

**The  
Idaho**

**44 Sheep Club**

by

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# *The Idaho 4-H Sheep Club*

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Idaho 4-H sheep clubs are organized in order that farm boys and girls can have experience in selecting, managing and growing sheep. As both wool and mutton are produced, a successful sheep project is profitable.

Sheep are more contented and do better with other sheep; hence, it is advisable to have two or more at the beginning. However, as 4-H work is conducted to give an opportunity to all farm boys and girls, minimum requirements are not enforced. A boy or girl who can secure only one lamb or ewe is entitled to full membership.

## **Idaho 4-H Sheep Club Projects**

Division I: Breeding Ewes, preferably two to four

Division II: Feeder Lambs, preferably three to five

Division III: Orphan Lambs, preferably three to five

## *Organization, Meetings, Records*

Successful club work depends upon proper organization and regular meetings. The club should meet regularly and all members plan to attend. While the leader will assist, the meetings and work should be conducted by the officers and members. A president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and news reporter should be elected at the first meeting. The order of business is usually a call to order by the president. The secretary then calls the roll and reads the minutes of the last meeting. The reports of special committees come next. The unfinished business from last meeting is then taken up and followed with new business. Next will come the program which was outlined, selected and assigned at the last meeting. After this, arrangements are made for the next meeting and program subjects assigned. The meeting is then adjourned.

A good program should be arranged for each meeting. This may consist of a discussion of sheep subjects, a report of progress or of demonstrations. Some program suggestions are:

1. Each member brings the project record book to be gone over with the leader. All records of weights, feeds, and returns are important. Enter them promptly and properly.

2. One entire meeting may be devoted to a discussion of feeds. Those on the program should discuss rations for breeding ewes, and feeder lambs. Each member is to give the amount and kind of feed he is using. The assigned program is to be a discussion of rations for breeding ewes and feeder lambs.

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3. A discussion on types, breeds and market grades of sheep and wool.

4. Each member will bring a rope and the meeting devoted to the making of rope halters as described in Chapter X.

5. A discussion of equipment for farm sheep raising. Include sheds, panels, hayracks, grain troughs, lamb creeps and watering facilities.

6. A summer evening devoted to the selection and judging of sheep. Before this time, each member should go over his own animal with a score card and note which points are weak and which are strong. Each member will be asked to name the different parts of the animal.

7. A summer meeting on the fitting and showing of sheep. Each member will be given the opportunity to brush and card the wool and use the shears.

8. A discussion on parasites, both external and internal.

The leader and club member will re-arrange the program subjects according to the time of year and the work that is being done. Additional material for most of the subject matter suggested can be secured from the county agent's office.

**Record Book, Record Keeping, and Demonstration Teams.** A valuable and essential lesson comes from keeping accurate records and writing the story of the project. All feed records should be promptly entered. The monthly weight of the lambs should be recorded.

In well-organized clubs, members who are assigned the next program come prepared. Each member should have a chance to take part in a demonstration. At general meetings, the club often selects two members to give demonstrations of tasks concerning sheep husbandry. Some that may be given are listed below. In the usual demonstration, one works while his partner explains.

1. Block a sheep for show explaining the use of the brush, card, and shears.

2. Demonstrate a treatment for destroying ticks and treating for internal parasites.

3. Make and demonstrate a small model of sheep corrals, lambing pen or lamb creep.

4. Select and balance rations for breeding stock or for growing or fattening.

5. Demonstrate the method of catching, holding and judging sheep for mutton and for wool. The location of the market cuts can be shown.

6. Demonstrate how to make a rope halter for sheep and for cattle.

# Judging Sheep

All who are breeding or fattening sheep should know something of the desirable body conformation and characteristics of the wool clip. One who is a successful breeder or a good hand at trimming or blocking sheep is also a fairly good judge.

In order to judge and discuss sheep properly, it is necessary to know the different parts of the animal. Figure 1 shows the location of the different parts and names.

Figure 1.

