

Market Lamb SAE Handbook

A Senior Project

Presented to

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By

Meagan Dunlap

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this project was to create an educational booklet to guide agriculture students through their market lamb SAE project. It is intended to be used as a resource for both novice exhibitors and agriculture teachers. The handbook contains information on how to select, raise, and show a market lamb for a local county fair. The goal of the project was to provide students and teachers with one resource that contains all of the necessary research to complete a market lamb SAE project. It is hoped that the handbook will give novice exhibitors a competitive advantage in the show ring.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Over 300 California high schools offer agriculture education programs, which reach over 70,000 students (statistics, n.d.). Many of these students will move on to attend post-secondary education and become the next generation of agriculturalists. According to the National FFA Organization's website, "agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems." Agriculture education programs offer a unique educational experience through its three-part model. A complete agriculture education program incorporates classroom instruction, FFA leadership, and supervised agricultural experience programs (SAE) into its' curriculum. The classroom portion offers classes such as agriculture biology, veterinary science, horticulture, agriculture mechanics, and agriculture chemistry. The FFA portion adds to the classroom experience by allowing students to participate in leadership roles, community outreach activities, career development, and competitive events. The SAE portion of the program allows students to explore individual areas of interest within the agriculture industry, while also applying key concepts learned in the classroom.

It is important to engage students in learning through hands on experience. Not only does it help students become interested in their school subjects, but it also provides them with the opportunity to develop a concrete skill set that could help them succeed at a future four-year institution or future career. SAE projects provide this valuable learning experience for students enrolled in agriculture education programs. SAE projects are a requirement in agriculture education programs, and as such, are intended for every student to have. A student can fulfill their SAE requirement by starting a project in any of the six SAE categories including,

entrepreneurship, placement, exploratory, research, service based learning, or school-based enterprises. All SAE projects should have some ties to the agriculture industry, whether it involves dairy, mechanics or floral design. The range of potential projects is limitless and left to the imagination of the student.

The most popular SAE project is raising livestock for local county fairs. Students can choose to raise and show beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, goats, sheep, poultry, and rabbits. However, many first time participants interested in raising livestock have little to no experience with large animals. Raising and showing a market lamb is a good first time project for students lacking extensive experience handling large animals. This allows the student to acquire useful show ring and animal husbandry experience with a market animal that is less inclined to cause physical injury. This senior project will be dedicated to creating a handbook to guide those students who wish to raise a market lamb for their local county fair for the first time.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Raising a market lamb for fair should be an enjoyable and challenging experience for students. However, a lack of preparation or inadequate knowledge about the process can cause what should be an enjoyable experience, to be quite difficult and stressful. The livestock show industry is extremely competitive and thus can be hard for students to be successful. There is a wide array of knowledge that students must acquire when they choose to raise an animal for fair. This prospect can cause first time participants to become intimidated and discouraged at the idea of raising a show animal. This handbook is meant to help relieve some of the stress and concerns that come with raising and showing a market lamb at county fairs. With the guidance that this

handbook will provide through the process of raising a market lamb, schools may see increased participation with livestock projects.

## **Importance**

There are tremendous benefits that students take away from completing an SAE project. It is important to encourage students to develop and implement a plan for their SAE in an area of agriculture that interests them. This project is important to increase involvement in the SAE portion of the agriculture education curriculum for students with a specific interest in the animal production industry. This handbook will provide students with the proper skills and guidance needed to have a successful market lamb project. Not only will students learn important skills related to animal husbandry, but they will also learn the value of hard work and commitment.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to create a market lamb handbook to guide agriculture students through their market lamb SAE projects.

## **Objectives**

The objectives to accomplishing the purposes of this project were as follows:

1. To identify and develop a list of tools and materials needed for a market lamb project
2. To gather detailed information on how to select, raise, fit, and show market lambs
3. To compile a list of showmanship questions and create a corresponding activity to test the student's knowledge

4. To develop an easy to read handbook that outlines the market lamb project from beginning to end

### **Definitions of Important Terms**

**Future Farmers of America (FFA):** A national organization that is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agriculture education

**Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE):** The SAE is a required component of a total agricultural education program and intended for every student. Through their involvement in the SAE program, students are able to consider multiple careers and occupations, learn expected workplace behavior, develop specific skills within an industry, and are given opportunities to apply academic and occupational skills in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment.

**County Fair:** A fair held annually at a set location within a particular county to showcase agriculture and livestock related exhibits

**Market Lamb:** A young sheep less than one year of age raised to be used in the food system

**Showmanship:** An exhibitor's ability to train, fit, and present an animal in a competitive, yet positive way, to a judge

**Fitting:** Washing, drying, brushing, and clipping an animal's wool or hair to make them more attractive in the show ring

## **Summary**

Market lamb projects are a wonderful way for students to gain hands on experience in agriculture while fulfilling the SAE requirement of the agriculture classes that they are enrolled in. By raising and showing a market lamb, students will learn important skills in animal husbandry while also developing a strong work ethic that will serve them well later in life. Additionally, students will get to explore a sector of the agriculture industry that reinforces topics introduced and discussed in the classroom. Market lamb projects are the perfect first step for students to get their feet wet in large animal production and the SAE portion of agriculture education programs.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Literature**

Enrollment in agriculture education is continuing to skyrocket. California is ranked the second largest state in terms of membership totals in FFA, just below Texas. In total, there are 79,500 FFA members participating in agriculture programs at 317 different high schools up and down the state of California (Statistics, n.d.). Agriculture education follows a three-part model that breaks into classroom laboratory instruction, FFA, and supervised agricultural experience (SAE). Each of these components is intracurricular to the program. Intracurricular means that it is included within the curriculum, and thus stands for a percentage of the student's grade in an agriculture course. Despite the increase in membership in California, participation in SAE programs have declined. SAE's are invaluable to a student's education and offer many benefits. Students prepare for future careers by developing their skill sets and talents through hands on application. SAE's contribute to career development and personal growth, which is the main purpose of agriculture education programs. Agriculture education programs should strive for higher involvement in SAE projects.

The purpose of this project was to establish a handbook that agriculture students could use to implement a market lamb project. This chapter will provide a brief history about SAE, what an SAE consists of, the importance of SAE in school funding, trends of involvement, and the affects of raising livestock.

## **History of Supervised Agricultural Experience**

The first vocational agricultural courses were established with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917. This act provided federal funding to states for the creation and promotion of vocational programs, which included agriculture. Traditionally it was viewed as a means to solve skilled-labor shortages and meet the demand for laborers in the growing industrial society. However, many educators saw vocational education as a way to “put into practice new teaching methods and philosophies that emphasized cultivating children’s interests through active learning” (Steffes, n.d.).

How to best educate students has long been evaluated and continues to be investigated today. John Dewey proposed one of the earliest philosophies that contributed to the idea of active learning in the early twentieth century. Dewey’s philosophy focused on high levels of interaction and a basis of curriculum on student experience. He believed that by “basing education on the personal experiences of a learner, both the quality and quantity of learning would increase” (Dyer & Osborne, 1995). In 1908, prior to the Smith-Hughes Act, an agriculture teacher by the name of Rufus Stimson, applied Dewey’s philosophy by encouraging his student’s to start projects at home. With the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, early stages of what Stimson considered a “home project,” and what is known today as an SAE project, emerged. The Smith-Hughes Act stipulated that “students of vocational agriculture, in addition to their studies in school, must have in operation a program of supervised practice for at least six months of the year” (History of Agriculture, n.d.). This stipulation has evolved into the SAE portion of the agriculture education three-part model that is practiced in programs today.

## **Categories of SAE**

SAE is a required component of a total agriculture education program and intended for every student to have. An SAE project provides students with the opportunity to apply and gain skills that they learn in the classroom. “Through their involvement in the SAE program, students are able to consider multiple careers and occupations, learn expected workplace behavior, develop specific skills within an industry, and are given opportunities to apply academic and occupational skills in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment” (Supervised Agricultural Experiences, n.d.). To fulfill the SAE requirement, students can engage in any of the six categories. The six categories of SAE are as follows:

1. Ownership or Entrepreneurship
2. Placement or Internship
3. Research
4. Exploratory
5. School-Based Enterprise (SBE)
6. Service Learning

In an ownership/entrepreneurship project, the student makes all management decisions regarding their project, assumes all financial obligations, and performs all operations. They are the sole planner and worker of the project. In a placement/internship project, the student works for someone else, either in a paid or non-paid volunteer position. A student can be placed in an agriculture related business, farm, school laboratory, or non-profit community service organization. Research SAE projects involve student experiments on topics related to agriculture, analyzing information and data, and ultimately discovering new knowledge or creating inventions. Exploratory SAE projects allow students to explore careers in agriculture and are

particularly helpful for first year students as they develop SAE plans. This may include job shadowing a veterinarian or other careers of interest. School-based enterprises are school projects that mirror a work setting for which students assume all management decisions. In a service learning SAE, students choose a project based on need in the community that they plan, fundraise, and implement (Supervised Agricultural Experiences, n.d.).

### **SAE's Role in Funding**

Since 1983, a main source of state funding for agriculture education has been the Agriculture Incentive Grant (AIG). Compared to block grants, which have very general provisions in the way they are to be spent, the AIG is a categorical grant. This means that there are specific and strict provisions that must be met in order to qualify for the grant. These strict provisions are intended to promote and award quality and innovative agricultural education programs. In order to receive an AIG allocation, an agricultural program must satisfy twelve specific criterion which include:

1. Curriculum and Instruction
2. Leadership and Citizenship Development
3. Practical Application of Agricultural Skills
4. Qualified and Professional Personnel
5. Facilities, Equipment and Materials
6. Community, Business and Industry Involvement
7. Career Guidance
8. Program Promotion
9. Program Accountability and Planning

10. Enrollment

11. Full Year Employment

12. Program Achievement

Under each of these categories are additional checklist items that are scored during the review process and are integral to receiving the grant.

The SAE portion of an agriculture program is required in order to receive the AIG. SAE fulfills the *Practical Application of Agricultural Skills* criterion. There are, however, stipulations that must be met in the SAE component of the three-part model according to the grant. SAE projects must be a requirement and count as a percentage of a student's grade in the agriculture class in which they are enrolled. First year students do not have to conduct an actual project but must have a future plan for their SAE. For continuing students, a minimum of eighty percent has to be engaged in an actual SAE project. Agriculture teachers must perform SAE project visits twice a year per student. School vehicles should be provided for the agriculture teachers to use for SAE associated trips or they should be compensated for using their own vehicles.

(Educator/Teacher Resources, n.d.). To keep receiving funding from the AIG, it is important to implement SAE programs that encourage student participation.

### **SAE Involvement**

Although SAE's are a requirement for every student in an agriculture program, participation in SAE's has declined over the years. In a report by Leising and Zilbert, it was found that forty-three percent of the students in California had no SAE project. Yet California is not the only state with low numbers. Participation in SAE's has been lacking nationwide. In New York, less than thirty percent of students have SAE projects. North Carolina reported that fifty-

eight percent of their students had SAE projects. Retention of SAE participant's is another concern for agriculture programs. Florida had sixty-eight percent of students with SAE's for one year, but only forty-two percent of them continued their SAE for all four years (Dyer & Osborne, 1995). For a program that is intracurricular to the agriculture education model, these findings need to be addressed and solutions need to be found.

