

SELECTION OF PROSPECT MARKET LAMBS

Things to select for: Muscle, structural correctness, balance and eye appeal, and growth potential.

1) Muscle

- Young lambs should show an adequate amount of muscle.
- Expression of muscle is more important than volume of muscle because the bulk will come with age.
- Young lambs that are extremely thick may be quick in their pattern. These lambs should be observed closely to make sure they will grow.
- Muscle can be evaluated by observing the thickness and expression of the leg, rack, and loin.

2) Structure

- Structure is extremely important in prospect lambs because they are still growing.
- If a lamb is structurally incorrect when he is young, then he will probably be structurally unsound when he is older.
- Lambs should stand squarely on their front and rear legs with adequate width between each leg.
- They should also have adequate slope of shoulder.
- Young lambs need to be level docked.

3) Balance and Eye Appeal

- Everything has an effect on balance and profile, so the lambs should be proportioned correctly.
- Eye appeal is effected by balance. Lambs that look good will be nicely balanced.
- An eye appealing lamb will be:

- *long bodied
- *long necked, with the neck tying into the top of the shoulder
- *clean and smooth fronted
- *strong topped
- *level docked
- *correct on feet and legs
- *adequately deep bodied
- *tight hided

4) Growth Potential and Maturity

- Growth potential is important in prospect lambs. The lambs are usually selected at about 4 months of age, so they should not appear to be fully grown at the time of selection. The lambs need to show enough growth potential so they can be held until the major shows.
 - Growth potential is correlated with maturity. Usually, larger framed, growthier animals will be later maturing. On the other hand, smaller framed, shorter bodied lambs will be earlier maturing. Although earlier maturing lambs are selected against, some smaller children may want to purchase a smaller framed lamb so they can handle them in the showing.
 - Earlier maturing lambs are selected against because they become excessively fat. Thus, they are harder to hold until the show date. Early maturing lambs will generally be:
 - *smaller framed
 - *shorter bodied
 - *shorter necked
 - *shorter in their cannon bone
 - *open and course in their shoulder
 - *fatter
 - Later maturing lambs can continue growing with more days of lean grow. This means they can reach larger market weights before they start depositing fat. Later maturing lambs are generally easier to feed because they fatten later in the show season. Thus, they require less attention and exercise. Later maturing lambs will generally be:
 - *larger framed
 - *longer bodied
 - *longer necked
 - *longer in their cannon bone
 - *smoother and cleaner in their shoulder
 - *leaner
- *Remember that the lambs you are selecting are only about 4 months of age. Therefore, you should select a lamb that will continue to grow.

CLASSIFICATION OF MARKET LAMBS

FINEWOOLS

Things to select against:

-Black or brown spots found anywhere on the body. These spots are usually located on the nose, ears, eyes, and legs of the sheep.

-black hooves

-black, brown, or red eyelashes

-chalky, white, course hairs found on the face, legs and body

-short, erect, slick ears

-roman nose and short muzzle

*Generally, lambs will not be classified out unless they have three or more of the traits listed above.

Things to select for:

-lambs that are free from any colored fibers or spots

-lambs that have wool instead of chalky hairs on their face and legs

-their wool should be soft, avoid lambs that have course wool

-long ears that are not erect

FINEWOL CROSSES

Things to select against:

- lambs that are extremely dark on their face and legs
- lambs that have chalky, white, course hairs on their face and legs
- lambs that lack wool on their face and legs
- avoid lambs that have black or brown spots on their body
- be cautious of lambs that have irregular color patterns on their face and legs
- short, slick, erect ears
- avoid lambs that are slick, onion headed

Things to select for:

- lambs that have wool on their poll and legs
- lambs that have white mixed into their color pattern on their face and legs
- lambs that are free of chalky, course fibers
- light faced lambs that are not excessively dark
- wool should feel soft but not course
- ears that are long and not erect

SOUTHDOWNS

Things to select against:

- slick ears, legs, and head
- dark faces and legs
- chalky, white, course fibers on the face and legs
- long, droopy ears
- any spots found on the legs or body

Things to select for:

- Muzzles and legs that appear to be a light mouse-color
- short, erect, wooly ears
- short muzzled lambs that are not roman nosed
- lambs that are free of spots and chalky hairs

*Generally, a lamb will not be classified out unless he has three strikes against him. Although the 3-strike system is the rule of thumb to go by, you should be cautious of any lamb that possesses a negative trait that is listed above.

*All lambs must have their milk teeth present to be able to show, so you should examine the lambs teeth while you are classifying him.