Points of the Sheep:

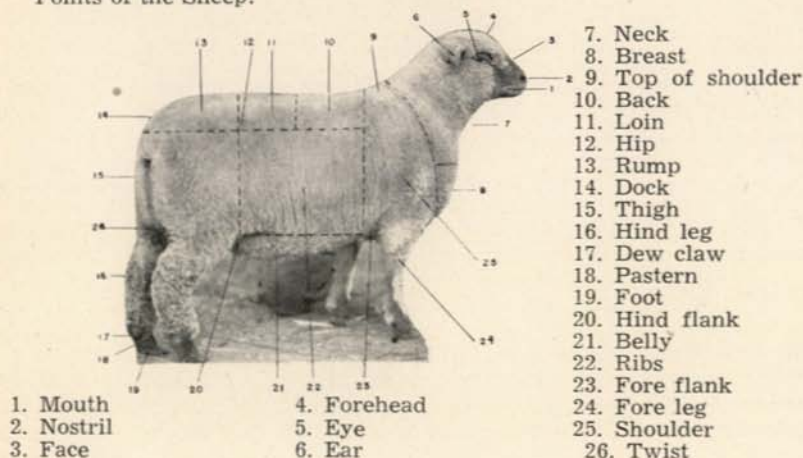


Figure 2 on Page 6 is a score card used for rating the value of a sheep. We do not use it in comparative judging, but it is valuable for a club member to score his own sheep in order that all parts may be learned, studied and rated.

The common mistake in judging is to get too close and start feeling the sheep without knowing what its general conformation may be. While it is desirable to feel a woolled sheep to ascertain certain points, in many cases it is not done. The experienced judge only uses his hands to make sure that a trimmed and blocked sheep is really as it appears. Most judges select sheep by viewing them from a distance, making a careful study of the front, sides and rear. After they have formed a general opinion, it is confirmed by feeling the animal. There is a definite order for going over a sheep: (1) Placing both hands at the sides of the neck to see that it is short, thick, and blends smoothly into the shoulders (2) Placing the hands on the withers to see that the shoulders are wide, level and smooth and not open or ridged (3) Feeling the width and depth of chest and the spring of rib (4) Feeling the width, levelness and strength of back (5) Feeling the width and thickness of the loin (6) Feeling the length, width and straightness of the rump (7) Feeling the depth and fullness of the twist (8) Feeling the size and plumpness of the leg of mutton.

Fig. 2

SCALE OF POINTS	Possible Score	Points Deficient		Reasons
		Student's Score	Corrected Score	
<b>General Appearance.</b>				
WEIGHT, score according to age .....	8			
FORM, medium, long, level, deep, low set, stylish.....	10			
QUALITY, clean bone; hair and wool fine, healthy skin, light in offal, yielding high percentage of meat .....	10			
CONDITION, deep even covering of firm flesh, especially of valuable cuts. Points indicating ripeness are, thick dock, back thickly covered with flesh, thick neck, full purse, full flank, plump breast .....	10			
<b>Head and Neck.</b>	38			
MUZZLE, fine; mouth large; lips thin; nostrils large and open .....	1			
EYES, large, clear, placid .....	1			
FACE, short, features clean-cut .....	1			
FOREHEAD, broad, full .....	1			
EARS, fine, alert .....	1			
NECK, thick, short, smooth, blending well with shoulder .....	2			
<b>Forequarters.</b>	7			
SHOULDERS, well covered with flesh, compact on top, snug .....	5			
BRISKET, neat, proportionate, breast wide .....	1			
LEGS, straight, short, wide apart, strong; forearm full; shank smooth, fine .....	1			
<b>Body.</b>	7			
CHEST, wide, deep, full .....	4			
RIBS, well sprung, long, close, thickly fleshed .....	4			
BACK, broad, straight, medium long, thickly fleshed.....	7			
LOIN, thick, broad, long, thickly fleshed .....	7			
<b>Hindquarters.</b>	22			
HIPS, far apart, level, smooth .....	2			
RUMP, long, level, wide to tail-head, smoothly fleshed .....	4			
THIGHS, full, deep, wide .....	4			
TWIST, plump, deep .....	5			
LEGS, straight, short, strong shank fine, smooth .....	1			
<b>Wool.</b>	16			
QUANTITY, long, dense, even .....	4			
QUALITY, fine, pure; crimp close, regular, even .....	4			
CONDITION, bright, sound, clean, soft, light .....	2			
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	100			



Fig. 3. Handling sheep to determine size of various regions of the body.