The study by Leising and Zilbert concluded that most teachers would agree that having an SAE program is important and beneficial to their students. However, the findings showed that the difficulty comes in implementing an SAE program successfully. One of an agriculture teacher's main challenges is student participation. From a student's perspective, there are many challenges that they may run into when developing a plan for their SAE. Compared to the beginning of agriculture education, a much higher percentage of the high school population in today's society lives in an urban setting. Since SAE programs commonly focus on farm-related activities, it is harder for students with urban backgrounds to find the right resources to complete a project. Comparatively, students who live on farms have more access to SAE opportunities. It is becoming harder for teachers to implement SAE programs because more of their students need additional help from school since they can't receive help at home (Dyer & Osborne, 1995). This is especially true for the more traditional types of SAE's such as raising livestock.

### **Livestock Projects**

Many schools have agriculture laboratories or school farms on their campus. In other districts, several schools share access to a district farm located in a central location between schools. This gives students who do not have the proper facilities at home, the opportunity to house livestock projects at a school-sponsored facility. Livestock projects fall under the

“ownership or entrepreneurship” category of SAE. An entrepreneurship project is defined as a project where “the student plans, implements, operates and assumes financial risks in a productive or service activity or agriculture, food or natural resources-related business” (Supervised Agricultural Experiences, n.d.). Because students are directly responsible for managing their project, livestock projects have been found to have profound impacts on a student’s character, apart from the knowledge that they gain about animals and business management.

In a study conducted by Purdue University, students who raised and exhibited livestock projects were asked a series of qualitative questions to determine the affects that raising livestock had on traits such as responsibility, self-confidence, and their people skills. Students questioned in the study noted a positive improvement in skills relating to responsibility as a result of being responsible for their livestock project. One statement from the study was that “success in school can only be achieved through making the same kinds of sacrifices and putting forth the same kind of effort that is required [in their organization]” (Balschweid, Machtmes, Rusk, Summerlot-Early, & Talbert, n.d.). Forty-four percent of the students who participated in the study had used the responsibility they learned from raising animal projects to complete homework assignments and school projects on time.

Many students learn to get out of their comfort zone from showing livestock. They don’t shy away when it is time to get in front of a crowd of people in the show ring. They are proud of the time and effort that they put into their project which helps build their self-esteem and confidence. They realize that they can accomplish whatever they set their mind to. Fifty-one percent of the participants indicated that their self-confidence had increased because of their involvement with animal projects (Balschweid et al., n.d.).

Lastly, students learn communicative skills with their livestock projects. They meet with prospective buyers, visit local businesses to seek sponsorship, and answer questions or give explanations to judges during showmanship. Sixty-seven percent of the students stated that their livestock projects had improved their people skills. Livestock projects, although they require the student to put in time and money, are an invaluable learning experience that contributes to the personal growth of the students.

## **Conclusion**

SAE's are a tangible experience meant for the student to apply curriculum learned in the classroom and to develop concrete skills that they can use later in life. There are tremendous benefits that students take away from completing an SAE project. Most importantly, SAE's can be used as a tool to prepare students for the transition from school, to work or college. It is important to push student's to have an SAE project so that they can render some of the many benefits. Students who can raise an animal project at home, or have access to a school facility, should get involved with raising livestock.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methods and Materials**

The purpose of this project was to create a handbook on how to raise a market lamb for local county fairs. The intent of this project was to provide agriculture students with an all-inclusive source that they could easily search through to find guidance throughout their entire market lamb experience. The expected outcome of this manual was to increase the amount of successful market lamb projects.

#### **Handbook Content**

The first step to design a well-organized handbook was to establish an outline of the information to be presented. It was important to present the information in sequential order to provide step-by-step guidance for the audience as they implement their market lamb project. A table of contents was first included in the handbook so that the audience could easily locate specific topics. An introductory section was included next stating the objective of the handbook along with an overview of the market lamb project. The remaining sections of the booklet included: popular market lamb breeds, selection, facilities, tools and equipment needed, nutrition, diseases and treatments, exercise and training, how to show, showmanship questions and practice, shearing and fitting, and quick tips for fair.

#### **Sources of Information**

The second step was to gather detailed information regarding each section in the handbook. Some information came from courses at California Polytechnic State University, San

Luis Obispo. Mrs. Elizabeth Reynolds class ASCI 223, Systems of Sheep Management, was referenced for basic knowledge on lamb care. This class covered useful topics in the handbook such as lamb breeds, nutrition, and lamb diseases. Outside sources from the Internet were also utilized to gain information on fairs and the club lamb industry specifically.

## **Illustrations**

The next step was to obtain photographs that correlated with the information being presented in the handbook. A list of photographs needed was compiled after a rough draft of each section of the text was made. Photographs were found on the Internet to illustrate tools, lamb breeds, lamb diagrams and showmanship techniques. These photographs were used to help capture the reader's attention and provide visual aid to enhance learning. All of the illustrations that the author found were from Google Images. Each photograph also needed to be cited in the handbook itself to give credit to the owners of the pictures.

## **Formatting**

To properly format the handbook, the author used Microsoft Word. This program allowed the author to produce a polished layout for the handbook. The author had the ability to construct each page individually and insert photos freely. The first step in using the program was to start a blank document. With each new section and heading, the author added a blank page to the document. The author used text boxes to insert all of the text into the handbook and downloaded unique fonts from the Internet to make the text more aesthetic. The author chose font colors to reflect the FFA's colors, corn gold and national blue. Specifically the font colors were "D8B449," a gold tone, and "000090," a dark blue tone. Once all of the text was included, the

author copied and pasted accompanying photographs for each section. The next step was to format the text boxes and accompanying photographs so that the handbook flowed, was easy to read, and was visually appealing. Once satisfied with the design and layout, the author saved the handbook as a PDF file for easy sharing.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this handbook was to create an accessible resource for agriculture students interested in raising and showing a market lamb at their local county fair. The handbook included information about the entire market lamb experience, from selection to fair, so that the audience had everything they may need to know compiled in one location. Students who utilize this handbook, especially first time participants, should have successful market lamb projects.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Results and Discussion**

The following pages contain the completed pages of the handbook, “How to Raise Your Market Lamb: A Project Guide.” The handbook was designed using Microsoft Word and covers topics from selecting market breeds to showing and fitting for fair. The handbook can be accessed as a PDF file for agriculture teachers and students to use as a resource for successfully completing market lamb SAE projects.



How to Raise Your

# MARKET LAMB

.....

A Project Guide



This Booklet Belongs To:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_



Picture from, <http://www.kateandersonphotodesign.com/lovely-little-lambs/>

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Picture from, <http://www.babble.com/home/little-darlings-from-sharon-montrose/>

# OVERVIEW

Congratulations! You have decided to raise a market lamb for your local fair. You will soon discover that raising a lamb is a fun and rewarding experience. All of the memories that you make will be well worth the long hours and hard work that you put into your project. You may have some doubts and fears about what you are getting yourself into, but this handbook was created to help you with your project. It will answer questions you may have beginning with the time you first pick out your lamb, all the way up to showing your lamb at fair.

So first things first, where do you purchase your market lamb? Lambs can be bought through private club lamb producers or through public livestock sales. Before you purchase a lamb, it is important to find out the date of the fair that you plan on entering your lamb in to show. Lambs can only be shown when they reach a certain age and weight range. This means that show dates determine when you need to purchase your lamb. Meet with your FFA advisor and come up with a game plan together! Your advisor will know when you should start looking to purchase a lamb. They can also help you find someone to purchase a lamb from and may even go with you to pick out your lamb! I hope that you make the best out of this experience, and don't forget to have fun!

Good Luck in the show ring!

- Meagan Dunlap  
Author

*Note: The information contained in this handbook act as guidelines to help you make decisions about your project. You may need to make modifications outside of the guidelines in this book to fit the specific needs of your project. But don't forget! Your FFA advisor will always be there to help you. Don't be afraid to go to them with your questions and concerns.*

# BREEDS

There are more than 50 breeds of sheep in the United States and more than 1,000 in the world. Each breed has certain traits that make it a better fit for certain markets (such as meat, wool, milk or cheese). When selecting a market lamb, it is important to choose a breed known for producing high quality meat. This section will describe the five most popular market breeds that are shown at fairs. They are: Suffolk, Hampshire, Dorset, Speckle-Faced, and "Natural".

## SUFFOLK



Picture from,  
<http://www.ujssa.org/RESULTS/naile/2012/peck-annuschat.JPG>

Suffolk's represent the largest sheep breed in the United States. They have bare black legs and faces. They are well known for having the fastest growth rate of all terminal breeds. They also have high cutability (which makes their meat excellent for the food market).

## HAMPSHIRE



Picture from,  
<http://www.otclublambs.com/winners/2014%20fully%20loaded.jpg>

Hampshire's are the second largest terminal sire in the United States. They have black faces with a wool cap on top of their head. They are known for their rapid growth and efficient feed conversion. They also have large, lean carcasses.

*Pro Tip: To tell the difference between a Hampshire and a Suffolk, see if there is wool on the legs or head. A Hampshire will have white wool, where as a Suffolk will be bare and black.*

## DORSET



Picture from, <http://www.thebigc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Polled-Dorset-Jr-Show-Res-Ch-Ewe.jpg>

Dorset's are the number one white-faced breed in the United States. They are a medium size, all white breed with wool down their legs. They have a moderate growth rate but good body length and heavy muscling. They are most known for their lambing abilities. Dorset ewes can have lambs twice a year (compared to only once a year for other sheep breeds).

## SPECKLE-FACED



Picture from, <http://netzkebrothers.com/netskelambs/images/2013/august%202013/Redwood%20Overall%20Ewe%20Champ.JPG>

Speckle-faced lambs have black and white spotted faces free of wool. Their legs also have black and white spotted features. They are good mothers and produce plenty of milk. They are often crossbred with Suffolk's or Texel's to produce lambs with good quality meat.

## NATURAL



Picture from, [http://www.showbarnflix.com/results/images/class42\\_2nd\\_lot922.JPG](http://www.showbarnflix.com/results/images/class42_2nd_lot922.JPG)

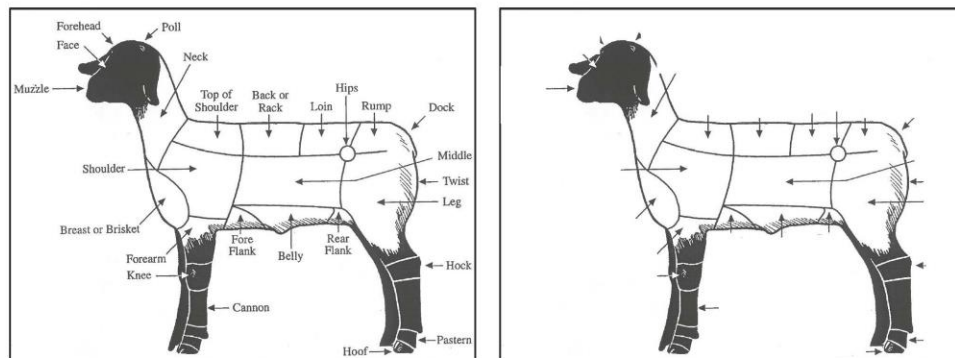
"Naturals" are not a lamb breed. Lambs that fall in the "natural" class can be from several different breeds. Natural colored lambs are essentially lambs that are not white. In most shows, they have to be 50% black in order to qualify as "natural." Fun fact: all lambs used to be "natural colored." White lambs were selected and bred for because of our ability to dye white wool different colors.

.....

Ultimately, choosing a breed for your project narrows down to personal preference. At fair, your lamb will get split into a class to compete against other similar lambs. Some shows separate lambs into classes based on weight ONLY (not breed). In other shows, your lamb may be classed by BOTH weight and breed. Black-faced lambs (like Suffolk's and Hampshire's) are the most popular breeds shown because they traditionally out perform white-faced breeds. That does not mean that if you choose a white-faced lamb you won't stand a chance of winning. With good management, white-faced lambs can also be just as successful.

