

Market Lamb

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 2015



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Hansford County 4-H
23 Northwest Court
Spearman, TX 79081

806-659-4130
806-659-4133 fax
806-202-6417 Cell
Andrew.sprague@tamu.edu

Lamb Guide

You have made the decision that you want to feed and competitively show a lamb. You will spend months to the proper care, feeding and management of the potentially award winning lamb.

I will help you purchase your lamb. You will need to learn how to exercise, feed and care for your lamb. It is your responsibility as a exhibitor to read the general rules, learn weight limits, ownership and entry deadlines. Under normal conditions a lamb should gain approximately 1/2 pound per day in most cases lambs consume 2 to 3% of their body weight per day.

Feed—16 to 18% lamb feed

Fresh water available at all times

Exercise

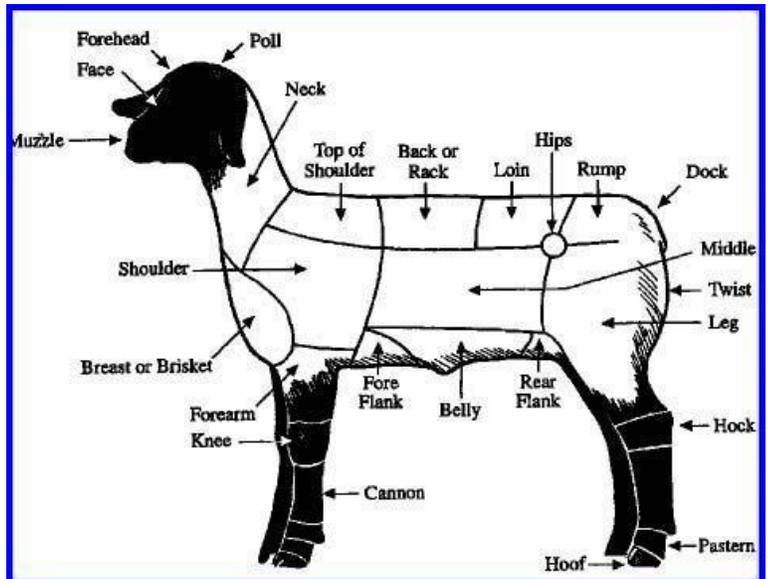
Health—worm lambs every 6 weeks or more often if needed

Shelter—dry, warm, clean, dog proof

Over eating shot at first if needed



Body Parts of a Lamb



Selection of Market Lamb

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.

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

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

Strong topped

Level docked

Long necked, with the neck tying into the top of the shoulder

Tight hided

Clean and smooth front

Correct on feet and legs

Adequately deep bodied



Growth Potential and Maturity

Growth potential is important in lambs. Lambs are usually selected at about 4 months old. They should appear to be fully grown at the time of selection. The lamb needs to show enough growth potential so they can be held until the major shows.

Growth is correlated with maturity. Larger framed animals will be later maturing, while smaller framed, shorter bodied lambs will be earlier maturing. 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. They are harder to hold until the show date. Early maturing lambs will be generally be; smaller framed, shorter bodied, shorter necked, shorter in their cannon bone, open and course in their shoulder and 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 and leaner.

Remember that the lamb you select will continue to grow.

Classification of Market Lamb

There are Finewool, Finewool Crosses and we show Southdowns Medium Wool

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 mousy color

Short muzzled lambs that are not roman nosed

Lambs that are free of spots and chalky hair

