

Inspecting and Handling Sheep in Judging Contests

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When inspecting and handling sheep in livestock judging contests, follow these guidelines:

1. Inspect carefully from a distance observing front, side, and rear. Reach as many conclusions as possible before handling the sheep.
2. Before handling be sure that sheep is standing squarely on its feet.
3. In handling keep the fingers laid closely alongside each other; let the pressure come on the bulbs of the fingers rather than the extreme tips.
4. Do not handle the sheep roughly. Handle them firmly enough that you will get the proper feel or touch. Keep the hand nearly flat and use only enough pressure to accurately indicate the amount of fleshing or finishing.
5. Be sure to use a system when handling sheep and handle all of them in the same manner. It does not matter whether you start at the shoulders or the dock when starting your examination, but always do it the same way.
6. Span the top of the sheep just back of the shoulders. This gives you an idea as to the fullness in the heart or arch of fore-ribs.
7. With the fingers close together, feel the sides of the sheep. Note the covering over the ribs.
8. Span the loin to determine its width and depth. Locate the last rib and point of the hip to check length of loin.
9. Check the rump to see whether it is long, level and uniform in width. Span the dock.
10. Feel the leg. To do this most effectively place the tips of the middle finger on each hand together, on the inside of the leg. Push the hands as far up in the rear flank and the twist as possible then note how much space remains between the tips of the thumbs of each hand.

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