# SELECTION

To help you understand the various parts of a lamb referenced in this section of the text, the following figures were included. We will be discussing some of these parts in terms of how they should be structured, which is an important part of the selection process. Try covering the picture with the terms on the left and use your memory to fill in the blanks on the picture to the right. This exercise will also help you answer showmanship question #9, located on page 18!



Picture from, <http://fyi.uwex.edu/fdlmeat/files/2009/09/SheepQuizBowlStudyGuide.pdf>

There are many factors to look at and consider when selecting a lamb. These factors include: overall muscling and potential for growth, structural correctness, and balance or eye appeal. These are some of the same factors that judges will be looking for when you show your lamb at fair. Selecting a lamb with a solid frame and structure will help you do well in the show ring.

**Muscling:** Pick a lamb that feels firmer than others. This may be hard to detect since you will be picking your lamb at an early age when there is more potential for muscle than actual muscle development. Good indicators of the potential for muscle development are a level and square rump, and good width at the pin bones (or dock). Also, a lamb that stands or walks wide will generally be more muscled. Next, look closely at the muscling on the legs and rump. These parts are the higher priced cuts of meat and should have more muscle.

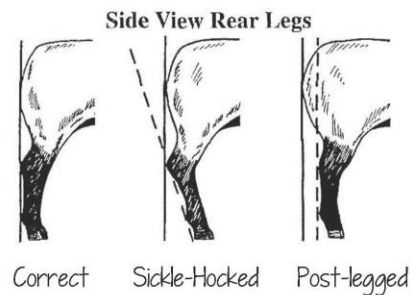
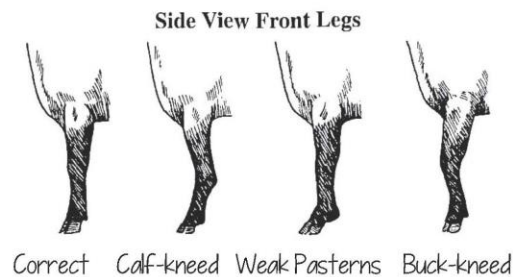
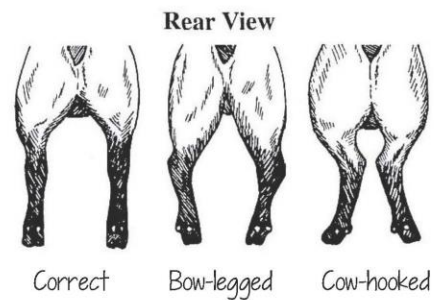
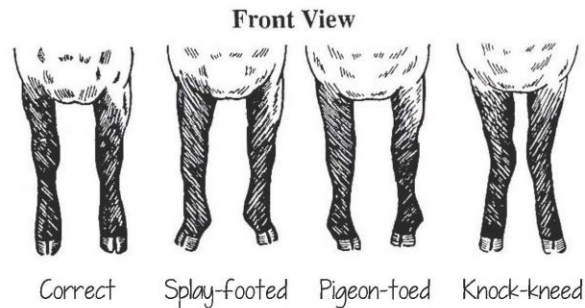
The length of the loin is also important. To measure the length of the loin, feel for the lamb's last two ribs and then measure with your fingers from the last two ribs to the hook bone. The longer the loin the better!

Structural Correctness: This is the lamb's ability to maintain a proper skeletal design as it stands and moves about the pen. What you want to look for in terms of structure include:

- A long and level top
- Square hips
- Strong pasterns and stance
- And a hoof size that is compatible with the frame size

The figure to the right shows the most common abnormalities in structure that can occur with a lamb's feet and legs. The correct structure is also pictured and is what you should look for when picking out your lamb.

Balance: This is the overall completeness of the lamb and how well the lamb blends together. You want a lamb that appears smooth, level, and straight.



Picture from,  
<https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/4h/Animals/gbj166.pdf>

*Pro Tip: Ask your FFA advisor to go with you to purchase your lamb. They can help point out good qualities when you select which lamb to take home.*

# FACILITIES

Whether you choose to raise your lamb at home or at your school farm, it is crucial to maintain a good housing area. Your lamb should have an indoor pen space where it can escape from cold and wet conditions, as well as a larger outdoor pen space where it can get fresh air and exercise throughout the day. Your pen should be well ventilated, dry, and clean. A clean environment keeps your lamb healthy and happy.

When you first move into your new pen, you should clean the pen of any leftover debris from the previous inhabitant. It is a good idea to also bleach the infrastructure of the pen, including the fence and gate. This will kill any bacteria or fungus that could possibly be present.

The type of pen surface may vary between facilities but is typically a mix of dirt and concrete. Concrete slabs should be scraped and hosed off regularly, and any dirt surface should be raked and shoveled to remove feces or feed that has gotten into the pen. You may choose to provide your lamb with additional bedding on top of the pen surface to improve your lamb's comfort and performance. Beddings can include either wood shavings or straw, but wood shavings are most recommended. Cedar shavings in particular tend to be the healthiest for lambs because of the large particle size and low dust level. No matter what bedding you choose, it should be replaced at least weekly or more frequently depending on the amount of moisture and feces that has built up.

In the indoor pen space, you should provide your lamb with water either in a trough or gallon buckets. The buckets should be kept out of the sun so that the water remains cool. Water containers should be drained, cleaned and replaced on a regular daily basis.



Picture from, <http://www.theanimalprintshop.com/lamb-no.-2/>

# EQUIPMENT

## THE LAMB EXPERT SHOPPING LIST



Picture from,  
<http://www.raisingssheep.net/uploads/1/3/5/3/13538303/551673.jpg?349>



Picture from,  
<http://www.showstoppererequipment.com/userfiles/lambtube.jpg>



Picture from,  
[https://www.valleyvet.com/group\\_images/32555\\_A.jpg](https://www.valleyvet.com/group_images/32555_A.jpg)



Picture from,  
[http://www.jefferspet.com/product\\_images/sheep-goat-poly-rope-halter-color-red/](http://www.jefferspet.com/product_images/sheep-goat-poly-rope-halter-color-red/)



Picture from,  
[https://www.valleyvet.com/group\\_images/37716\\_A.jpg](https://www.valleyvet.com/group_images/37716_A.jpg)



Picture from,  
[https://s7d2.scene7.com/is/image/homedepotcanada/p\\_1000779545.jpg](https://s7d2.scene7.com/is/image/homedepotcanada/p_1000779545.jpg)

- ☐ Halter
- ☐ Feed Bucket
- ☐ Gallon Bucket for Water
- ☐ Sock/Blanket
- ☐ Hoof Trimmer\*
- ☐ Drench gun
- ☐ Wheelbarrow\*
- ☐ Show Box
- ☐ Fly Spray
- ☐ Bath Towels
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Blow Dryer
- ☐ Syringes\*
- ☐ Livestock Scale\*
- ☐ Rake/Shovel/ Things to Clean a Pen\*
- ☐ Hose\*
- ☐ Wool Card\*
- ☐ Shears and Blades\*
- ☐ Trimming Stand\*
- ☐ Clippers\*
- ☐ Fan\*

*Pro Tip: Items marked with an asterisk are typically provided to students by the agriculture department if you are raising a lamb at the school facility. However, if you are raising your lamb at home, make sure that you have this equipment available to you.*

# NUTRITION

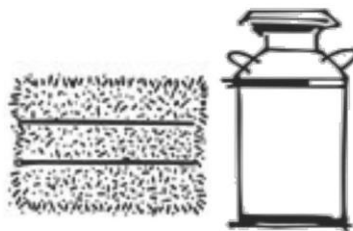
Lambs belong to the ruminant family because they are able to get their nutrients from plant-based foods by fermenting it in their specialized stomach prior to digestion. In simpler terms, they are able to take low quality food and get high quality nutrients. In a ruminant digestive system, the stomach is divided into four compartments: the Rumen, Reticulum, Omasum, and Abomasum.

The basic components of nutrition to maintain your lamb's health and increase growth are: water, energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. Water is the most important of all nutrients, so you should make sure that there is fresh water in your lamb's pen each day. As discussed earlier, you will need a gallon bucket or two in your pen (this depends on how many lambs you are going to be sharing a pen with). During the hot summer months, it is particularly important to make sure that your lamb is getting enough water to drink.

The primary component of your lamb's diet is grain. Grain is a concentrate that provides a rich source of energy. Your lamb will need this energy to grow and to train for fair. Most feeds are considered a "total mixed ration," which means that the grain is mixed in with all of the other nutrients your lamb needs. Protein, vitamins and minerals are the other components that are included in a total mixed ration. Protein is crucial for market lambs because of how fast they grow and the amount of muscle they are building. The best show feeds to purchase for market lambs contain around 18% protein.

Forages like grass, weeds, hay, and silage are most natural for lambs to consume and therefore, must be fed to your lamb as well. Alfalfa is the best forage to feed since it is a higher quality hay. Forages, like alfalfa, keep your lamb's stomach working properly and the pH of the stomach regulated. Problems can occur if you introduce too much grain into your lamb's diet at one time or if you increase the amount of grain too quickly. Too much grain causes a large amount of lactic acid to be produced in the rumen and thus the pH of the rumen drops. This can be dangerous to the health of your lamb.

*Pro Tip: Grain must be introduced into the diet slowly to give the rumen time to adjust to the changes.*





Pictures from, Google images (lamb feed)

The brand of show feed that is available to you at your local feed store will vary by region and by distributor. All of the feeds pictured above are considered total mixed rations and were specifically formulated for lambs being raised to show. Your local feed store may carry one or all of these feeds. When you go to pick out your feed, make sure to read the nutrition labels on each bag. Specifically, you will want to look for and compare the amount of protein and the amount of fatty ingredients like molasses. Molasses is added into feed to increase the palatability of the ration so that your lamb will want to eat lots of it. However, feed with a higher protein content and lower fat content is going to be the best choice. You want your lamb to build muscle for most of the time that you are raising your lamb. You don't want your lamb to put on very much fat until the very end. Right before fair, your lamb should have a thin layer of fat covering all of the muscle it has grown. This is called a finish and is a desirable trait for market lambs to have.

Lastly, when you first purchase your lamb it will weigh around 50 pounds. By the end of your project it can weigh anywhere from 100 to 160 pounds. You must regularly weigh your animal (at least once a week) to make sure that it is properly gaining weight at a moderate pace. You don't want your animal to weigh too light or too heavy when you get to fair. Fairs have strict weight qualifications and anything outside what they determine to be the acceptable weight range is automatically disqualified. This means that you won't be able to show your lamb or sell it at the auction. I suggest recording your lamb's weight in a log or journal every time that you weigh your animal. You can keep this log in your show box so that it is in a safe place and can be easily accessed.



## DISEASES AND TREATMENTS



A basic understanding of some of the most common diseases and infections that spread amongst lambs can help you diagnose and treat your lamb before the problem escalates and becomes most severe. Poor health can lead to poor performance in your lamb so it is best to diagnose and treat your lamb early.

A healthy lamb will have:

- A body temperature of 102.8 degrees F
- A pulse of 75 beats per minute
- And a breathing rate of 20 breaths per minute

When you purchase your lamb, ask your buyer about his health program and vaccination schedule. Most buyers vaccinate their lambs before they sell them to you but some vaccinations require a booster shot a couple weeks later that you may be responsible for. Also, you will most likely need to do another round of deworming once you get your lamb home. Dewormers are given orally and can be purchased over the counter at your local feed store. This will protect your lamb from parasites that typically get into the digestive system causing tremendous problems, even death.

