



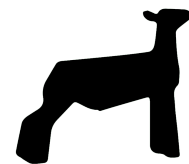
Show Lamb Guide

A Complete Guide to Showing Lambs

Payton Dahmer



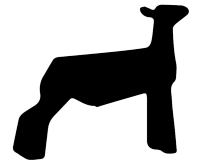
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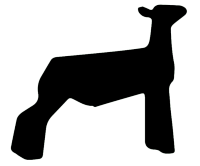
Introduction



Welcome to the Kansas State University Show Lamb Guide! We hope that the material provided in this guide can help direct you through the basics of showing sheep. Whether it is your first year as an exhibitor or you are a veteran, the information provided here covers some of the most important aspects of successfully finding, feeding, preparing and showing your project to capitalize on all the educational benefits and life lessons to be learned!



Acknowledgements



Special thanks to these contributors for their help in putting this guide together!

Dr. Alison Crane

Dr. Cassie Jones

Dr. Joel DeRouchey

Kaylee Lukert



Educational Resources



The following list of resources can be helpful links to assist you with a variety of questions you may encounter with your show lamb project.

Kansas Youth Livestock Program

<https://www.asi.k-state.edu/research-and-extension/youth-programs/>

Kansas State University Sheep and Meat Goat Extension

<https://www.asi.k-state.edu/research-and-extension/sheep-and-goats/>

Sure Champ Educational Blog

<https://surechamp.com/blog/2018/05/07/how-to-get-lambs-ready-for-the-show-ring/>

Purina Educational Video Series

<https://www.purinamills.com/show-feed/education/detail/controlling-show-lamb-weight-gain>

<https://www.purinamills.com/show-feed/education/detail/tips-for-successful-lamb-exercise-programs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSu67BCROxk>

Maryland Small Ruminant Page

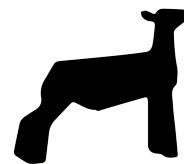
<https://www.sheepandgoat.com>

American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control

<https://www.wormx.info>



Selection



First....

- To help select the right lamb, you should ask yourself a few questions: What is your end goal?
 - Participate at the county, state, or national level?
 - How well are you aiming to do at that level?
- Determine the date of your “target show” or the show in which you want your lamb to be in optimal condition
- Also, start thinking about things like:
 - What breed of lamb do I want to exhibit?
 - Where am I going to get it?
 - What are the ownership requirements for the exhibitions?
 - Most shows require that you own your project by a certain deadline, typically a few months before the show
 - This information can be found in the rules/regulations of the show

Next...

For some, selection of a good project comes easy with a natural ability to evaluate livestock. If you are less experienced or do not know how to select the right lamb, it is important that you reach out to someone who has that expertise. Agriculture teachers, FFA advisors, 4-H leaders, extension agents and breeders are all knowledgeable sources when it comes to finding the right project for you and are always willing to help you in the process.

- Finding the appropriate age and weight of lamb is important for your long-term goals and success
 - You want to avoid finding a project that is too old and will be hard to maintain at the correct weight, but still find one big enough to meet the minimum weight requirement for most shows

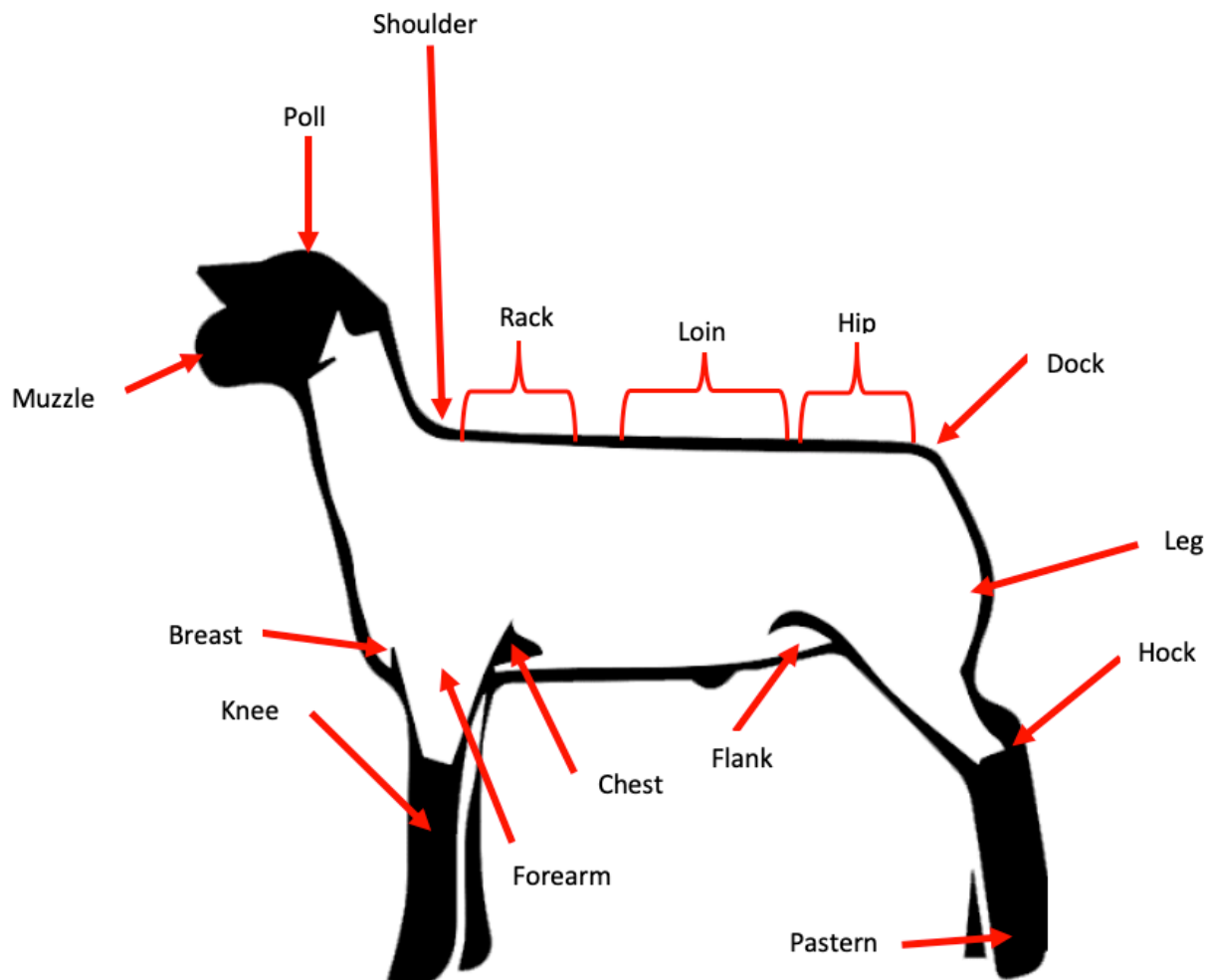
<u>Target Show Date</u>	<u>Ideal Age of Lamb to Select</u>
July-August (most Kansas county fairs fall in this time frame)	Typically, lambs born in January or early February work best
September-November (this time frame encompasses shows like the Kansas State Fair, Kansas Junior Livestock Show, and most national livestock shows)	Lambs born in February to early March are ideal