Sheep are felt with the fingers close together so that they do not make openings in the wool.

The fleece and skin are examined by opening the wool at a natural crevice on the side—never on the back. The skin on a thrifty, healthy sheep is pink giving rise to the saying, “pink of condition.” A dark, bluish skin usually indicates that the animal is not gaining in weight or in the case of a fat sheep, has passed the bloom and is overdone.

A dense fleece of long staple is desirable. The condition of the fleece is determined by the color, yolk and dirt. The uniformity, fineness and crimp of the fibers indicate its quality. The fleece is examined on the shoulder, side, side of rump, and low on the thigh. The best fleece is uniform and does not run out on the rear.

In judging fat lambs, more attention is given to the condition than when judging breeding classes. The prime lamb is well covered with firm flesh that is somewhat springy to the touch and even over all parts of the body, shoulders, back, loin and rump. The sides of the dock indicate the finish. A good lamb will yield a thick carcass with a wide, thick loin and full plump legs. A bad mouth, broken pasterns or poor fleece are of much importance in judging breeding sheep, but are not discriminated against in a class of fat lambs that are to go for immediate slaughter.

After passing through the packing plant, the fat lamb is still lamb, but the yearlings and older sheep are mutton.

## Selecting the Flock

Starting with good grade ewes, using a good purebred ram and producing market lambs is so much more successful than starting with purebreds that it is recommended as a requirement for beginners. Experience can be gained at less expense, and the standards of excellence are not so rigid. Grade lambs find a ready market, either fat or as feeders. Competition among purebreds is so keen that not all succeed. Club members who gain experience and are successful with grade sheep may make a start with purebreds, but many such ventures prove disappointing.

**Selection of the Breed.** Only a few of the numerous breeds of sheep are used in Idaho. Although all sheep produce both meat and wool, some are designated as mutton and others as wool breeds. In Idaho, the ranch and range ewes are of the Rambouillet or white-faced, crossbred type. A majority of the lambs produced are of the blackfaced, mutton type. Usually club members are more interested in producing fat market lambs than breeding stock.

Among the available sheep for breeding are whitefaced crossbred types. Included in specific breeds are Corriedales, Columbias or Panamas. While excelling in fleece qualities, many also have good mutton conformation. Such ewes, bred to Hampshire or Suffolk rams, produce top market lambs.

It is recommended that the Idaho Club member stay with the common Idaho breeds.

**Selecting the Ewe.** In selecting a foundation flock, it is important that the desirable type be kept in mind. Essential points are a feminine head, a deep body with good spring of ribs, a wide level back carrying out well over the rump, a dense, long staple fleece covering the body uniformly, a mouth with sound teeth that fit the upper jaw evenly, and good udders. Common mistakes are failing to look at the mouth and overlooking spoiled udders or barren ewes.

A sheep's age is determined by examining the teeth. A yearling mouth has two permanent teeth in the center. The next year, an additional pair—one on each side of the yearling pair—appears. More teeth follow in the same order at three and four years of age. When sheep are four years old, they are "full mouthed," as they remain until the teeth become wide apart, broken or absent. After this occurs, sheep are known as "spread or broken mouthed" or as "gummers."

A sound udder is soft and pliable. Normal teats are free of injuries and hard cores. Useful, healthy ewes are alert and vigorous. Unthriftiness is indicated by hard coughing (other than from dust), scouring, a pale or bluish rather than a pink skin, and dry and harsh wool.

**Selecting the Ram.** Although most of Idaho's ewes are grade, the general practice is to breed to good, purebred rams. As the

ram is "half the flock," extra care should be taken in selecting him. A good ram is masculine, healthy and vigorous, with a wide, deep chest, a good spring of ribs and good bone. All undesirable characteristics of a ram may appear in the entire lamb crop.