A list of more serious health problems that can arise amongst lambs appears in the table provided on the next page. The table lists the disease, its' cause, signs and symptoms, and possible treatments.

*Pro Tip: When in doubt, consult your FFA advisor or a veterinarian.*

DISEASE	CAUSE	SIGNS & SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT
RECTAL PROLAPSE	Docking tail too short, coughing, scours, sex/pregnancy	Bright red tissue will protrude from anus during coughing or straining	Varies depending on severity and stage. Injections around the rectum and a purse string suture around the anus can be used until slaughter but is not a cure
PINK EYE	Caused by many different organisms like Moraxella and Chlamydia, Very contagious	Corneal ulcer in the middle of the eye, swelling and redness to eyelid, crust around eye	tetracyclines injected either in the body or directly placed on the eye, penicillin dropped directly on the eye
SCOURS	Caused by bacteria, parasites, and viruses, abrupt feed changes or stress	Abnormal fluidity of fecal excretion, dehydration and lameness	Electrolytes and rehydration
SOREMOUTH	Pox Virus	Sores on the mouth, scabs, blisters	Live virus vaccine available, iodine solution applied to scours
URINARY CALCULI	Increased levels of calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and potassium in the diet	Painful swollen penis, infrequent, or irregular urination to no urination, bloating	Oral dose of ammonium chloride, consult veterinarian if no changes
ENTEROTOXEMIA OR "OVEREATING" DISEASE	Clostridial perfringens C & D	Convulsions or sudden death	Vaccination, administration of C & D antitoxens, injection of penicillin
HOOF ROT	Anaerobic bacteria from wet conditions	Lameness, limping, and odor	Trim hooves, apply antibiotic ointment, maintain dry conditions, foot baths
PNEUMONIA	Multiple bacteria, stress, viruses,	Fever, cough, abnormal or	Various antibiotic treatments depending on

	improper ventilation (dust)	difficulty breathing, nasal discharge	cause
FUNGUS & RINGWORM	Trichophyton fungi, exposure to contagious fungus, frequent washing and shearing can also be a cause because it removes protective oils	Circular, thick flakey lesions (when healed it should turn black)	Topical anti-fungal ointments or tractor oil sprayed directly on fungus spot which causes the fungus to suffocate and die

# EXERCISE AND TRAINING



The following exercises should be practiced daily. Try training your lamb for at least 20 minutes each day in the beginning. As you get closer to fair, you may want to spend more time training your lamb. The more time that you spend training your lamb, the better your lamb will behave in the show ring, and the more success you will have controlling it.

## HALTER BREAKING

The first thing you should train your lamb to do is to lead with a halter. To lead means to guide your lamb forward without using force. The two most popular types of halters to use are the soft braided rope halters and the nylon buckled halters. These halters can easily be adjusted to fit your specific lamb. It is important to put the halter on correctly. The halter lead should come up from under your lamb's chin and into your hand on the left hand side of your lamb's head.

To begin halter breaking, try taking your lamb on walks. Your lamb will fight the halter at first pulling backward. You can apply some pressure to the rope, but don't tug too hard. If your lamb still isn't walking, you can "goose" your lamb. This is where you apply slight pressure to its' dock or tail with one hand while leading with your other hand. Begin with short walks at first, sticking close to your lamb's pen. As your lamb gets more comfortable with the halter, increase the length of your path and go on longer walks.

## EXERCISE

Simply walking your lamb around with its' halter won't be enough exercise to develop the most muscle. In addition to walks, your lamb needs to run. You may run with your lamb on a track, or if you have access to an enclosed field, you can let your lamb loose and have a dog (or yourself) chase it around in circles. Some exhibitors will even go so far as to provide their lambs with a treadmill for exercise. No matter what method you choose, some type of additional exercise program is necessary to build muscle shape.

## GETTING YOUR LAMB USED TO BEING HANDLED

In the show ring it is important to have control of your animal, so your lamb needs to get comfortable with being handled. First, you should start by getting them used to being restrained. You can use a stand or rack to tie them up and practice getting them to stand still without moving. While your lamb is restrained, you should also practice touching and moving their legs. At first your lamb will kick and move away from you. However, with enough practice, your lamb will get used to your touch and will learn to stand still in whatever position you place them. Whenever you restrain your lamb you want to tie the halter in a slipknot. This type of knot allows for a quick and easy release in case you or your lamb is in danger. You should also never leave your lamb unattended while it is restrained.

## BRACING

When you brace your lamb, you want your lamb to push back against you so that their muscles tense. Firm lambs are most desirable by judges in the show ring because it indicates that there is more muscle than fat. Bracing can be practiced prior to show by utilizing a push block. Start by getting in the correct bracing position. Your hands, feet, and knees must be positioned correctly. To brace your lamb, stand in front of your lamb holding your lamb's head pointing upward into your arm. Next, place your knee in the lamb's breast or shoulder, and gently push against them. It is important not to pull your lamb by the neck, but to control the brace by lifting your lamb with your knee and upper thigh. When on the push block, slowly push your lamb back, toward the ledge. Don't let them completely fall off of the block, but allow one leg to slip off the ledge. Your lamb will be scared of falling off the block and will start to push back against you. If you don't have a push block, you can also back your lamb into a wall or a fence. When your lamb is pushed against the wall or fence, they won't have anywhere else to go but to drive forward back into you. Be cautious if you are using the fence method. Your lamb can get injured or cut from getting backed into the too hard or too repetitively.

*Pro Tip: Be patient. These techniques aren't learned overnight and will require some time and effort from both you and your lamb.*

# HOW TO SHOW

The purpose of showmanship is to present your lamb to the judge in a manner that emphasizes your lamb's strengths and disguises its weaknesses. In showmanship, you are being judged on your own ability to control and present your animal. This skill is not something that can be learned overnight. A good showman starts practicing showmanship with their lamb months in advance in order to train their lamb to lead and brace with control.



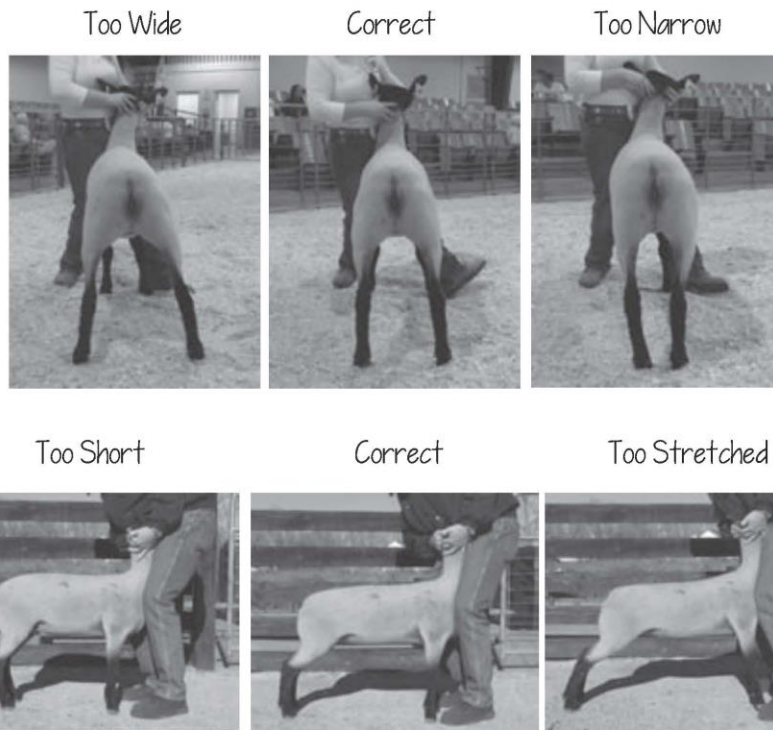
Pictures from, <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2828.pdf>

## LEADING YOUR LAMB

When you walk your lamb into the show ring, you are not allowed to use a halter. You must lead your lamb with your hands. Your left hand should be placed under the chin and your right hand should be behind your lamb's head, under the ears. This technique is pictured above. Your lamb will associate the pressure of your hands with the pressure they are used to feeling from their halter.

When you walk your lamb in the show ring, there may be a situation that arises that requires you to walk on the right side of your lamb. When you use a halter, you always walk on the left side of your lamb so you should practice leading your lamb using your hands on both sides. In the show ring, walk straight and at a moderate pace. You should always leave space between you and the exhibitor in front of you. As you walk, be observant of any signals or instructions coming from the judge, especially if you are leading your class (in other words, if you are the first one out into the ring).

Remember: Your lamb should always be in between you and the judge. You should never be blocking the judge from being able to look at your lamb. When you come to a stop, line up in a straight line. This ensures that the judge can see all of the other lambs as well as your own, which is good sportsmanship for show.



Pictures from, <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2828.pdf>

## POSITIONING YOUR LAMB'S FEET

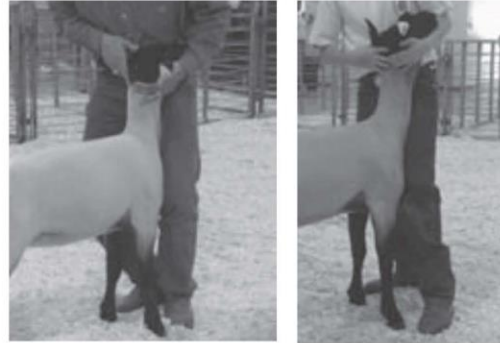
Whenever you come to a stop in the show ring, you must place your lamb's feet square. They should never be placed too narrow or too wide apart for either the front or back legs. When you look at the profile of your lamb, you should not overstretch their legs or be too short. The images above illustrate both the right and wrong way to set up your lamb's feet.

When you are setting up your lamb's feet, you should start by setting up the legs that are closest to the judge first. You can use your hands, boots, or knees as tools to set up your lamb. If you use your hand, simply grab the leg that needs to be fixed and place it in the intended spot. If you use your leg or boot, simply nudge or push the leg until it's in the correct spot. More advanced showers opt for picking up their lamb's with their knee or upper thigh and setting them down in the correct position.

## BRACING IN THE RING

Once you have your lamb set up, you need to be ready for the judge to come handle your lamb. You are ready when your lamb is bracing. The images to the right show proper bracing technique, which we discussed in the previous section. The only time you won't brace your lamb in the show ring, is when you are showing off the front of your lamb or when

you are leading your lamb around the show ring. When the judge comes to feel your lamb, push harder against your lamb so that the muscles tense even more. Usually after bracing, your lamb's feet will be out of place. When the judge is done handling your lamb and starts to walk away, you can reset the feet and legs.



Pictures from, <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2828.pdf>

## MOVING WITH THE JUDGE

The judge will walk around you and your animal periodically throughout the show. It is your responsibility to move in response to the judge's movements so that your lamb is always between you and the judge. You should maintain eye contact with the judge at all times so that you don't miss any of his movements, which will allow you to quickly respond. If the judge comes from the left side of your lamb, you should be on the right side of your lamb (and vice versa). So as the judge moves to the right side of your lamb, you should gracefully switch sides so that you are on the left side of your lamb. When you are changing sides, make sure to move around the front of your lamb and not the back. Also, as the judge pulls animals out of line, you should move forward to fill in the gaps. If you are the one pulled out of line, you should take the most direct path.

*Pro Tip: Watch these sheep showmanship videos to see what a real showmanship looks like.*

- 🐾 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Px9PiDKTrE>
- 🐾 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdI6P9n5CyQ>
- 🐾 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFhoCWUndMQ>
- 🐾 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyT9EBZq5\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyT9EBZq5_0)

# SHOWMANSHIP QUESTIONS

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Is your lamb a ewe or a wether?