- An important thing to keep in mind when selecting your lamb is maturity; indicating the point in time that the lamb will reach optimal condition or the peak of lean muscle to optimal fat ratios, or finished weight.
 - Some lambs are later maturing, meaning they will need to be fed to heavier weights (140-160 lbs.) to reach the optimal muscle to fat ratio
 - Later maturing lambs are usually longer through their head (nose to poll), neck, body, and cannon bone while having less fat over the fore rib

- Others are earlier maturing, meaning they will be finished (or reach optimal fat levels) at lighter weights (120-130 lbs.)
 - Earlier maturing lambs are usually shorter about their head (nose to poll), body and cannon bone and often times already have more fat deposition over the fore rib, even at a younger age

Parts of a Sheep

While it may seem elementary to some, it is important that you understand the parts of a sheep prior to learning about selection. A great diagram showing the primary parts of a market lamb is shown below.

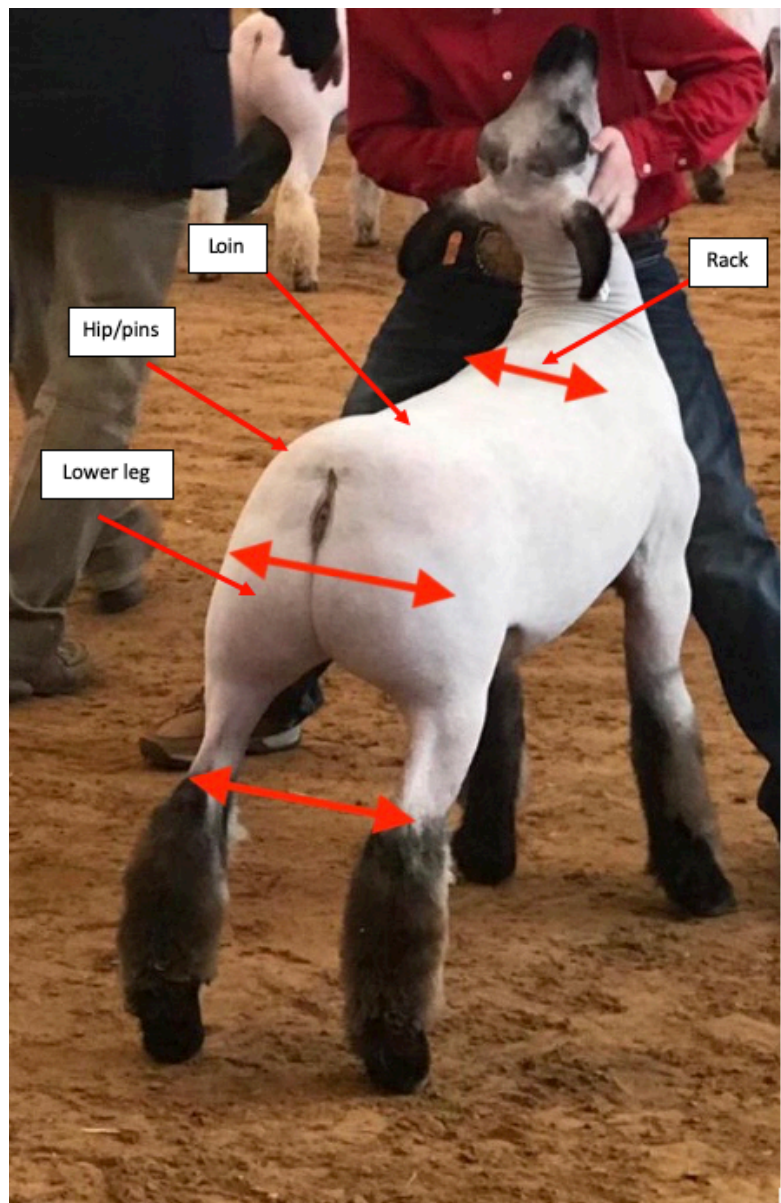


Selection Criteria

When selecting your project, keep the following criteria in mind to help find the ideal show lamb: muscle, leanness, structural correctness, balance, pattern, and growth.