Good, desirable rams are high-priced and difficult to find. If the entire club can work together at breeding time with all the ewes put together in one pasture, a good ram is usually available. The services of a ram lamb are often rented.

Common range and ranch practice is to count one ram lamb to 25 ewes or one yearling to 50 ewes. This proportion is the maximum when the ram is permitted to run with the ewes. By taking the ram away from the ewes each morning and keeping him in all day on hay and grain, a double amount of service is obtained. The favorite grain for a ram through the breeding season is whole oats.

## *Management of the Ewe Flock*

After the breeding season, the ram is taken away and the ewes kept on the aftermath pastures of harvested fields until snow falls. Alfalfa and grain stubble make up the usual pasture. Beet tops are good feed but should never make up the entire ration of breeding sheep. If sheep on beet top pastures do not have access to alfalfa or clover stubble or fence row and ditch bank feed, they should be fed hay. During this time, but little care is necessary other than to see that there is sufficient feed. Bred ewes should not be permitted to lose flesh. Sheep may get thin without appearing so. It is necessary to feel the backs occasionally to see that flesh and weight are not being lost. If the feed is so short that they must graze all day long, the supply is usually insufficient but can be remedied by feeding hay in the evening. Run of the fields with a feed of alfalfa hay every evening and access to salt and water is the common method of successful wintering breeding ewes.

**Lambing Time.** As lambing time approaches, the ewes are properly prepared by clipping the loose locks of wool and tags

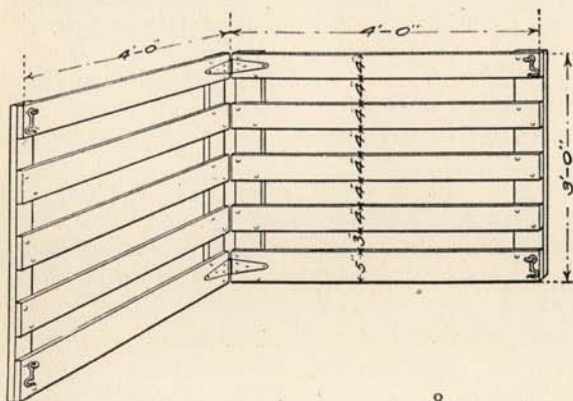


Fig. 4. Hinged panels for temporary lambing or claiming pens.



from around the udder and rear. A sheltered place in the barn or open shed should be provided. It need not be warm but should be light, and free from draft and preferably sunny. A number of small individual pens should be provided. These pens are usually made of 1 x 4 material hinged together and set up in a corner, making the complete pen. See fig. 4.

In range lambing where caretakers are on duty day and night, the drop band is left in the open and the newly born lamb and its mother immediately moved to the sheltered lambing pens. In the farm flock where the owner cannot be on hand 24 hours a day, the sheep are kept in a sheltered yard or shed. Any ewe expected to lamb before morning may be placed in an individual pen. As a rule, the successful flock master at this time does not remain in bed all night but makes occasional trips to see whether any ewe or lamb may need assistance. It is the shepherd's harvest time and constant attention adds to the success of the venture.

When spring comes and there is good pasture, the ewes and lambs are of but little trouble. When the lambs are born quite early, a long time before grass, a common practice is to leave the lambs in on hay and grain while the ewes are turned onto pasture. The ewes are dodged out every morning and turned in with the lambs overnight. Some of the best early Idaho lambs are produced in this way. It has the advantage of not requiring an abundance of good pasture which is not needed after the lambs are marketed. Keeping the ewes on short pasture, avoids some udder trouble after the lambs go to market. Another advantage is that the lambs soon become accustomed to being away from the ewes and go to market or a spring show without worrying and fretting.

**Weaning Time.** If the lambs are marketed early, they are usually left with the ewes. If not marketed at 4½ to 5 months of age, they should be weaned. This is best done by leaving them on good pasture while the ewes are placed on limited feed. If the lambs are to be shown, it is advisable to put them up six weeks before the show and finish on hay and grain.

After the lambs are weaned, the ewes may put on flesh and get too fat to breed. They should be kept on limited feed. Shortly before breeding time, they should be put on good pasture and flushed. This system insures a fairly uniform breeding and lambing time and is believed to increase the number of twins.