---

2. How much does your lamb weigh?

---

3. When was your lamb born?

---

4. How much feed do you use?

---

5. What kind of feed do you use?

---

6. How much protein is in your feed?

---

7. What would you change about your lamb?

---

8. What is the best feature about your lamb?

---

9. Where is the (names a body part) on your lamb?

---

10. What breed is your lamb?

---

11. What is the average amount of back fat on a lamb?

---



12. Who was your lamb's breeder?

---

13. How is the yield grade determined?

---

14. How many parts are there to a lamb's stomach? Can you name them?

---

15. Name some meat breeds

---

16. Name some wool breeds

---

17. Name some dual purpose breeds

---

18. What are the 4 main cuts of a lamb?

---

19. Do lambs have teeth on their top jaw?

---

20. What is the most expensive cut of lamb?

---

21. How many teeth do sheep have?

---

22. What is the purpose of a scrapies tag?

---

23. What is the gestation period of a ewe?

---

# ANSWER KEY



1. Is your lamb a ewe or a wether? Ewe or Wether (Do not say boy or girl)
2. How much does your lamb weigh? Remember how much your lamb weighs at the fair's weigh in
3. When was your lamb born? You should be given your lambs birth date when you purchase your lamb from your breeder. If you don't know the exact date, make one up. At fair time lambs should be between 6-10 months old depending on the fair. So for example, if your fair is in September make up a birth date in February. Whatever date you choose, say it with confidence.
4. How much do you feed your lamb? Don't answer in number of scoops or coffee cans. Know specifically the unit such as pounds of feed. If you are using a coffee can to measure out your feed, a full can is equivalent to three pounds of feed.
5. What kind of feed do you use? For example Showmaster Start to Finish, High Noon, Show Edge, etc.
6. How much protein is in your feed? When you buy your feed you should be looking at the ingredients and reading the nutrient labels. However if you didn't look or don't remember make up a number that is close to reality. Typically protein in show feed averages about 16-18% crude protein. A judge will have no way to verify what value you give them is true but will know if you are in the right range.
7. What would you change about your lamb? The judge wants to see how well you know the features of your lamb and identifying its weaknesses. Answers vary but could be anything from a longer loin to a smoother shoulder. Make sure it is true for your lamb. Ask your teacher if you can't think of anything yourself.
8. What is the best feature about your lamb? Pick out a trait that you like most about your lamb. Just like the previous question make sure that it is true and ask a teacher for their advice. An example could be squareness of the rump or the width of the top.

9. Where is the (names a body part) on your lamb? Study the diagram on page \_\_\_\_\_. When asked this, make sure to point to the correct spot on your lamb where it is located.
10. What breed is your lamb? Example: Hampshire, Suffolk, Dorset, Speckle Faced, Natural
11. What is the average amount of back fat on a lamb? .255
12. Who was your lamb's breeder? Who did you buy your lamb from or what company
13. How is the yield grade determined?  $\text{Back fat} \times 10 + 4$
14. How many parts are there to a lamb's stomach? Can you name them? 4 parts: the rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum
15. Name some meat breeds Hampshire, Southdown, Suffolk, Dorset
16. Name some wool breeds Merino, Lincoln, Cotswold, Romney
17. Name some dual purpose breeds Dorset, Cheviot, Polpay, Romney, Columbia
18. What are the 4 main cuts of a lamb? Loin, leg, rack, and brisket
19. Do lambs have teeth on their top jaw? Yes there are molars in the back but they have no upper incisors
20. What is the most expensive cut of lamb? Rack
21. How many teeth do sheep have? 32 specifically 8 incisors and 24 molars

*Prop Tip: This is only a representation of some of the questions you may be asked in the show ring. It is not a complete list, nor does it represent every single thing you should know about lambs. The judges may ask you a number of questions but they will always have something to do with lambs. No matter what question you get asked, just do your best and have fun with it!*

## FITTING YOUR LAMB



Giving your lamb its best look can help it excel in the show ring. Prior to show, shearing your lamb should be kept to a minimum. You want to keep fleece on your lamb while it's at home so that your lamb's natural conditioner, lanolin, stays in the fleece. Lanolin will also protect your lamb from fungus and ringworm. The same goes for washing your lamb. Washing removes lanolin and so you should only wash your lamb the bare minimum. However, professionals do suggest that you wash the legs of your lamb, apply a conditioner, and brush the wool up more frequently. This method promotes the growth of the wool so come fair time, your lamb's legs will look fuller.

At fair, you should shear your lamb 24 to 48 hours before show time so that your lamb's fleece has time to set up. This will make your lamb's fleece appear more fresh, smooth, and natural. For market lambs, the wool should be short shorn so that all of the muscles can be seen. You should use surgical or super surgical blades. If it is your first time shearing, I would suggest using surgical blades so that you don't cut your lamb or leave red marks.

Pictured to the right is a shearing table. This is what you will be using to keep your lamb from moving while you shear. You should always shear in a horizontal motion. Start at the tail head and shear horizontally towards the chest. If you use longer strokes, the cut will look smoother. The only vertical strokes you should make is when you shear from the neck to the head and up the hock to the hip. Do not shear any wool off of your lamb's legs below the hock.



Picture from,  
[https://www.premier1supplies.com/img/newsletter/06-06-2013-sheep/6\\_6\\_13\\_63991.jpg](https://www.premier1supplies.com/img/newsletter/06-06-2013-sheep/6_6_13_63991.jpg)

Once you finish shearing the body of your lamb, you can shear the neck and the head. This works best if you have someone hold your lamb's head in between their legs as you shear. This will allow you to maneuver the lamb's head around so that you can work around the wrinkles on the neck. Remember to apply oil to your shears as you go and to spray the blades with coolant. The blades get really hot since shearing takes a decent amount of time. Hot blades will cause your lamb to be jumpy, which can subsequently cause you to cut your lamb or mess up a stroke.

On the day of the show, you will need to wash and fit your lamb one last time. You can wash your lamb using a variety of soaps. I always used the big containers of milk and honey hand soap, but you can also use real shampoo if you wish. After washing, it is a good idea to apply a conditioner to your lamb's fleece or spray your lamb with a freshening spray. This will help replenish moisture in the hide and will add a soft touch when the judge comes to feel your lamb.

The next thing you will need to do is brush and trim the legs. You want your legs to be completely dry before you brush them. Brush the legs in an upward motion using a card brush. A card brush will make the wool fluff up and appear fuller. Using trimming scissors, trim the wool to the same length. You can also shape the wool with the trimming scissors so that it looks square to the leg. Now that your lamb is clean and brushed, you are ready for showmanship!

### QUICK TIPS FOR SHOWTIME

- Be sure to know the show schedule and make sure that you are entered into the correct class.
- Be ready when your class is called. This means you AND your lamb.
- Don't forget to bring your show whites, boots, FFA jacket, and FFA scarf/tie.
- Last, but certainly not least, HAVE FUN WITH IT! This is your time to shine!

## CONGRATULATIONS

### YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED YOUR MARKET LAMB PROJECT

Your final task is to update or complete your SAE Record Book. I hope that you found this handbook useful and that you enjoyed the experience. See you again next fair season!



## **Chapter Five**

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

The purpose of this project was to create a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) handbook for students interested in raising a market lamb for their county fair. This chapter includes recommendations from the author to consider when creating or revising guides in the future and a reflection discussing the outcome of the project.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Create a timeline for your project and set concrete deadlines for yourself. Make a goal of how many sections you want to have completed each week. This will hold you accountable to complete your handbook at a moderate pace and prevent you from procrastinating.
2. Allow time for feedback. Had the author started the development of the project at an earlier time, it would have been beneficial to send out a survey to current agriculture teachers or club lamb advisors to receive their feedback on how to improve the handbook or what other information to include. A survey would also allow the author to get a more accurate sense of the outcome of the project.
3. Work with a program that you are already comfortable with, don't try to learn something new. The author attempted to use InDesign at first, but ultimately wound up using Microsoft Word to design the handbook. The project went much smoother once the author was using a program she was most familiar with.

4. Keep in mind that students have different learning styles. Try to include text, visual aids, diagrams, charts, videos, and etc. to appeal to all types of learners.

## **Conclusions**

The development of the handbook, “How to Raise Your Market Lamb: A Project Guide,” was a success since it accomplished the objectives stated in Chapter One. The design of the handbook itself is fun, creative, easy to follow and allows students to locate information regarding their market lamb projects from one complete source. This handbook shall serve as an educational resource for agriculture students and teachers. The author feels that the handbook is up to date with current industry information and trends. However, it is suggested that the handbook be updated as trends change in future years. The author hopes that this handbook will guide novice exhibitors successfully through their fair experience.

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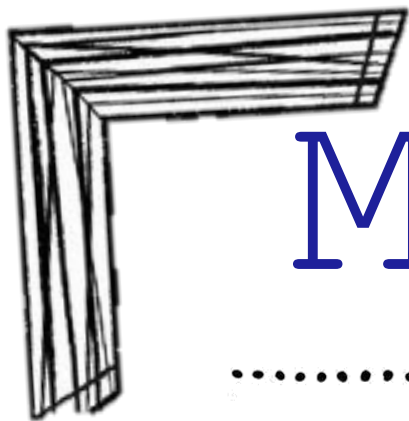
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## **Appendix**

### **How to Raise Your Market Lamb: A Project Guide**



# How to Market



## A Project

This Booklet

Belongs to,

Name;



Picture from, <http://www.kateandersonphotodesign.com/lovely-little-lambs/>

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Picture from, <http://www.babble.com/home/little-darlings-from-sharon-montrose/>

# Overview

Congratulations! You have decided to raise a market lamb for your local fair. You will soon discover that raising a lamb is a fun and rewarding experience. All of the memories that you make will be well worth the long hours and hard work that you put into your project. You may have some doubts and fears about what you are getting yourself into, but this handbook was created to help you with your project. It will answer questions you may have beginning with the time you first pick out your lamb, all the way up to showing your lamb at fair.

So first things first, where do you purchase your market lamb? Lambs can be bought through private club lamb producers or through public livestock sales. Before you purchase a lamb, it is important to find out the date of the fair that you plan on entering your lamb in to show. Lambs can only be shown when they reach a certain age and weight range. This means that show dates determine when you need to purchase your lamb. Meet with your FFA advisor and come up with a game plan together! Your advisor will know when you should start looking to purchase a lamb. They can also help you find someone to purchase a lamb from and may even go with you to pick out your lamb! I hope that you make the best out of this experience, and don't forget to have fun!

Good Luck in the show ring!

- Meagan Dunlap  
Author

*Note: The information contained in this handbook act as guidelines to help you make decisions about your project. You may need to make modifications outside of the guidelines in this book to fit the specific needs of your project. But don't forget! Your FFA advisor will always be there to help you. Don't be afraid to go to them with your questions and concerns.*

# Breeds

There are more than 50 breeds of sheep in the United States and more than 1,000 in the world. Each breed has certain traits that make it a better fit for certain markets (such as meat, wool, milk or cheese). When selecting a market lamb, it is important to choose a breed known for producing high quality meat. This section will describe the five most popular market breeds that are shown at fairs. They are: Suffolk, Hampshire, Dorset, Speckle-Faced, and "Natural".

## Suffolk



Picture from,  
<http://www.ujssa.org/RESULTS/naile/2012/peck-annuschat.JPG>

Suffolk's represent the largest sheep breed in the United States. They have bare black legs and faces. They are well known for having the fastest growth rate of all terminal breeds. They also have high cutability (which makes their meat excellent for the food market).