Muscle

- Muscularity stems from a wide base
 - Width through the chest floor, width of base from hock to ground
- Muscle in market lambs is evaluated down their top and from behind
 - Shape of rack, width/squareness of loin, width of pins, shape/width to lower leg
- Market lambs are handled by the judge, so freshness and handling quality of the muscle is important:
 - Hard, square and upstanding shape to rack muscle
 - Length of hind saddle (measured from the last rib back)
 - Wide, square loin edge
 - Firm, bulging shape to leg and depth to the twist
 - Thin, fresh touch to the hide



Leanness

- Young lambs should read lean over their forerib so they can mature into the correct degree of cover at their market weight
- Judges evaluate finish in market lambs by the amount of fat cover laid over the lambs forerib
- Ideal fat cover for market lambs depends on their weight
- You can also evaluate fat cover by looking for indentation from the lambs' shoulder into its forerib (*example to the right*)
- A great resource to learn more about market lamb carcass evaluation can be found at

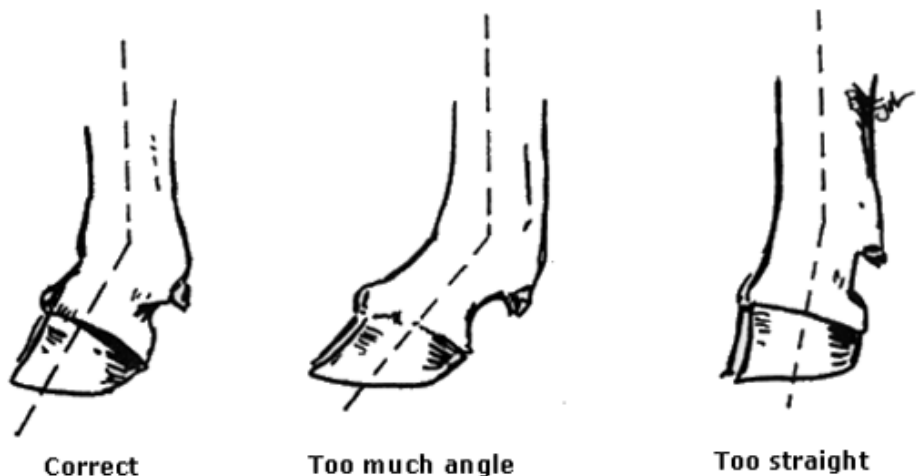
<https://workspaces.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/4h/Animals/GBJ09.pdf>



Structural Correctness

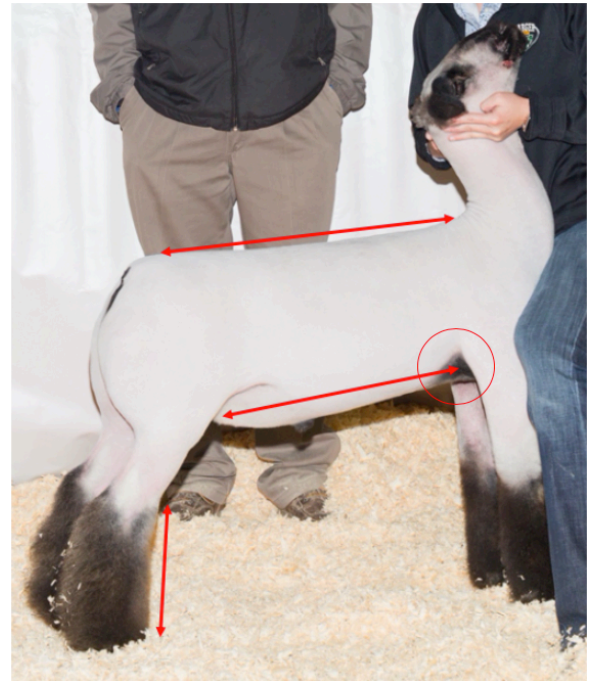
- Structural correctness refers to how a lambs' skeleton is put together
- Evaluate structure from the ground up, front to rear and in motion
 - Lambs should naturally carry their head high
 - Neck should project high out of their shoulder
 - Shoulder blade should have an angle similar to 45°
 - The knee should have some angle to it with a correct angle to the pastern
 - Front feet should plant wide and point straight ahead, feet should be big with toes even in size
 - Spine should be level all the way out through the lambs' hip/dock
 - Hind leg should have some angularity from the side with a correct set to the pastern
 - From behind, hind leg should plant wide and square from the hock to the ground

A diagram of pastern set is illustrated to the right



Balance

- Balance is **NOT** the same thing as attractiveness
- Balance directly means **proportional** (example to the right)
 - A lamb's' length of front, body, and hind quarter should all match
 - Lambs should be clean through the base of their chest (circled area on picture to the right) and get progressively deeper back to their flank
- The amount of foot/bone a lamb has should match the amount of muscle and mass it possesses
 - An extremely heavy muscled lamb with small feet and thin/frail bone is not balanced
 - A light muscled lamb with big feet and stout bone is also not balanced



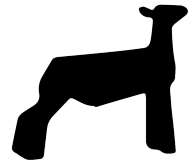
Pattern

- Pattern refers to **attractiveness** (example shown to the right)
- An attractive lamb with correct pattern is:
 - Tall at the top of the shoulder
 - Projects a long neck out of its shoulder
 - Stays smooth down its topline and is smooth from the last rib, into the loin, and back to the hip
 - Stays level and smooth down its top when set into motion



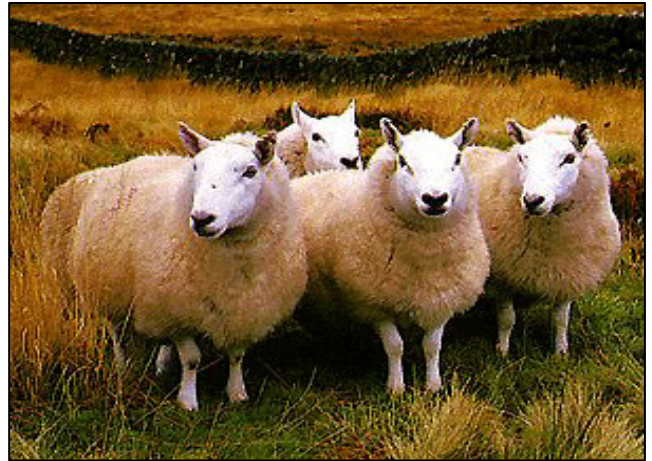


Sheep Breeds



- **Cheviot**

- Originated in Scotland in the 1400s
 - Imported to the US in 1838
- Small-sized and white wool with bare head and legs
- Good maternal qualities
- Yield high amounts of medium grade wool
- <http://www.cheviots.org/index.html>