Sheep will graze over large areas and eat a great variety of weeds and shrubs. Many small bands of sheep are kept entirely on fenced ditch bank pastures until the aftermath in the harvested fields is ready. If not overstocked, they are often kept without additional expense on high, rocky or brush lands which cannot be cultivated. Most farms have some ditch bank or other waste land going to shrubs and weeds which may be improved by grazing with sheep.

## The Lamb's Birthday

On an average, the lambs can be expected in 21 weeks (147 days) after the breeding date. All do not follow the calendar accurately; some arrive a week early, some later.

Ewes that have had plenty of exercise and been properly fed seldom need help at lambing time. The flock needs to be watched carefully and aid given a ewe in trouble or a lamb that is not starting off right.

Just before lambing, the ewes become restless and nervous, often lying down and getting up. The udder and teats are full and apparently swollen. There is a sunken appearance in front of the hips.

As soon as the lamb is born, the mother usually gives attention to drying it. In cold and stormy weather, it is important that the newly-born lamb and its mother be taken to the individual lambing pen that has been properly prepared for their arrival. A weak lamb may need assistance to get the first drink by helping it to find the udder. Sometimes it is necessary to draw a little milk to see that it flows freely. Tincture of iodine should be applied to the navel. Then the lamb and ewe may be left alone in an individual, sheltered pen.

The chill should be taken from the water given a ewe that has just lambed. At first, only good hay should be offered. After a few days, a limited feeding of oats or bran may be given. The udders should be watched to see that the lamb is taking all the milk. If not, an udder may be saved by milking out the surplus or holding the ewe while a nearby twin or triplet does the milking.

The ewe and lamb may be left in the individual pen from one to three days and then turned into a sunny, sheltered corral with other ewes and lambs. If the flock is good sized, the ewes with twins will do better if kept with other ewes that have twins until they are ready to go into the large band.

The lambs should be docked and the rams converted into wethers when a week or ten days old. In Idaho, this is so common

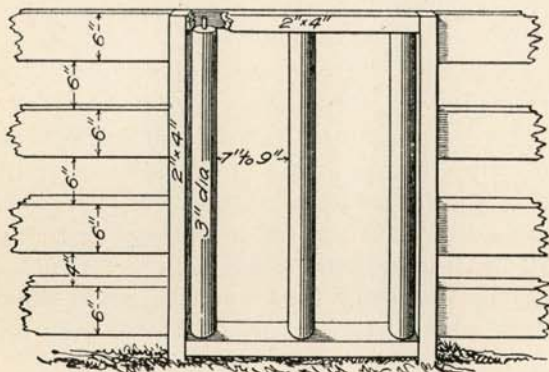


Fig. 5. Lamb creep with rollers for up-rights.

and general a practice that long-tailed and grade buck lambs are rare. Nearby will be experienced help that will gladly show how this is done. To avoid infection, the lambs should be in a clean, newly bedded pen or on fresh grass but never in a dusty, or dirty corral.

As long as the ewes and lambs are still in winter quarters, a creep where the lambs can enter and get extra feed should be provided. The creep may be made by setting small round poles upright about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet high and from 7 to 9 inches apart. This is made so the lambs can enter but the ewes cannot.

Troughs should be made so that the lambs cannot get in with their feet. Fresh, leafy hay and only enough grain should be fed that will be cleaned up daily. Stale feed or good feed in a dirty trough will be eaten only sparingly or not at all.

The lambs will soon learn to eat and like grain but may be difficult to get started. They will do well on whole grain but will start sooner if crushed or rolled oats or barley is fed at the beginning. Sweetening the grain with brown sugar or adding a small amount of calf pellets will sometimes start them eating it more readily. If the ewes are eating grain, the lambs will soon learn from them.

The greatest aid in giving the lambs a good start is the mothers' milk. For the first few days after lambing, the lambs will not need much milk. In a short time, they can use all the ewe produces. This is especially true with twins.