## Hampshire

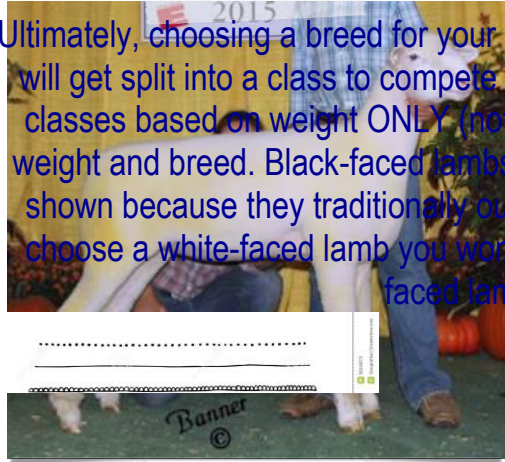


Picture from,  
<http://www.otclublambs.com/winners/2014%20fully%20loaded.jpg>

Hampshire's are the second largest terminal sire in the United States. They have black faces with a wool cap on top of their head. They are known for their rapid growth and efficient feed conversion. They also have large, lean carcasses.

*Pro Tip: To tell the difference between a Hampshire and a Suffolk, see if there is wool on the legs or head. A Hampshire will have white wool, where as a Suffolk will be bare and black.*

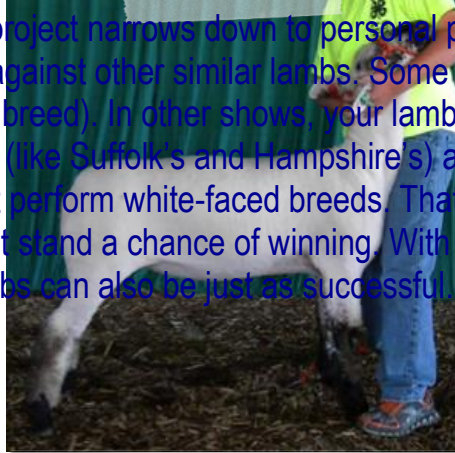
# Dorset



Picture from, <http://www.thebige.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Polled-Dorset-Jr-Show-Res-Ch-Ewe.jpg>

Dorset's are the number one white-faced breed in the United States. They are a medium size, all white breed with wool down their legs. They have a moderate growth rate but good body length and heavy muscling. They are most known for their lambing abilities. Dorset ewes can have lambs twice a year (compared to only once a year for other sheep breeds).

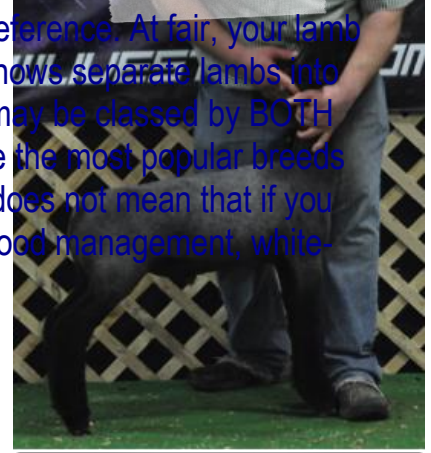
# Speckle-



Picture from, <http://netzkebrothers.com/netskelambs/images/2013/august%202013/Redwood%20Oversall%20Ewe%20Champ.JPG>

Speckle-faced lambs have black and white spotted faces free of wool. Their legs also have black and white spotted features. They are good mothers and produce plenty of milk. They are often crossbred with Suffolk's or Texel's to produce lambs with good quality meat.

# Natural

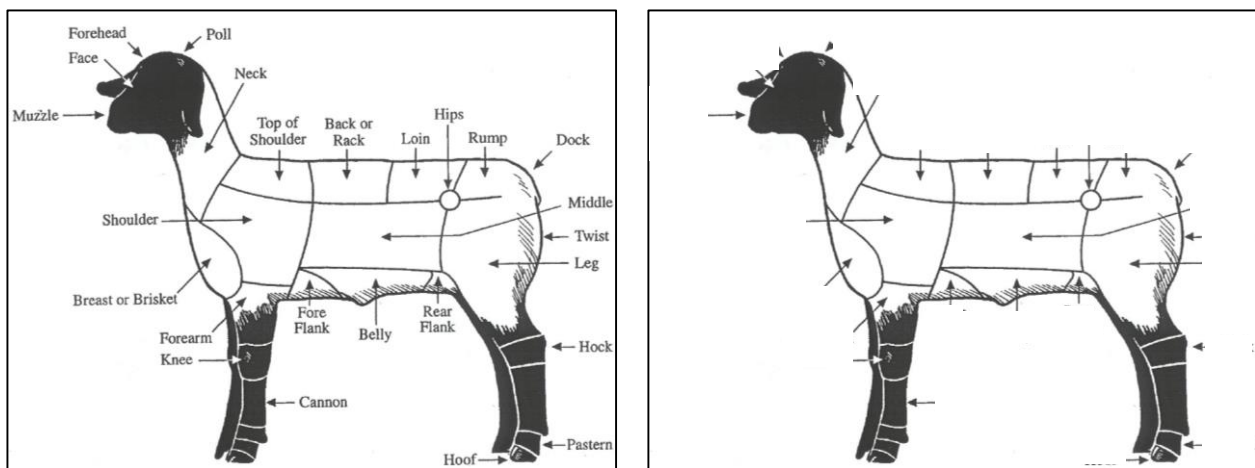


Picture from, [http://www.showbarnflix.com/results/images/class42\\_2nd\\_lot922.JPG](http://www.showbarnflix.com/results/images/class42_2nd_lot922.JPG)

"Natural's" are not a lamb breed. Lambs that fall in the "natural" class can be from several different breeds. Natural colored lambs are essentially lambs that are not white. In most shows, they have to be 50% black in order to qualify as "natural." Fun fact: all lambs used to be "natural colored." White lambs were selected and bred for because of our ability to dye white wool different colors.

# Selection

To help you understand the various parts of a lamb referenced in this section of the text, the following figures were included. We will be discussing some of these parts in terms of how they should be structured, which is an important part of the selection process. Try covering the picture with the terms on the left and use your memory to fill in the blanks on the picture to the right. This exercise will also help you answer showmanship question #9, located on page 18!



Picture from, <http://fyi.uwex.edu/fdlmeat/files/2009/09/SheepQuizBowlStudyGuide.pdf>

There are many factors to look at and consider when selecting a lamb. These factors include: overall muscling and potential for growth, structural correctness, and balance or eye appeal. These are some of the same factors that judges will be looking for when you show your lamb at fair. Selecting a lamb with a solid frame and structure will help you do well in the show ring.

**Muscling:** Pick a lamb that feels firmer than others. This may be hard to detect since you will be picking your lamb at an early age when there is more potential for muscle than actual muscle development. Good indicators of the potential for muscle development are a level and square rump, and good width at the pin bones (or dock). Also, a lamb that stands or walks wide will generally be more muscled. Next, look closely at the muscling on the legs and rump. These parts are the higher priced cuts of meat and should have more muscle.

The length of the loin is also important. To measure the length of the loin, feel for the lamb's last two ribs and then measure with your fingers from the last two ribs to the hook bone. The longer the loin the better!

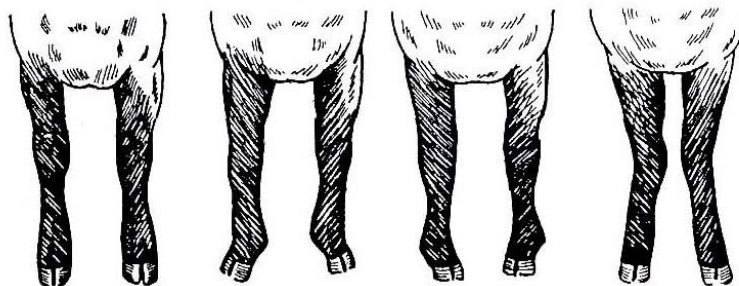
**Structural Correctness:** This is the lamb's ability to maintain a proper skeletal design as it stands and moves about the pen. What you want to look for in terms of structure include:

- A long and level top
- Square hips
- Strong pasterns and stance
- And a hoof size that is compatible with the frame size

The figure to the right shows the most common abnormalities in structure that can occur with a lamb's feet and legs. The correct structure is also pictured and is what you should look for when picking out your lamb.

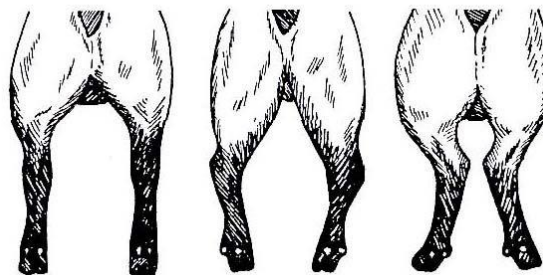
**Balance:** This is the overall completeness of the lamb and how well the lamb blends together. You want a lamb that appears smooth, level, and straight.

### Front View



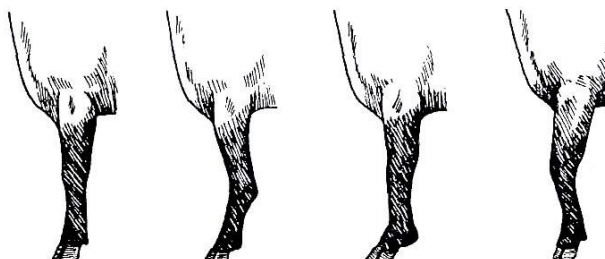
Correct      Splay-footed      Pigeon-toed      Knock-kneed

### Rear View



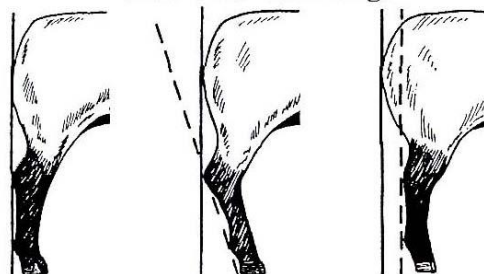
Correct      Bow-legged      Cow-hooked

### Side View Front Legs



Correct      Calf-kneed      Weak Pasterns      Buck-kneed

### Side View Rear Legs



Correct      Sickle-Hocked      Post-legged

Picture from,  
<https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/4h/Animals/gbj166.pdf>

*Pro Tip: Ask your FFA advisor to go with you to purchase your lamb. They can help point out good qualities when you select which lamb to take home.*

# Facilities

Whether you choose to raise your lamb at home or at your school farm, it is crucial to maintain a good housing area. Your lamb should have an indoor pen space where it can escape from cold and wet conditions, as well as a larger outdoor pen space where it can get fresh air and exercise throughout the day. Your pen should be well ventilated, dry, and clean. A clean environment keeps your lamb healthy and happy.

When you first move into your new pen, you should clean the pen of any leftover debris from the previous inhabitant. It is a good idea to also bleach the infrastructure of the pen, including the fence and gate. This will kill any bacteria or fungus that could possibly be present.

The type of pen surface may vary between facilities but is typically a mix of dirt and concrete. Concrete slabs should be scraped and hosed off regularly, and any dirt surface should be raked and shoveled to remove feces or feed that has gotten into the pen. You may choose to provide your lamb with additional bedding on top of the pen surface to improve your lamb's comfort and performance. Beddings can include either wood shavings or straw, but wood shavings are most recommended. Cedar shavings in particular tend to be the healthiest for lambs because of the large particle size and low dust level. No matter what bedding you choose, it should be replaced at least weekly or more frequently depending on the amount of moisture and feces that has built up.