- **Columbia**

- Developed in Wyoming in 1912
 - Cross of Lincoln and Rambouillet
- Large, white wool breed
- Medium wool
- Often used to sire commercial lambs
- <https://columbiasheep.org/about-us/>



Photo courtesy of Columbia Sheep Breeders Association

• Corriedale

- Developed in New Zealand and Australia in the late 1800s
- Lincoln or Leicester rams with Merino females
- Imported to the US in 1914
- Medium-sized white-faced wool breed
- Medium wool
- General-purpose breed
- <http://www.countrylovin.com/ACA/index.htm>



Photo courtesy of Ruppert's Corriedales

• Dorper

- Developed in South Africa in the 1930s
 - Cross between Horned Dorset and Black headed Persian
- Hair sheep of medium size with white bodies and a black or white colored head
- Hardy, adaptable, early maturing, yield heavy-muscle carcasses
- <https://dorpersheep.org/faqs/>



• Dorset

- Originated from Southwestern England
 - Cross between Merino and Horned Sheep of Wales
 - Imported to the US in 1860
- Medium-sized, all white wool breed
- Medium-fine wool
- Heavy milking commercial breed with fleeces free of black fibers
- Females carry “out of season” breeding characteristics with increased potential for multiple births
- Used heavily on maternal side of commercial operations
- <https://dorsets.homestead.com>



Photo courtesy of www.raisingssheep.net

- **Hampshire**

- Hampshire County in Southern England
 - The “Hampshire Down” developed from the Southdown, Wiltshire Horn, Berkshire Knot
 - Imported to the US in the 1800’s
- Blackface, practically free of wool from the eyes down, with a sufficient wool cap, black legs
- Terminal breed
 - Used mainly in market lamb production
 - Good growth
 - High carcass cutability
- <http://www.hampshires.org>



Photo courtesy of Wheaton Hampshires

- **Katahdin**

- Maine 1958
 - Caribbean hair sheep and a variety of wool breeds
- Medium-sized hair sheep, any color, parasite tolerance, and capable of breeding out of season
- Shedding hair coat which does not require shearing
- <https://www.katahdins.org>



Photo courtesy of Canadian Katahdin Sheep Society

• Lincoln

- Lincolnshire, England
 - Cross between Leicester and Native Lincolnshire sheep
 - Late 1700's
- The largest breed of sheep, typically have largest average weight
- White wool
- Produce a heavy fleece that is long and coarse
- <http://www.lincolnsheep.com>



Photo courtesy of National Lincoln Sheep Breeders Association

• Merino

- Originated in Spain
- Many different types of Merino sheep developed in other countries
- Usually medium to large framed with exceptionally fine, white wool
- Fine-Wool Merino is main representative of Merino breed in Australia, where the world's finest quality wool is produced



Photo courtesy of Encyclopedia Britannica

• Oxford

- Originated in Oxford County, England
 - Cross between Hampshire and Cotswold
 - Imported in the 1800's
- Medium to large-sized with a dark brown face
- Medium wool
- Terminal breed
- <https://americanoxfords.org>



Photo courtesy of Reid Family Oxfor

• Rambouillet

- Originated in France and Germany
 - Developed from the Spanish Merino
 - Imported in the 1800s
- Large, hardy and adaptable breed
- “Dual Purpose” for their excellent wool and weight gains
- <http://www.countrylovin.com/ARSBA/index.htm>



Photo courtesy of Oklahoma State University

• Shropshire

- Shropshire and Staffordshire counties in England
 - Developed from Longmynd, Southdown, Leicester, and Cotswolds
 - Imported to the US in 1855
- Medium to large black-faced breed
- Medium wool
- Prolific with good carcass quality
- <http://www.shropshires.org>



Photo courtesy of VIP Club Lambs

• Southdown

- Developed in Sussex England in the late 1700s
 - Imported to US in 1824
- Medium to small-sized breed with gray to mouse-brown nose and lower legs
- Early maturing breed, best suited for farm flock production
- Work well in cross breeding programs due to their ability to produce muscular lambs
- <https://southdownsheep.org>



Photo courtesy of Maddox Southdowns

• Suffolk

- Southeastern coast of England
 - Developed from breeding Southdown rams to Norfolk Horned ewes
 - Imported to the US in 1888
- Extremely muscular, large framed sheep with a black face and legs
- Medium wool breed
- Known for their size, growth, and meat
- <https://suffolks.org>



Photo courtesy of Buckham Farms

• Polypay

- 1960's
- Developed with the goal of increasing prolificacy
- Created from a cross of Finnsheep, Rambouillet, Targhee and Dorsets
- Named Polypay from “poly” meaning many and “pay”, meaning return on investment
- <https://www.polypay.org>



Photo courtesy of Oklahoma State University

• Texel

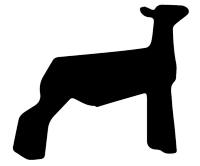
- Originated on Isle of Texel off the coast of the Netherlands
- White faced breed with no wool on head or legs
- Superior muscling and feed efficiency
- Dominant terminal sire breed in Europe



Photo courtesy of Texel Sheep Society



General Care & Management



Facilities

While it is not necessary to have the newest and most expensive facilities, it is still important to provide basic shelter and an optimal environment to ensure your lamb's success. Here are some key things to remember when considering the management and housing options for your lamb:

- Make sure dry, clean bedding is provided
- Can be penned individually or with others, but recommended floor space per lamb is a minimum of 20 square feet
- Fences should be at least 42 inches tall
 - If possible, use panels with vertical rather than horizontal bars to prevent injury to your lamb
- It is important to provide a comfortable area for your lamb –
 - When you first bring your lamb home in the spring, it can be chilly during the day and even cold at night, so provide a warm, draft-free area and correctly mount a heat lamp if necessary
 - Throughout the hot months of summer, if your lamb is not cool, their feed intake could decrease – so always provide fresh, cool water and shade, and utilize fans if necessary
- If penned individually, feeders should be hung at shoulder height for each lamb. If lambs are penned as a group, then individual feeding stalls may be beneficial to monitor intake of each lamb.
- A variety of watering types can be used; however, it is critical that water is consistently fresh and available. If hand watering, use buckets no larger than 5 gallons and change water at least once daily.
 - During hot summer months, bucket waters should be monitored and kept full throughout the day. A lower maintenance option would be automatic waterers.

