

Guidelines for Classification of Market Lambs

Black Faced Crossbreds

Black Faced Crossbreds are a cross between two black face breeds. A variety of wool, ear, head, and body structure characteristics are acceptable.

Cheviot

Cheviot is a small-framed mutton breed characterized by their unique, erect ears. Rams in good condition mature at 160 to 200 pounds and ewes from 130 to 170 pounds. Cheviot heads should be carried high with the ears erect and forward. The muzzle should be slightly arched, covered in fine white hair. The nose and eyes should be dark in color. There should be no wool on the head in front of the ears. They should be covered in clean, white wool, with no wool extending below the knees and hocks. Hooves should be black in color. Though Cheviots are a smaller framed breed, Cheviots still produce quality carcasses.

Cheviot Breed Defects:

1. Solid pink nose
2. White hooves
3. Long ears and/or extremely long neck
4. Excessive brown or black hair (more than 25%)
5. Wool cap
6. Wool below the knees
7. Horns or solid scurs
8. Absence of white hair (frosting) on face and legs of black lambs
9. Steep hip and a genetic tendency to be double-muscle

Columbia

Columbia sheep are a white-faced wool breed developed in the early 1900's in the United States in Laramie, Wyoming. Columbia are a large-framed breed with rams ranging from 225-300 pounds, and ewes ranging from 150-225 pounds. The average fleece weighs 10 to 16 lbs, with a staple length of 3-6 inches. Columbia are expected to be large-framed with a rugged bone, and ample fleece production. They should possess pink pigment on the nose and ears; additionally they should have yellow hooves free of any dark pigmentation, much like that of the Dorset breed. Emphasis should be placed on fleece production and quality when evaluating Columbia sheep.

Columbia Breed Defects:

1. Scurs
2. Solid black nose or pigmented ears
3. Excessive (more than 25%) black or brown hair
4. Short thin ears
5. Open face or absence of wool cap
6. Absence of wool below hock or knee
7. Horns
8. Steep hip and a genetic tendency to be double muscled

Corriedale

The Corriedale is a dual-purpose breed that is known not only for its carcass traits, but for their ample fleece production as well. Mature rams will weigh from 175 to 275 pounds, ewe weights range from 130 to 180 pounds. The head should be polled with a wool cap, and white hair on the ears. The nostrils and eye pigment should be dark in color. Corriedale fleece should be high-yielding and uniform over the body. Their wool should be solid white and contain no discolorations. Legs should be well balanced and have some wool extending below the knee and hock with dark coloring in the hooves.

Corriedale Breed Defects:

1. Scurs
2. Brown spots on the ears
3. Brown or black spots (in the hair) on the head or legs
4. Minor deviation from the ideal conformation, or breed characteristics
5. Horns
6. Black and/or brown spots in the wool
7. Solid black nose and all white hooves
8. Steep hip and a genetic tendency to be double muscle

Dorset

Dorsets are a white-faced dual purpose breed known for their strong maternal instinct and ability to breed multiple times per year. Dorsets are a medium to large framed breed with ewes ranging from 150-225 pounds and rams from 225-325 pounds. A Dorset head should be covered with wool and present an open face with pink pigmentation on the mouth, nose, and ears. Ears should be medium in length and covered in white hair. The body should be covered completely in white wool, with wool extending below the knee and hock. Hooves should be a yellow color and free of any dark pigmentation. Dorset may be either horned or polled

Dorset Breed Defects:

1. Any dark colored spots in the hair or wool
2. Large drooping ears
3. Fine textured, silky hair covering
4. Absence of hair covering in typical areas
5. All solid black hooves
6. Dark colored septum - dividing tissue between the nostrils; or
7. Dark colored lining of the nose or mouth
8. All-black, colored or spotted (Holstein type) lambs

Hampshire

Hampshire is a large framed black-faced breed that is predominately a meat-producing breed. Rams should weigh 275 pounds or more, while ewes should be at least 200 pounds. They should be black on the face and legs with a white body free of any dark fiber, Hampshires should possess a wool cap extending from the neck over the forehead. The legs should have some wool below the knee. The ear should be of medium size, covered with course dark hair.

Hampshire Breed Defects:

1. Broken wool cap
2. Very fine or thin hair on face or legs
3. Scurs
4. Excessive (more than 25%) white hair on jaw or legs
5. Steep hip and genetic tendency to be double muscled.
6. Horns
7. Speckled face so that the lamb appears to be a "brockle"
8. Excessively dark or blue hide
9. Inadequate wool covering on head and legs

Montadale

Montadales are a dual-purpose breed. Heads should be covered in solid white hair with no wool cap. Nose and eye pigment should be dark or black and the ears should be somewhat erect. The body should be covered with white wool, with no wool extending below the hock and knee, and hooves should be dark in color.

