish their grain. If they don't clean up their grain in 15 minutes, remove the uneaten feed and reduce their next feeding by that amount until they clean it up. You will increase feed to approximately two pounds of grain and two pounds of hay per day. After two weeks your lamb should be on full feed.

## SUCCESS IN FEEDING



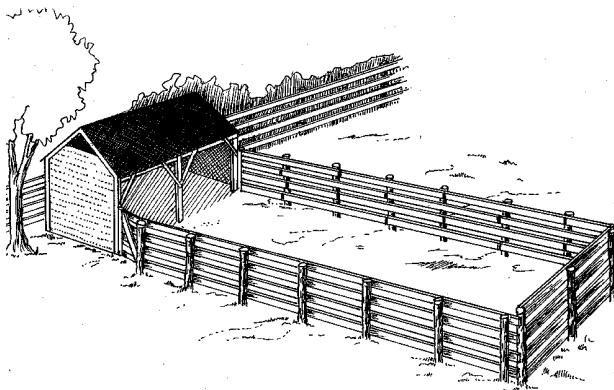
Contact with your lamb twice a day is critical to monitor their progress. Feed on time, within 15 to 30 minutes of a regular schedule. Hand feeding is the best way to do this. This allows you to regulate the feed intake. It is easier to keep lambs on feed and overeating is less of a problem when you hand feed. You will learn several things by seeing your lamb at feeding times. They are:

- Know when to increase or decrease feed by feeling your lambs finish

- Know when concentrate level should be increased to put on more finish
- Know when to put the lamb on a holding ration to prevent him from getting to fat (increasing oats will do this)
- Weigh your lamb regularly to help you determine how he is growing. This will help you decide how much to feed him to reach your weight goal for the show.

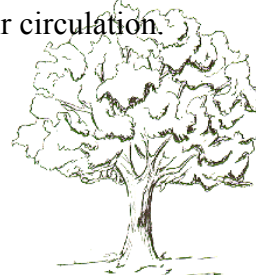
## FACILITIES

The recommended amount of space per lamb is 200 square feet. This provides ample room for the lamb to move around. If several lambs are in a pen that is too small they may pick at each others wool and cause patches on the body with no wool. This will take away from the overall attractiveness of the lamb.



A good tree can provide a great shaded area for a lamb pen.

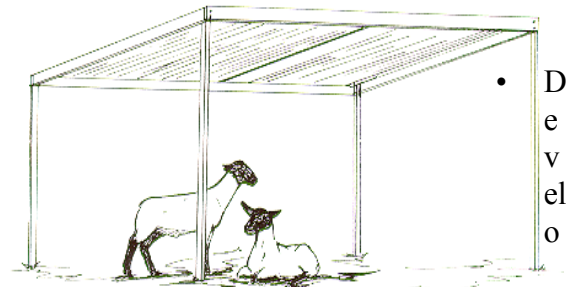
If natural shade isn't available, construct a simple shade for the lambs to provide needed protection. This also allows for proper air circulation.



Large trees are the best source of shade.

## EXERCISE

Exercising a lamb is very important and is beneficial in several ways:



• Development of muscle

- Condition or feel of muscle
- Stimulation of appetite
- Proper finish or fat cover




If lambs have a large area for exercise during the entire feeding program they may not need a forced exercise program.

More exercise is not always better. You need to make sound management decisions for the exercise program that works best for you and your lambs. Some producers think that too much exercise can cause blue carcasses which is undesirable in the slaughter house.

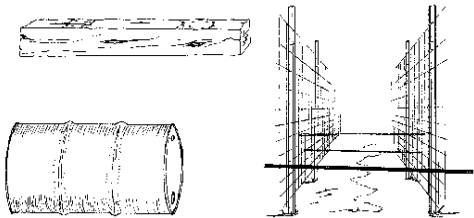
Walking lambs on halter on level ground does not give them enough exercise to tone muscle. This is however excellent for halter breaking and getting you used to your lamb.

### Tips for exercising lambs:



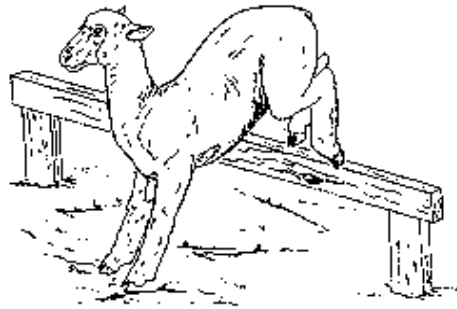
- Start slowly and build up to a full exercise schedule
- Never allow a lamb to get too hot when exercising. Early morning or late evening when it's cool is the best time to exercise.

- Provide them with hurdles to jump over. These may consist of railroad ties, barrels, or pipes or boards sticking through an alley way. Only allow the lamb to jump over one



obstacle at a time. In other words, don't put

two sticks in one location. They might get their leg stuck in between them and injure themselves.