Health

Maintaining good health is a key component to your lamb's success. Proper nutrition and health are highly correlated; thus, a healthy lamb is going to gain better and have an easier time reaching its target weight. A large portion of maintaining a healthy lamb is to take preventative measures. It is very important to evaluate health **DAILY** by looking for signs of illness (ear position, coughing, not eating/drinking, lethargy, body temperature, changes in stool, etc.). Administer proper medications under the direction of your veterinarian when needed, but always stay mindful of withdrawal times. Strive to have a good working relationship with your veterinarian to ensure proper health of your animal.

- *Enterotoxemia*
 - Also known as overeating disease, this is caused by a clostridial organism that is normally found in the intestine of most sheep. When lambs experience rapid diet changes, like consuming large amounts of grain, this causes the organism to grow and produce toxins that can result in death. Proper vaccination (against clostridials, such as types C and D) and gradual changes in your feeding program can help prevent this disease.
- *Internal Parasites*
 - It is recommended that you deworm only when needed
 - Often times, parasite problems are confirmed by a fecal test performed by your veterinarian

- Once a problem is confirmed, then follow-up deworming is only necessary if there is continued infection
- *More information regarding deworming protocols can be found at the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control website (<https://www.wormx.info/bmps>)*
- **Coccidiosis**
 - One of the most common internal parasites encountered with show lambs is coccidia
 - Caused by a protozoon that reproduces in the intestinal cells
 - Often categorized by diarrhea (can contain mucus and blood)
 - Your veterinarian can help diagnose and develop a treatment plan
 - Many cases can be treated with medications like Corid or lasalocid

- **Soremouth**
 - This contagious disease causes scabs to form around the mouth and lips (pictured above). It is a viral infection that is transmittable to humans, so it is important to wear proper protection when handling lambs with soremouth. Application of iodine is common practice to dry out the scabs and speed up the healing process.



Photo by the University of Illinois

- **Show Lamb Fungus**
 - While there are more scientific terms for this common skin issue, it is probably the most prevalent health issue you will face throughout the show season (pictured below). This fungal infection is very contagious to both livestock and humans, otherwise known as ringworm. Red lesions typically appear on the head, neck, and back and eventually become “crusty” or “scaly” and circular.
 - While there is no specific treatment for this issue, prevention is key in order to keep your lamb free of fungus.
 - Always wash your lamb immediately after a show with an antifungal shampoo prior to getting it home
 - Keep facilities and equipment clean and disinfect frequently
 - Keep infected lambs isolated from healthy lambs and clean equipment between use animals
 - Wear proper protection when handling infected animals, as it is easy to pass to healthy sheep or even to yourself
 - Keep a close eye on your lambs hide in the days following a show to notice if any lesions start to appear



Photo courtesy of California Department of Food and Agriculture

Halter Breaking

It is important to remember that halter breaking your lamb is a process. Do not try to rush into this as soon as you get your lamb home. A week of down time between getting your lamb home and starting the process is suggested; this allows enough time to get the lamb started on feed and used to their new surroundings.

- Before you can begin exercising the lamb, you must first train them to walk on a halter. Start by tying your lamb up to the fence and be sure to give it enough slack to be comfortable. The lamb is more than likely going to fight this hard. It is CRITICAL that you stay with the lamb during this time so that they do not injure themselves. Once they stop fighting the halter, release them and repeat this step daily until they are comfortable being tied.
- Once your lamb is broke to tie, it is time to teach them to lead. Again, this is a process! Rather than pulling on the halter to drag the lamb, stand to the side or behind it and let the lamb naturally walk. If you try pulling the halter, your lamb is going to pull back and no progress will be made.

Exercise

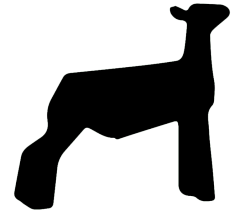
Exercise is critical during all stages of your lamb's life. Proper exercise during the early stage of the feeding program helps with muscle development and deposition, while exercise during the later stages will maintain proper condition. All adjustments in exercise should be made gradually. and It is also important to never over-work the lamb as this can cause more harm than good. There are multiple ways to go about exercising your lamb and knowing how and when to adjust your exercise program will be pivotal to your success.

- Treadmilling is a very popular form of exercise for show lambs. You can either utilize a standard human treadmill with a box built around it to keep the lambs' feet on, or there are commercially available treadmills built specifically for lambs. While this method of exercise is not essential, it does allow you walk your lamb backwards, which works other muscles that normally would not get worked and allows for more efficiency when exercising.
- Another way of exercising is on a track. This is a circular or oval shaped pen built with tall panels that lambs are ran around with the assistance of a track dog. If you are going to utilize this method, make sure that panels are at least 42" tall and are free of sharp objects or points. Also, be sure that the dog you are using as been professionally trained to do this job.
- While both of these methods are effective, they are not crucial. You can exercise your lamb just fine by walking/running it on a halter. You can either walk your lamb long distances or perform shorter distance sprints. A common practice is to walk your lamb away from the barn and chase it back to its pen.





Nutrition



While you may be able to find a high-quality lamb for your project, without proper nutrition, your lamb will not succeed. Additionally, it is important to be aware of all aspects of a good feeding program in order for your lamb to be at peak performance.

