



National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England & Wales)

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Stockjudging Guidelines: Breeding Ewes

PROCEDURE IN JUDGING

Judging a group of animals consists of comparing them with the **IDEAL** for the type and breed to which they belong, and then placing the one that most nearly approaches this ideal at the top of the class.

Before starting to judge, make certain of what it is that has to be judged. Then view the animals from a distance (20 to 30 feet), so that all the animals in the class can be seen and compared - general appearance and conformation; type etc.

Watch the animals walking towards and then away from you, particularly for breeding. The hind legs should move forward in a straight line, maintaining good width throughout each movement.

When you come up close to inspect and handle, work over the animal with method and in a certain order, e.g. from head to tail, When judging sheep, stand back occasionally or crouch on your heels so as to bring the animals nearer to eye-level.

Do not be in a hurry to place the animals, for it is difficult to make one go back on one's first judgment. When ready, pick out the top and bottom animals, placing the second and third later,

If you are taking part in a competition, make quite certain of the time allowed for parade, judging from a distance, and close inspection and handling.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Good Points

- Signs of good health (bright, bold, alert eyes, pink skin)
- Sound udder and teats
- Mouth must be examined (younger ewe will last longer)
- Outstanding confirmation (length, depth and width of body)
- Feet (depth of heel, short clees, well up on her pasterns)
- Legs (strong boned, placed on each corner of the ewe)
- Even growth of staple in fleece

Bad Points

- Short broad head
- Bad udder and teats (swollen quarters, hard lumps, sores)
- Old ewes, Jaws over or under shot
- Poor confirmation (narrow, short)
- Lamé feet, bad legs, down on her pasterns
- Open fleece

REASON PLAN

Usually, two minutes are allowed for giving Reason and the marks are commonly awarded on the basis of *Accuracy, 25; Comparisons*, 15; Style, 10*. Competitors may, of course, make notes during the inspection of the animals, and these may be referred to while Reasons are given. They must be made, however, on the card provided.

- 1 Reasons should be memorised as well as possible, and one should try to have in one's mind a clear picture of the animals to be compared.
- 2 Make comparisons as much as possible when giving Reasons, compare animals either from head to tail (carcase - tail to head) to maintain a uniformity to your Reasons.

This implies that statements should be comparative rather than descriptive, e.g. "**A** is more symmetrical than **B**".

- 3 Stand up straight, look at the judge, and keep your hands out of your pockets.
- 4 Be careful to use the terms that apply to the different kinds of livestock, e.g. a leg-of-lamb is found only on a lamb, and bullocks do not have hams,
- 5 Always try to use the full two minutes available when giving Reasons,
- 6 A white coat should be worn at all times and should have all buttons fastened
- 7 Thank the Judge at the end of your Reasons.

HOW TO BEGIN GIVING REASONS AND THEIR STRUCTURE

Mr Judge, these are my reasons for placing the ring of four commercial breeding ewes in the order A, B, X, Y.

I placed A first describe and compare to rest of class as to why it was the outstanding ewe in the ring of four.

Then compare 2nd (b) to 1st (A)
 3rd(X) to 2nd (B)
 4th (Y) to 3rd (X)

N.B. Remember, there is sometimes a good point on your last ewe which should be mentioned,

EXAMPLE REASONS

Good evening, Mr Judge, I place this ring of four commercial breeding ewes in the following order, A, B, X, Y.

- 1 I placed **A** first, the outstanding shearling ewe, combining length and width, with excellent conformation and was balanced throughout,

A long feminine head, set neatly on to broad and well-fleshed shoulders; tremendous width through its spring of rib, carried through into a broad strong loin enabling it to carry two lambs for many years. Her hind legs were widely set, and well rounded in shape. She was correct in her udder and mouth and was providing a tight quality fleece.

- 2 I placed **B** second, again a shearling ewe with stature and length, but lacked the width, conformation and breed character of my first ewe, **A**. An eye-catching

healthy sheep, bright bold eyes but, compared to **A**, she was narrower across her shoulders, lacking width through her ribs and over her loin.

- 3, I placed **X** third, showing four broad teeth, a ewe in her prime, but today she was lacking the length, stature and conformation of my first two ewes. Compared to **B** she lacked width in her chest, her neck was longer, set into narrow shoulders. She lacked the body capacity, flatter ribbed, lacking width in her loin and, indeed, lacked width in the rear. Correct in her mouth, an uneven udder, but both quarters still soft and appear in working order,
4. I placed **Y** last, a full-mouthed ewe with eight broad teeth. The smallest ewe, lacking the length, depth and condition of the other ewes. Compared to **X**, bright and bolder in her eyes with more character and carriage in her head, but was narrow and poorly fleshed over her loin, Sound feet and legs, but with one hard quarter in her udder. We must assume it not to function and she would be unsuitable to breed again and should be culled.

These, Mr Judge, are my Reasons for placing the four Suffolk cross ewes in the order of **A, B, X, Y**.

Competitions Department

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