In the indoor pen space, you should provide your lamb with water either in a trough or gallon buckets. The buckets should be kept out of the sun so that the water remains cool. Water containers should be drained, cleaned and replaced on a regular daily basis.



Picture from, <http://www.theanimalprintshop.com/lamb-no.-2/>

# Equipment

## The Lamb Expert Shopping



Picture from,  
<http://www.raisingssheep.net/uploads/1/3/5/3/13538303/551673.jpg?349>



Picture from,  
<http://www.showstopperequipment.com/userfiles/lambtube.jpg>



Picture from,  
[https://www.valleyvet.com/group\\_images/32555\\_A.jpg](https://www.valleyvet.com/group_images/32555_A.jpg)

- ☐ Halter
- ☐ Feed Bucket
- ☐ Gallon Bucket for Water
- ☐ Sock/Blanket
- ☐ Hoof Trimmer\*
- ☐ Drench gun
- ☐ Wheelbarrow\*
- ☐ Show Box
- ☐ Fly Spray
- ☐ Bath Towels
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Blow Dryer
- ☐ Syringes\*
- ☐ Livestock Scale\*
- ☐ Rake/Shovel/ Thing\*
- ☐ Hose\*
- ☐ Wool Card\*
- ☐ Shears and Blades\*
- ☐ Trimming Stand\*
- ☐ Clippers\*
- ☐ Fan\*



Picture from,  
[http://www.jefferspet.com/product\\_images/sheep-goat-poly-rope-halter-color-red/](http://www.jefferspet.com/product_images/sheep-goat-poly-rope-halter-color-red/)



Picture from,  
[https://www.valleyvet.com/group\\_images/37716\\_A.jpg](https://www.valleyvet.com/group_images/37716_A.jpg)



Picture from,  
[https://s7d2.scene7.com/is/image/homedepotcanada/p\\_1000779545.jpg](https://s7d2.scene7.com/is/image/homedepotcanada/p_1000779545.jpg)

*Pro Tip: Items marked with an asterisk are typically provided to students by the agriculture department if you are raising a lamb at the school facility. However, if you are raising your lamb at home, make sure that you have this equipment available to you.*

# Nutrition

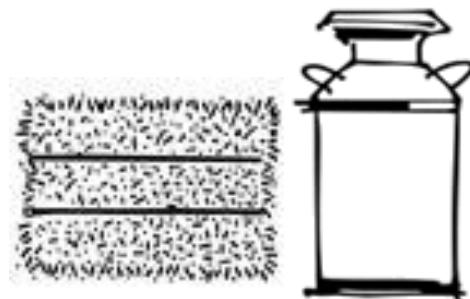
Lambs belong to the ruminant family because they are able to get their nutrients from plant-based foods by fermenting it in their specialized stomach prior to digestion. In simpler terms, they are able to take low quality food and get high quality nutrients. In a ruminant digestive system, the stomach is divided into four compartments: the Rumen, Reticulum, Omasum, and Abomasum.

The basic components of nutrition to maintain your lamb's health and increase growth are: water, energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. Water is the most important of all nutrients, so you should make sure that there is fresh water in your lamb's pen each day. As discussed earlier, you will need a gallon bucket or two in your pen (this depends on how many lambs you are going to be sharing a pen with). During the hot summer months, it is particularly important to make sure that your lamb is getting enough water to drink.

The primary component of your lamb's diet is grain. Grain is a concentrate that provides a rich source of energy. Your lamb will need this energy to grow and to train for fair. Most feeds are considered a "total mixed ration," which means that the grain is mixed in with all of the other nutrients your lamb needs. Protein, vitamins and minerals are the other components that are included in a total mixed ration. Protein is crucial for market lambs because of how fast they grow and the amount of muscle they are building. The best show feeds to purchase for market lambs contain around 18% protein.

Forages like grass, weeds, hay, and silage are most natural for lambs to consume and therefore, must be fed to your lamb as well. Alfalfa is the best forage to feed since it is a higher quality hay. Forages, like alfalfa, keep your lamb's stomach working properly and the pH of the stomach regulated. Problems can occur if you introduce too much grain into your lamb's diet at one time or if you increase the amount of grain too quickly. Too much grain causes a large amount of lactic acid to be produced in the rumen and thus the pH of the rumen drops. This can be dangerous to the health of your lamb.

*Pro Tip: Grain must be introduced into the diet slowly to give the rumen time to adjust to the changes.*





Pictures from, Google images (lamb feed)

The brand of show feed that is available to you at your local feed store will vary by region and by distributor. All of the feeds pictured above are considered total mixed rations and were specifically formulated for lambs being raised to show. Your local feed store may carry one or all of these feeds. When you go to pick out your feed, make sure to read the nutrition labels on each bag. Specifically, you will want to look for and compare the amount of protein and the amount of fatty ingredients like molasses. Molasses is added into feed to increase the palatability of the ration so that your lamb will want to eat lots of it. However, feed with a higher protein content and lower fat content is going to be the best choice. You want your lamb to build muscle for most of the time that you are raising your lamb. You don't want your lamb to put on very much fat until the very end. Right before fair, your lamb should have a thin layer of fat covering all of the muscle it has grown. This is called a finish and is a desirable trait for market lambs to have.

Lastly, when you first purchase your lamb it will weigh around 50 pounds. By the end of your project it can weigh anywhere from 100 to 160 pounds. You must regularly weigh your animal (at least once a week) to make sure that it is properly gaining weight at a moderate pace. You don't want your animal to weigh too light or too heavy when you get to fair. Fairs have strict weight qualifications and anything outside what they determine to be the acceptable weight range is automatically disqualified. This means that you won't be able to show your lamb or sell it at the auction. I suggest recording your lamb's weight in a log or journal every time that you weigh your animal. You can keep this log in your show box so that it is in a safe place and can be easily accessed.



# Diseases and Treatments



A basic understanding of some of the most common diseases that can occur amongst lambs can help you diagnose and treat your lamb before the problem escalates and becomes most severe. Poor health can lead to poor performance in your lamb so it is best to diagnose and treat your lamb early.

A healthy lamb will have:

- A body temperature of 102.8 degrees F
- A pulse of 75 beats per minute
- And a breathing rate of 20 breaths per minute

When you purchase your lamb, ask your buyer about his health program and vaccination schedule. Most buyers vaccinate their lambs before they sell them to you but some vaccinations require a booster shot a couple weeks later that you may be responsible for. Also, you will most likely need to do another round of deworming once you get your lamb home. Dewormers are given orally and can be purchased over the counter at your local feed store. This will protect your lamb from parasites that typically get into the digestive system causing tremendous problems, even death.

A list of more serious health problems that can arise amongst lambs appears in the table provided on the next page. The table lists the disease, its' cause, signs and symptoms, and possible treatments.

*Pro Tip: When in doubt, consult your FFA advisor or a veterinarian.*

Disease	Cause	Signs & Symptoms	Treatment
Rectal Prolapse	Docking tail too short, coughing, scours, sex/pregnancy	Bright red tissue will protrude from anus during coughing or straining	Varies depending on severity and stage. Injections around the rectum and a purse string suture around the anus can be used until slaughter but is not a cure
Pink Eye	Caused by many different organisms like Moraxella and Chlamydia; Very contagious	Corneal ulcer in the middle of the eye, swelling and redness to eyelid, crust around eye	tetracyclines injected either in the body or directly placed on the eye; penicillin dropped directly on the eye
Scours	Caused by bacteria, parasites, and viruses; abrupt feed changes or stress	Abnormal fluidity of fecal excretion, dehydration and lameness	Electrolytes and rehydration
Soremouth	Pox Virus	Sores on the mouth, scabs, blisters	Live virus vaccine available, iodine solution applied to scours
Urinary Calculi	Increased levels of calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and potassium in the diet	Painful swollen penis, infrequent, or irregular urination to no urination, bloating	Oral dose of ammonium chloride, consult veterinarian if no changes
Enterotoxemia or “Overeating” disease	Clostridial perfringens C & D	Convulsions or sudden death	Vaccination, administration of C & D antitoxens, injection of penicillin
Hoof Rot	Anaerobic bacteria from wet conditions	Lameness, limping, and odor	Trim hooves, apply antibiotic ointment, maintain dry conditions, foot baths
Pneumonia	Multiple bacteria, stress, viruses, improper ventilation (dust)	Fever, cough, abnormal or difficulty breathing, nasal discharge	Various antibiotic treatments depending on cause

<p><b>Fungus &amp; ringworm</b></p>	<p>Trichophyton fungi, exposure to contagious fungus, frequent washing and shearing can also be a cause because it removes protective oils</p>	<p>Circular, thick flakey lesions (when healed it should turn black)</p>	<p>Topical anti-fungal ointments or tractor oil sprayed directly on fungus spot which causes the fungus to suffocate and die</p>
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# Exercise and Training



The following exercises should be practiced daily. Try training your lamb for at least 20 minutes each day in the beginning. As you get closer to fair, you may want to spend more time training your lamb. The more time that you spend training your lamb, the better your lamb will behave in the show ring, and the more success you will have controlling it.

## Halter Breaking

The first thing you should train your lamb to do is to lead with a halter. To lead means to guide your lamb forward without using force. The two most popular types of halters to use are the soft braided rope halters and the nylon buckled halters. These halters can easily be adjusted to fit your specific lamb. It is important to put the halter on correctly. The halter lead should come up from under your lamb's chin and into your hand on the left hand side of your lamb's head.

To begin halter breaking, try taking your lamb on walks. Your lamb will fight the halter at first pulling backward. You can apply some pressure to the rope, but don't tug too hard. If your lamb still isn't walking, you can "goose" your lamb. This is where you apply slight pressure to its' dock or tail with one hand while leading with your other hand. Begin with short walks at first, sticking close to your lamb's pen. As your lamb gets more comfortable with the halter, increase the length of your path and go on longer walks.

## Exercise

Simply walking your lamb around with its' halter won't be enough exercise to develop the most muscle. In addition to walks, your lamb needs to run. You may run with your lamb on a track, or if you have access to an enclosed field, you can let your lamb loose and have a dog (or yourself) chase it around in circles. Some exhibitors will even go so far as to provide their lambs with a treadmill for exercise. No matter what method you choose, some type of additional exercise program is necessary to build muscle shape.

## Getting Your Lamb Used to Being Handled

In the show ring it is important to have control of your animal, so your lamb needs to get comfortable with being handled. First, you should start by getting them used to being restrained. You can use a stand or rack to tie them up and practice getting them to stand still without moving. While your lamb is restrained, you should also practice touching and moving their legs. At first your lamb will kick and move away from you. However, with enough practice, your lamb will get used to your touch and will learn to stand still in whatever position you place them. Whenever you restrain your lamb you want to tie the halter in a slipknot. This type of knot allows for a quick and easy release in case you or your lamb is in danger. You should also never leave your lamb unattended while it is restrained.

## Bracing

When you brace your lamb, you want your lamb to push back against you so that their muscles tense. Firm lambs are most desirable by judges in the show ring because it indicates that there is more muscle than fat. Bracing can be practiced prior to show by utilizing a push block. Start by getting in the correct bracing position. Your hands, feet, and knees must be positioned correctly. To brace your lamb, stand in front of your lamb holding your lamb's head pointing upward into your arm. Next, place your knee in the lambs breast or shoulder, and gently push against them. It is important not to pull your lamb by the neck, but to control the brace by lifting your lamb with your knee and upper thigh. When on the push block, slowly push your lamb back, toward the ledge. Don't let them completely fall off of the block, but allow one leg to slip off the ledge. Your lamb will be scared of falling off the block and will start to push back against you. If you don't have a push block, you can also back your lamb into a wall or a fence. When your lamb is pushed against the wall or fence, they won't have anywhere else to go but to drive forward back into you. Be cautious if you are using the fence method. Your lamb can get injured or cut from getting backed into the too hard or too repetitively.