From the beginning

- Make the process of getting your project home as smooth as possible
- Allow free, constant access to clean feed and water upon arrival
- Try to start your lamb off on the same feed it was eating prior to getting it home, and slowly make changes in its feed

The basics

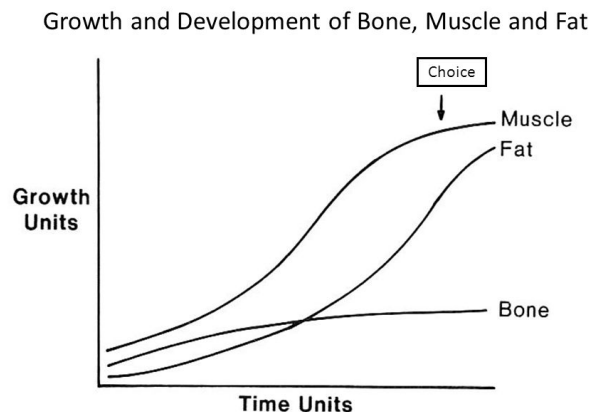
There are five nutrients that are of primary importance in sheep: water, protein, energy, vitamins and minerals.

Water

- Just like humans, water is critical in the digestive health of your show lamb. As soon as you get your project home, be sure to provide clean, fresh water and change water daily. Sheep can consume anywhere from a ½ to 4 gallons of water daily, but decreased water consumption will lead to decreased feed intake, ultimately limiting the performance and the overall look of your project.

Protein

- Protein is an important component in your lambs' diet that can help build muscle. Protein requirements vary depending on the stage of your lambs' feeding program. Younger sheep that are rapidly depositing muscle benefit from higher protein feeds (between 16%-19% Crude Protein). As sheep mature along their natural growth curve, muscle deposition eventually declines and fat deposition increases. When feeding sheep to a finished weight, lower protein feeds work great (between 11%-15% Crude Protein).
- The figure to the right displays the normal growth curve of an animal
 - This is important to understand why adjusting protein/fat throughout your lambs' life is necessary



Energy

- Energy intake is critically important for your lamb as it usually is the largest component of their diet and can often times be the most limiting nutrient. Energy requirements are typically met from carbohydrates and fats found in grains. Most show feeds contain anywhere from 2.5%-5.0% crude fat. Energy is important for basic biological maintenance for your lamb, but it also helps with bloom and smoothness of your lamb that will help it appear better on show day. On the same token, excess energy in the diet can result in your lamb depositing too much fat, which is undesirable. Thus, energy levels are adjusted in the diet throughout the feeding stages of your project. Younger lambs are typically fed rations with lower energy(fat), and those levels are typically increased as the lamb matures.

Vitamins

- While vitamins are an essential component of the diet, they are required in much smaller amounts relative to other nutrients. Typically, Selenium and Vitamin A will be added to show feed rations, and you can find information regarding their inclusion on the feed tag. Additionally, supplementation with Vitamin B complex is often a recommended practice to optimize nutrition, especially in diets high in protein and energy.

Minerals

- The most important minerals in sheep rations are calcium, phosphorous and salt. Calcium and phosphorus should be included in diets at a ratio of 2.5 parts calcium to 1 part phosphorous.
- Calcium and phosphorus are necessary for proper growth and development. They should be fed in a ratio of approximately 2.5 parts calcium to 1-part phosphorus. Feed rations that contain high levels of phosphorus in relation to calcium may cause urinary calculi, the formation of stones that block the passage of urine. The addition of ammonium chloride at the rate of 10 pounds per ton of feed will help prevent urinary calculi.
- Most roughages are higher in calcium and lower in phosphorous, while grains typically have lower calcium levels and average phosphorous content.

Things to think about:

Some important factors to keep in mind when thinking about your show lambs feeding program:

- **Rumen Health**
 - Remember that lambs are ruminants – so maintaining the health and function of the rumen is critical
 - If rumen health is compromised, subsequent impacts on feed intake, gain, and overall appearance can be detrimental
- **Don't Forget Roughage**
 - Always supplement a grain-based diet with sufficient roughage
 - Each lamb should consume approximately two large handful (¼ pound) of high-quality hay each day, particularly alfalfa
 - Lower-quality hay is digested slower and can increase belly – therefore it is crucial to feed a high-quality roughage
 - Fiber length of your hay is important – a fiber length of 1 ½ to 2 inches is appropriate, as ground or pelleted hay fails to meet your lamb's requirement for NDF, or neutral detergent fiber

- **Feeding Schedule**
 - Finding a time both in the morning and evening to feed your lamb and keeping those times consistent from day to day.
 - It also helps to feed more than one lamb, as they typically perform better with other lambs around them
- **Clean Out Old Feed**
 - Never put new hay or grain on top of uneaten feed – always clean the uneaten feed out and reduce the amount you feed for the next 1-3 feedings until you work your lamb back up to the original amount
- **Making Changes**
 - It is important that you carefully study your lamb throughout the growing and finishing stages of its life and make changes to the diet accordingly. Also, be sure that changes in your lamb's ration are made slowly. Abrupt changes in your feeding program can negatively affect the digestive system of your lamb.
- **Monitoring Weight**
 - It is important to know how much time your lamb will have on feed until your target show, and to carefully monitor its weight throughout the feeding period
 - On average, most lambs will gain about ½ pound per day
 - Weighing your lamb weekly will help you track its daily gain and determine if you will need to push or hold your lamb going into your target show

What and how much to feed:

You have many options on what to feed your lamb, and the decision can be slightly overwhelming. There are numerous brands of show feeds available to fit a wide variety of needs and budgets, or you can mix your own ration. Don't hesitate to reach out to the breeder you purchased your lamb from for advice! No matter what route you choose to go, there are some important things to remember:

- Start your lamb off with a 16-18% crude protein and 12%-15% crude fiber feed – feed this ration until approximately 100 pounds
- Study your lamb's physical appearance to determine if protein and fat content should be kept the same or decreased as your lamb matures
 - Rules of thumb on adjusting your feed:
 - *If your lamb is too **fat**, reduce the amount of feed and increase crude protein*
 - *If your lamb is too **thin**, decrease crude protein and increase fat*
 - **Never** *skip a feeding or hold feed to reduce weight or burn fat – this will only work against you*
- On average, feed 1 to 1 ½ pounds of feed twice per day with about ¼ pound of high-quality hay

Remember:

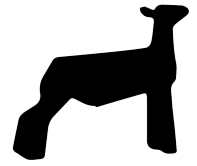
- A high-quality ration should meet the following criteria:
 - Maintain feed intake
 - Promote growth and performance
 - Help maintain a good physical appearance
 - Allow your lamb to reach its genetic potential

Supplements:

- There are many feed additives available to be complementary to your base ration
- High protein supplements can help build muscle or burn excess fat
- High energy supplements can help add fat and create a smooth finish
- Digestive health supplements like probiotics can help keep your lamb on feed
- Remember that supplements should **never** be your sole feed source – they have little impact if they aren't being fed with a complete feed



Show Preparation



Once all of the work at home as been put in, it is time to take your lamb to the show. Everything that you have been practicing for is finally here. However, there are many things to accomplish leading up to the show in order to be successful once you get there. The following information is important to keep in mind as you prepare to leave for the show.

The Week Before

A whole week before your show may seem early, but it is the optimal time to get the final touches put together on your lamb. During this time, it is crucial that your lamb is healthy, eating/drinking well, and has been worked with in order to succeed on show day.

- During this week, it is beneficial to start hydrating your lamb. Providing electrolytes via your lamb's water is one way. There are also many electrolyte mixes and homemade "drench" recipes to use. Be mindful of the show's rules, as drenching may not be allowed. Therefore, it is helpful to add this mixture to your lambs feed.
- Evaluate your lambs "fill" each day throughout this week. The fill is how much belly is on your lamb. A large belly is undesirable in the show ring, but you need time to reduce belly in a healthy way.
 - If you notice extra belly, this can be diminished by adding water to your lambs feed. This "wet feeding" technique helps keep your lamb from filling up on water immediately after eating dry feed, thus causing excess belly.
- Practice loading your lamb on and off the trailer so that they are used to it when you load them to head to the show.
- Make sure your sheep is used to being put on a fitting stand, being blown dry with a blower, and having its legs brushed. These are all things that will happen on show day and it will go smoother if your lamb has already experienced these things.

Shearing/Clipping

Protecting your lamb's hide is very important. Lamb's naturally produce the oil lanolin, which keeps the hide moist and fresh. Washing removes lanolin from the wool, therefore lambs should not be washed except for when you are preparing to clip them for show.

- Shearing of lambs should be done minimally, however during hot summer months it is appropriate to "rough-shear" them. This is often done with a large set of sheep-head clippers (*pictured to the right*) in order to leave wool slightly longer. Sheep do not need to be washed prior to this.

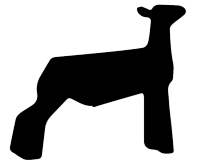


- When clipping lambs for a show, be sure to know the rules of the show regarding wool length and whether clippers are allowed on the show grounds.
 - To clip for a show, you'll need to use a shorter set of blades (typically a "fine" or "surgical" length) on a set of clippers like the one pictured to the right
 - Be sure that your lamb is used to being put on a stand prior to clipping them for the first time
 - Try to clip your lamb as close to show day as possible. The longer you wait between clipping and showing can cause the hide to dry out and wrinkle
 - Before clipping, wash your lamb with any form of shampoo, then blow dry your lamb until the body and legs are completely dry
 - Make sure your clippers are well-oiled
 - Great how-to videos on clipping sheep can be found at these links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XcjHWWt0jg> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAtGwiFU7QQ>
 - After clipping your lamb, it is important to condition the hide with some form of lotion
 - A commonly used, inexpensive product is Corn-Huskers lotion, or you can use show supply brand hide lotions (mix one bottom lotion to one spray-bottle water and apply to lamb's body)





Packing for the Show

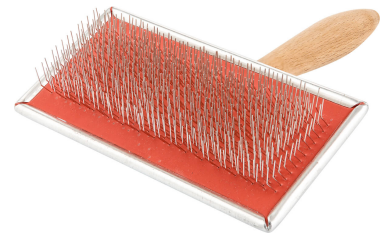


This checklist can be beneficial when packing supplies for your show. The items listed on this checklist are considered essential for show day preparation of your lamb. Mark each item off as it is packed.

- ☐ Feed (with a feeder)
- ☐ Water Bucket
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Scrub Brush
- ☐ Wool card/leg brush
- ☐ Halters/Blankets
- ☐ Water Hose
- ☐ Hay
- ☐ Electrolytes
- ☐ Hide lotion (Cornhusker's)
- ☐ Bedding
- ☐ Health Papers (if required)
- ☐ Lamb Stand (if available)
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Blower (if available)



Sheep Fitting Stand



Wool Card/Leg Brush



Blower

Leaving for the Show

The trip to the show can be one of the most stressful times for your lamb. Here are some important things to keep in mind as you leave for the show.

- Before leaving, feed half of a normal feeding to your lamb
- Hopefully you have begun using electrolytes the week prior, but if not, adding electrolytes to their water can help keep them hydrated during this stressful time
- By this point, you should have practiced loading your lamb on and off the trailer several times so that they are used to it

At the Show

Once you have made it to the show, it is time to get unpacked and get your lamb settled in. The new surroundings can be stressful on your lambs and sometimes they are leery to eat or drink. Being calm and knowing what things can help keep your lamb stress-free are very important.