Montadale Breed Defects:

1. Solid pink nose
2. Completely white hooves
3. Excessive wool cap
4. Heavy wool covering below the hock and knee
5. Excessive brown or black hair (more than 25%)

Natural Colored

In Tennessee, Lambs classified as Natural Colored must have a fleece that is at least 50% other than white and show evidence of wool breed ancestry. We recommend that lambs nominated for this classification leave a 3 inch square portion of unshorn fleece on the left shoulder to assist in their identification as being from wool breed heritage.

Oxford

Oxfords originated by crossing Hampshire with Cotswold. Oxford sheep are medium to large sized (rams weighing 225-325 pounds and ewe weighing 150-200 pounds) with a dark brown face and should have a top knot wool on the legs.

Oxford Breed Defects::

1. Long droopy, black ears
2. Bare face
3. Black spots in wool or hair
4. Inverted eyelids
5. Speckled face and/or legs
6. Horns or solid scurs
7. Lack of a top-knot
8. Long, slick, droopy, black ears
9. Steep hip and a genetic tendency to be double muscled
10. White spots on ear

Romney

The Romney breed is dual purpose and known for its ample fleece production and ability to produce a high quality carcass. Their heads should be white with a wool cap and thick medium sized ears. The nose should be black to gray, and the poll should be free of horns and hair. Rams will weigh from 225-275 pounds, while the ewe will weigh between 150 and 200 pounds. A Romney's fleece should be solid white and lay in separate locks with minimal cross fibers between the locks. Strong consideration should be placed on fleece quality when evaluating the Romney breed.

Shropshire

The Shropshire breed is a medium to large framed breed that has been used as a terminal sire in farm flocks. Rams will weigh 225-275 pounds and ewes will weigh 160-220 pounds. Shropshires have a dark face, a wool cap, a straight nose, a straight ear of medium length and wool on the legs.

Shropshire Breed Defects:

1. Course or long, droopy ears
2. Coarse or roman nose
3. Excessive white on face, ears or legs
4. Legs completely bare of wool below knee of hock
5. Black arm-pits or black spots in skin or wool
6. Horns
7. Lack of wool cap
8. Steep hip and a genetic tendency to be double muscled

Southdown

The Southdown is a small-framed breed known for their meat producing abilities. Rams should weigh from 190-230 pounds while ewes will range from 130-180 pounds. Southdowns are characterized by their short stocky bodies and their grayish-brown coloring on their face and legs. Their ears should be medium length and covered in wool, though short hair is accepted. The nose should be a solid black or purplish color. Their body should be covered entirely by a uniform white fleece; dark spots are discriminated against. Because Southdowns are a meat producing breed, muscling should be the top priority when selecting with emphasis put on the rack, loin, and leg.

Southdown Breed Defects::

1. Solid white hair color on muzzle
2. Pink nose
3. Excessive white on face, ears or legs
4. Completely slick ears
5. Pink or striped hooves
6. Black spots in the fleece
7. Open poll on head
8. Speckled face or legs
9. Horns or solid scurs
10. Solid black lambs
11. Steep hip and a genetic tendency to be double muscled

Suffolk

The Suffolk breed is the largest in number by registration in the United States. This is a large frame, black-faced breed known for meat production. Suffolk rams can grow to over 400 pounds while ewes can reach over 250 pounds. The solid black hair on the head and legs characterizes a Suffolk. They are a polled breed that should possess a larger, bell-shaped ear and roman nose. Because Suffolks are a carcass breed, they should be well muscled from end to end, particularly over the rack, loin, and into the leg. They should possess a deep, wide body that is covered with white wool, free of black fiber, with no wool extending below the knee.

Tunis

Tunis is a medium framed breed that is characterized by the reddish-tan coloring on their head and legs. They are a dual-purpose breed, known for their mothering capacity and meat producing ability. Rams should weigh between 175 and 225 pounds, while ewes should be 150 to 200 pounds. Their heads and legs should be cinnamon red covered in coarse hair with no wool. Their fleece should be creamy white with no colored fiber. Because Tunis is a dual-purpose breed, you want to consider the quality of the fleece and natural thickness when evaluating.

White Face Crossbreds

White Face Crossbreds are generally a cross between a whiteface breed and a blackface breed, although a cross between two whiteface breeds also qualifies. To be classified White Face Crossbred, lambs should show significant evidence of their white faced ancestry. Some blackface breeds will have individuals with white spots on either ears or face, so this, in itself should not be sufficient reason for classification as White Faced Crossbred