- Jumping lambs over hurdles will assist in leg and loin development. Excessive jumping may build too much muscle in the front shoulders and make your lamb too heavy fronted.
- Running without hurdles usually firms and hardens finish. During the last six weeks lambs should get plenty of exercise unless they are light weight. They must have ample finish before this part of the program takes place. Provide a soft surface for exercising lambs such as sand or loose dirt.



- If your lamb is not very fat and you exercise too much it can cause the carcass to be blue when the animal is slaughtered. This is undesirable

# HEALTH

Any questions about a lambs health program can be answered by your local veterinarian. With any medication be sure to follow the label recommendation and use only those that are labeled for use in sheep. Be sure to be aware of and adhere to withdrawal times. There are eight basic health aspects that need to be taken into consideration.

## **Enterotoxemia (overeating disease)**

There are many types of this disease across the United States. There are two types of this disease that effect us here in Utah; types C & D. Enterotoxemia is caused by lambs consuming large amounts of grain or having an abrupt change in their feeding schedule.

All show lambs should be protected with a combination vaccine along with a booster given two to three weeks later. Additional boosters can be given at two to three month intervals.

## **Internal Parasites (worms)**

New lambs should be drenched for stomach or intestinal round worms and other internal parasites. A second drenching should be given three weeks later. Consult your veterinarian for recommendations. These may include Tramisol, Loxon, and Thiabendazole, which yield good results.

## **Soremouth**

This contagious disease appears as scabs on the lips and mouth of lambs. It is a virus that can affect humans, too. Iodine can be applied to lesions where the scabs have been removed. This dries out the sores and reduces the infection.

## **Tetanus**

If the lamb has been docked with a elastrator band, make sure to administer a tetanus shot. Lambs that get tetanus seldom recover and there is no satisfactory treatment. There is a combination vaccine for both tetanus and enterotoxemia.

## **Ringworm**

This is a very contagious disease that can travel from lamb to lamb, from lamb to human, and from equipment to either lambs or humans. Prevention is the best measure to take.

There are several prevention methods used for ringworm. Some of them are:

- Q Fulvicin Powder - This powder can be used to top dress feed or in a bolus form
- Q Novasan - Spray on lamb equipment and pens with a mixture of 3 ounces per gallon of water
- Q Bleach - A 10 percent solution can be sprayed on lamb equipment and pens

## **Rectal Prolapse**

This condition causes the rectum to protrude from the body. Get immediate attention from a veterinarian. The possible causes are:

- Feeding a high concentrated feed
- Short Docking procedure
- Straining from feeding on an incline
- Pushing to get into a small creep feeder
- Coughing from a respiratory condition
- Diarrhea
- Feeding dusty or moldy feed
- Hereditary

Any one of these is not the sole cause of rectal prolapse. However, they can attribute to the problem.

### **Tail Docking**

If tails are docked to long it detracts from the style and balance of the lamb. If it is docked to short it can contribute to the problem of rectal prolapse. Be sure to follow the rules of the show that your are going to. Plan many months before you go to the show so you can follow the rules with regards to tail docking as well as other rules of the show.

### **Polyarthritis (stiff lamb disease)**

This condition affects lambs from three weeks to five months. The lambs are inactive, don't want to get up or move and lose weight or gain weight slowly. Contact your veterinarian for treatment of a tetracycline antibiotic prescription.

## **SHEARING LAMBS**

Shear your lambs before it gets to hot. Lambs will stay cooler, feel better and be

more efficient on feed. Some feeders feel sheared lambs will put on a smoother more uniform finish.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Here is a list of possible items to include in a show box and/or feed room:

- T stiff brush for cleaning water troughs
- T shovel
- T rake
- T trimming table with measurements of 45 inches long, 20 inches wide and 18 inches tall
- T clippers
- T wool card
- T rope halter
- T hand shears
- T portable feed and water troughs
- T lamb blankets and or socks

## **PAPERS**

Get a Bill of Sale from the seller or breeder. Ask about the appropriate Livestock Brand Inspection papers as well. For lambs coming into Utah from another state, call the Extension Office for procedures, and laws an regulations from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. The extension office has a copy of these regulations

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

It is your responsibility to know the rules of the shows that you plan to attend. Different shows have different requirements, whether county, state, jackpot or even

national events. Call the representative for these shows to get a copy of the show premium book or rules.

## REFERENCES

The author does not claim all material inside as original. Thank you and credit goes to the following sources.

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ON THE COVER - Lindy Payne of Bloomfield New Mexico demonstrates how to set up a lamb properly at the 2000 Weber County Livestock School.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

**WEBER COUNTY EXTENSION STAFF**

**NOTES**



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