- Make sure your pen has clean bedding and get your lamb settled in
- Offer your lamb water (preferably with electrolytes)
 - It is likely that your lamb won't want to drink, so if the show rules permit, properly drenching your lamb to keep them hydrated may be necessary
- Some shows will have an official weigh-in and other shows allow you to declare your own weight with weigh-backs in class
 - Know the rules of your show and get your lamb weighed in a timely fashion so that you can feed
- Once you are weighed in, feed your lamb the other half of its feeding
 - At this point, the timing of the show will determine when and how much you feed
 - If you have a few days before you show, then returning your lamb to its normal feeding routine is fine
 - If you show within the next day, then handfeeding may be beneficial to control fill
 - NEVER completely limit feed from your lamb as it can be detrimental to its health
 - If you need to pull belly from your lamb, you can feed in smaller amounts more frequently throughout the day until you have reached their normal daily consumption of feed – ***Never forget to supply quality hay***
- Exercise is still important when at a show
 - Most shows allow you to get your lamb out and walk it around the barn, so take advantage of this
 - Exercising at the show can help calm your lamb down as well

Show Time

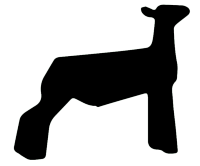
When the time finally arrives, it can be stressful. Remember to relax and enjoy the experience! On show day, you'll need to be prepared rather early as there is a list of things that will need done in order to be successful once you get in the ring.

- First thing when you arrive to the fairgrounds is to get your lamb out and get some exercise in – nothing too intense, but walk some of the show-day jitters off
- Feed and water your lamb according to its fill and belly
 - It is important that your lamb gets some feed and water prior to showing in order for it to be feeling its best
- Determine what class you are in and try to estimate when you will be showing
- Wash/condition your lamb with plenty of time to get it dry and prepared for the ring prior to your class

- After washing, towel dry the body and blow dry the legs, and then brush out the legs
- There are many fitting practices utilized to make sheep look their best, but know the rules of the show as some shows limit what products may be used
 - An effective, yet general fitting practice is to apply a small amount of hide lotion to your lamb before entering the ring to provide a smooth handle and soft touch to its hide
- Once you have your lamb ready for the ring, be on time to your class and enjoy your time in the ring!



Showmanship



Showmanship is essential when showing sheep. Of all the livestock species, showing sheep requires the most physical contact with the animal. The showman and lamb must have a good working relationship and practice is required prior to the show in order to be prepared. You must be able to exhibit your animal in a manner that will promote your lambs' strengths and disguise its weaknesses.

At Home

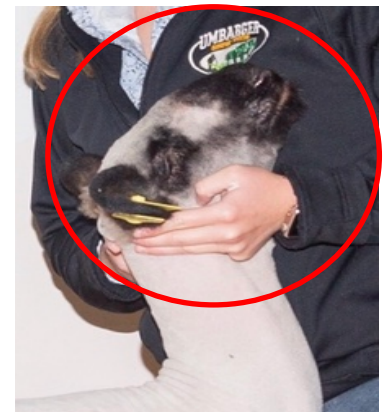
It is essential to work with your lamb at home and practice as frequently as possible if you wish to have success in the show ring.

- As soon as you get your lamb, you need to start spending time with it
 - Lambs are often nervous when you first get them, so you need to develop a relationship with them to build trust
 - The easiest way to do this is to find a bucket and just sit in their pen – eventually they will warm up to you and you can start touching them so they can get used to human contact
- Once your lamb has calmed down, you can begin training them. It's best to start by training them to walk on a halter
 - While they will likely fight you at first, patience is key
 - More information about halter breaking can be found in the KSU Show Lamb Guide: *General Care* section (insert page number here for reference)
- Another important thing to teach your lamb is to brace
 - The term "bracing" refers to your lamb pushing into you in order to enhance the appearance of their muscles – similar to "flexing" your muscles
 - The judge will approach to handle your lamb, so training them to properly brace is important
 - To properly brace your lamb, you must know how to properly position yourself – this is covered in the following sections

Proper Technique

While teaching your lamb how to cooperate is important, knowing what to do yourself is equally as critical to get the most out of your lamb (best performance/appearance?)

- When setting up a lamb you have to properly position your own body. Your hands should be cupped around the base of their ears, with your hands flat against the lamb's' head
 - Figure 1 (to the right) shows proper hand placement on the lambs' head



- When positioning your legs, your left leg should be the one bracing against the lamb. Your left leg should be pointed directly at them, pushing diagonally across their chest. Your right leg should be slightly behind you, giving you something to brace yourself with
 - Figure 2 (to the right) shows the correct position when bracing your lamb



Figure 2.

Feet/Leg Placement

Now that you know how you should be positioned, it's time to focus on the position of your lamb

- Your lambs' legs should be set square and to all four corners so that its' weight is evenly distributed
 - Figure 3 (to the right) shows the correct way to set your lambs' feet
- You want to be sure that your lamb is not too stretched out nor too scrunched together from the side



Figure 3.

Walking

In the *General Care and Management* section, you will find information about halter breaking your lamb. Once halter broken, the next important thing is teaching them to walk by hand. Sheep are shown without a halter (unless a younger exhibitor is unable to keep hold of the animal).

- Your lamb should walk alongside you, with its head slightly in front of you
- If possible, try to follow another exhibitor in the ring; lambs more easily follow one another, but often times struggle to lead
- **PRACTICE** is the only way your lamb will properly walk on show day
 - Sheep will not take to this quickly, therefore patience and practice at home is crucial!

Show Ring Attire

You have put in the hard work to prepare for the show, so it is just as important for you to look the part when in the ring! Here are some things to consider when deciding how to dress for the show:

- Be professional – nice jeans with no holes/rips, a collared shirt or nice blouse, nice boots/durable shoes
- While looking nice is important, flashier is not better – avoid clothes that are distracting or unpractical

Other Tips

After you have the basics down, there are some smaller details that can help take your showmanship game to the next level.

- Be sure to always have your lamb straight in line and leave ample space between you and the other exhibitors around you
- Always be courteous – be mindful of the judge and other exhibitors at all times
- While it may seem basic, be sure that your lamb is clean and presented well



Notes