*Pro Tip: Be patient. These techniques aren't learned overnight and will require some time and effort from both you and your lamb.*

# How to Show

The purpose of showmanship is to present your lamb to the judge in a manner that emphasizes your lamb's strengths and disguises its weaknesses. In showmanship, you are being judged on your own ability to control and present your animal. This skill is not something that can be learned overnight. A good showman starts practicing showmanship with their lamb months in advance in order to train their lamb to lead and brace with control.



Pictures from, <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2828.pdf>

## Leading your lamb

When you walk your lamb into the show ring, you are not allowed to use a halter. You must lead your lamb with your hands. Your left hand should be placed under the chin and your right hand should be behind your lamb's head, under the ears. This technique is pictured above. Your lamb will associate the pressure of your hands with the pressure they are used to feeling from their halter.

When you walk your lamb in the show ring, there may be a situation that arises that requires you to walk on the right side of your lamb. When you use a halter, you always walk on the left side of your lamb so you should practice leading your lamb using your hands on both sides. In the show ring, walk straight and at a moderate pace. You should always leave space between you and the exhibitor in front of you. As you walk, be observant of any signals or instructions coming from the judge, especially if you are leading your class (in other words, if you are the first one out into the ring).

Remember: Your lamb should always be in between you and the judge. You should never be blocking the judge from being able to look at your lamb. When you come to a stop, line up in a straight line. This ensures that the judge can see all of the other lambs as well as your own, which is good sportsmanship for show.

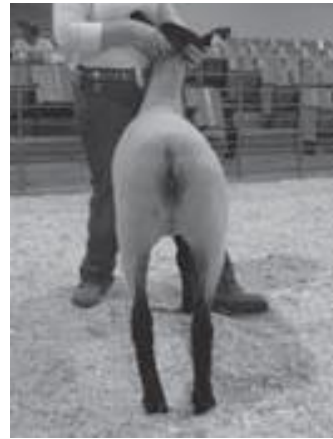
Too Wide



Correct



Too Narrow



Too Short



Correct



Too Stretched



Pictures from, <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2828.pdf>

## Positioning your lamb's feet

Whenever you come to a stop in the show ring, you must place your lamb's feet square. They should never be placed too narrow or too wide apart for either the front or back legs. When you look at the profile of your lamb, you should not overstretch their legs or be too short. The images above illustrate both the right and wrong way to set up your lamb's feet.

When you are setting up your lamb's feet, you should start by setting up the legs that are closest to the judge first. You can use your hands, boots, or knees as tools to set up your lamb. If you use your hand, simply grab the leg that needs to be fixed and place it in the intended spot. If you use your leg or boot, simply nudge or push the leg until it's in the correct spot. More advanced showers opt for picking up their lamb's with their knee or upper thigh and setting them down in the correct position.

## Bracing in the ring

Once you have your lamb set up, you need to be ready for the judge to come handle your lamb. You are ready when your lamb is bracing. The images to the right show proper bracing technique, which we discussed in the previous section. The only time you won't brace your lamb in the show ring, is when you are showing off the front of your lamb or when



Pictures from, <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2828.pdf>

you are leading your lamb around the show ring. When the judge comes to feel your lamb, push harder against your lamb so that the muscles tense even more. Usually after bracing, your lamb's feet will be out of place. When the judge is done handling your lamb and starts to walk away, you can reset the feet and legs.

## Moving with the judge

The judge will walk around you and your animal periodically throughout the show. It is your responsibility to move in response to the judge's movements so that your lamb is always between you and the judge. You should maintain eye contact with the judge at all times so that you don't miss any of his movements, which will allow you to quickly respond. If the judge comes from the left side of your lamb, you should be on the right side of your lamb (and vice versa). So as the judge moves to the right side of your lamb, you should gracefully switch sides so that you are on the left side of your lamb. When you are changing sides, make sure to move around the front of your lamb and not the back. Also, as the judge pulls animals out of line, you should move forward to fill in the gaps. If you are the one pulled out of line, you should take the most direct path.

*Pro Tip: Watch these sheep showmanship videos to see what a real showmanship looks like.*

- 🐑 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Px9Pi1DKTrE>
- 🐑 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ndl6P9n5CyQ>
- 🐑 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfh0CWUndMQ>
- 🐑 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyT9EBZq5\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyT9EBZq5_0)

# Showmanship Questions

## Test Your Knowledge

1. Is your lamb a ewe or a wether?

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2. How much does your lamb weigh?

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3. When was your lamb born?

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4. How much feed do you use?

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5. What kind of feed do you use?

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6. How much protein is in your feed?

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7. What would you change about your lamb?

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8. What is the best feature about your lamb?

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9. Where is the (names a body part) on your lamb?

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12. Who was your lamb's breeder?

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13. How is the yield grade determined?

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14. How many parts are there to a lambs stomach? Can you name them?

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15. Name some meat breeds

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16. Name some wool breeds

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17. Name some dual purpose breeds

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18. What are the 4 main cuts of a lamb?

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19. Do lambs have teeth on their top jaw?

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20. What is the most expensive cut of lamb?

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21. How many teeth do sheep have?

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# Answer Key

1. Is your lamb a ewe or a wether? Ewe or Wether (Do not say boy or girl)
2. How much does your lamb weigh? Remember how much your lamb weighs at the fair's weigh in
3. When was your lamb born? You should be given your lambs birth date when you purchase your lamb from your breeder. If you don't know the exact date, make one up. At fair time lambs should be between 6-10 months old depending on the fair. So for example, if your fair is in September make up a birth date in February. Whatever date you choose, say it with confidence.
4. How much do you feed your lamb? Don't answer in number of scoops or coffee cans. Know specifically the unit such as pounds of feed. If you are using a coffee can to measure out your feed, a full can is equivalent to three pounds of feed.
5. What kind of feed do you use? For example Showmaster Start to Finish, High Noon, Show Edge, etc.
6. How much protein is in your feed? When you buy your feed you should be looking at the ingredients and reading the nutrient labels. However if you didn't look or don't remember make up a number that is close to reality. Typically protein in show feed averages about 16-18% crude protein. A judge will have no way to verify what value you give them is true but will know if you are in the right range.
7. What would you change about your lamb? The judge wants to see how well you know the features of your lamb and identifying its weaknesses. Answers vary but could be anything from a longer loin to a smoother shoulder. Make sure it is true for your lamb. Ask your teacher if you can't think of anything yourself.
8. What is the best feature about your lamb? Pick out a trait that you like most about your lamb. Just like the previous question make sure that it is true and ask a teacher for their advice. An example could be squareness of the rump or the width of the top.

9. Where is the (names a body part) on your lamb? Study the diagram on page \_\_\_\_\_. When asked this, make sure to point to the correct spot on your lamb where it is located.
10. What breed is your lamb? Example: Hampshire, Suffolk, Dorset, Speckle Faced, Natural
11. What is the average amount of back fat on a lamb? .255
12. Who was your lamb's breeder? Who did you buy your lamb from or what company
13. How is the yield grade determined? Back fat X 10 + 4
14. How many parts are there to a lambs stomach? Can you name them? 4 parts: the rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum
15. Name some meat breeds Hampshire, Southdown, Suffolk, Dorset
16. Name some wool breeds Merino, Lincoln, Cotswold, Romney
17. Name some dual purpose breeds Dorset, Cheviot, Polpay, Romney, Columbia
18. What are the 4 main cuts of a lamb? Loin, leg, rack, and brisket
19. Do lambs have teeth on their top jaw? Yes there are molars in the back but they have no upper incisors
20. What is the most expensive cut of lamb? Rack
21. How many teeth do sheep have? 32 specifically 8 incisors and 24 molars
22. What is the purpose of a scrapies tag? In order to trace the disease scrapies back to the farm where the lamb was bought
23. What is the gestation period of a ewe? 5 months or an average of 147 days

*Prop Tip: This is only a representation of some of the questions you may be asked in the show ring. It is not a complete list, nor does it represent every single thing you should know about lambs. The judges may ask you a number of questions but they will always have something to do with lambs. No matter what question you get asked, just do your best and have fun with it!*

# Fitting your Lamb



Giving your lamb its best look can help it excel in the show ring. Prior to show, shearing your lamb should be kept to a minimum. You want to keep fleece on your lamb while it's at home so that your lamb's natural conditioner, lanolin, stays in the fleece. Lanolin will also protect your lamb from fungus and ringworm. The same goes for washing your lamb. Washing removes lanolin and so you should only wash your lamb the bare minimum. However, professionals do suggest that you wash the legs of your lamb, apply a conditioner, and brush the wool up more frequently. This method promotes the growth of the wool so come fair time, your lamb's legs will look fuller.

At fair, you should shear your lamb 24 to 48 hours before show time so that your lamb's fleece has time to set up. This will make your lamb's fleece appear more fresh, smooth, and natural. For market lambs, the wool should be short shorn so that all of the muscles can be seen. You should use surgical or super surgical blades. If it is your first time shearing, I would suggest using surgical blades so that you don't cut your lamb or leave red marks.

Pictured to the right is a shearing table. This is what you will be using to keep your lamb from moving while you shear. You should always shear in a horizontal motion. Start at the tail head and shear horizontally towards the chest. If you use longer strokes, the cut will look smoother. The only vertical strokes you should make is when you shear from the neck to the head and up the hock to the hip. Do not shear any wool off of your lamb's legs below the hock.



Picture from,  
[https://www.premier1supplies.com/img/newsletter/06-06-2013-sheep/6\\_6\\_13\\_63991.jpg](https://www.premier1supplies.com/img/newsletter/06-06-2013-sheep/6_6_13_63991.jpg)

Once you finish shearing the body of your lamb, you can shear the neck and the head. This works best if you have someone hold your lamb's head in between their legs as you shear. This will allow you to maneuver the lamb's head around so that you can work around the wrinkles on the neck. Remember to apply oil to your shears as you go and to spray the blades with coolant. The blades get really hot since shearing takes a decent amount of time. Hot blades will cause your lamb to be jumpy, which can subsequently cause you to cut your lamb or mess up a stroke.

On the day of the show, you will need to wash and fit your lamb one last time. You can wash your lamb using a variety of soaps. I always used the big containers of milk and honey hand soap, but you can also use real shampoo if you wish. After washing, it is a good idea to apply a conditioner to your lamb's fleece or spray your lamb with a freshening spray. This will help replenish moisture in the hide and will add a soft touch when the judge comes to feel your lamb.

The next thing you will need to do is brush and trim the legs. You want your legs to be completely dry before you brush them. Brush the legs in an upward motion using a card brush. A card brush will make the wool fluff up and appear fuller. Using trimming scissors, trim the wool to the same length. You can also shape the wool with the trimming scissors so that it looks square to the leg. Now that your lamb is clean and brushed, you are ready for showmanship!

## Quick Tips For Showtime

- Be sure to know the show schedule and make sure that you are entered into the correct class.
- Be ready when your class is called. This means you AND your lamb.
- Don't forget to bring your show whites, boots, FFA jacket, and FFA scarf/tie.
- Last, but certainly not least, HAVE FUN WITH IT! This is your time to shine!

# Congratulations

You have successfully completed your Market Lamb

Your final task is to update or complete your SAE Record Book. I hope that you found this handbook useful and that you enjoyed the experience. See you again next fair season!