For a few days after lambing, the ewe will be feverish and will do better on only hay and water. If there is not enough milk, it may be increased by feeding grain. A common practice is to feed grain to the ewes with twins but not to those with singles. If the flock is on good pasture, it is not necessary to feed grain.

**Trouble in the Lambing Corral.** In a properly wintered and well-managed flock, there may be no trouble. Once in a while a ewe may be found laboring for some time without results. It is not advisable to be in a big hurry to help a ewe in labor. This can go on for some time without ill effect. If there is no relief in three or four hours, there is trouble that help will remedy. At that time, a club member will need experienced help. The ewe and lamb can be saved by proper aid.

First, trim the fingernails closely and wash the hands with disinfectant. Cover the hands with vaseline or mineral oil. Do not hurry and do not use force. Try to make a little headway every time the ewe quits straining. When the lamb is reached, the position should be ascertained. With an abnormally large lamb coming naturally—that is with the four feet first and the head between the legs—the problem can be solved by giving a gentle, slightly downward pull on the legs when the ewe strains.

The difficulty may be that the legs or head are turned back. In this case, they must be turned into natural position. To do so, it may be necessary to push the lamb back where there is more room.

Some lambs are delivered with the hind feet first. In this case, prompt delivery is necessary by giving aid to the ewe when she strains, or the lamb may smother.

If the ewe is straining too hard and too constantly to permit effective work, it may be necessary to turn her on her back and raise the rear part of the body a few inches until the lamb is turned into proper position for delivery.

A ewe that has had difficulty lambing will not give as prompt attention to the new lamb as one that has not had trouble. If there is mucus in the nose or mouth of the lamb, it should be removed. If it has not started breathing, respiration can usually be started by blowing into the nostrils, slapping the sides and gently pumping the front legs, one at a time. If the ewe is not paying attention to the lamb, it should be placed in front of her so that she may get its odor and dry it.

## *Troubles in the Sheep Fold*

Under natural conditions where sheep have a wide range with grass, weeds, browse and fresh running water, but little attention need be paid to the health and welfare of the flock. When kept on low, moist ground or in small enclosures, some trouble may be experienced.

### **Ailments of Baby Lambs.**

The successful shepherd tries to be on hand when the lambs are born. He keeps constant watch to see that all is well. Troubles that may be expected and remedied are: chilling; navel infection and stiffness; indigestion; pinning; and eye troubles.

**Chilling.** In extremely cold weather or when exposed to a cold wind, lambs may become so chilled that they soon die. A chilled lamb may be saved by wrapping in a warm woolen blanket and taking to a warm room, or placing in a bedded box that is heated by a jug of hot water. Immersing in water as hot as the bare arm can stand until it begins to squirm and kick is a quick method. It should be thoroughly dried and rubbed and then given a few swallows of milk from its mother or another newly freshened ewe. If a new lamb does not get this colostrum or first milk, there is less chance for its survival.

**Navel Infection.** Prevention by immediately dipping the navel cord of a newly born lamb in a wide-mouthed jar of tincture of iodine is a reliable method of combating this trouble.

**Digestive Disorders.** Effective remedies for constipation are castor oil or milk of magnesia. Whichever is used, it should be given warm. A teaspoonful for a very small lamb and tablespoonful for a larger lamb is the proper dose. In severe cases, an enema of lukewarm, soapy water is beneficial.

**Scouring** is usually caused by the lamb getting too much milk. The treatment is the same as for constipation.

**Pinning** is the name given to the condition of the first passage of the lamb sticking to the tail and causing it to adhere to the body. To save the lamb, the tail must be freed and cleaned.

**Sore eyes** in which a scum appears are common. A common eye wash of silver nitrate, a 15 per cent solution of argyrol, or a saturated solution of boracic acid will prove effective. Lambing camps report good results by using strong salt water.

Sometimes the eyelids turn inward and cause sore eyes. Each shepherd has a favorite remedy. Some sew the eyelid back. Others use adhesive tape. The most common method is to clip out a section of the eyelid making it shorter as it heals.

**Scabs** on the lips of sheep and lambs may give trouble at any time. Removing the scabs and applying a 10 per cent solution of nitric acid remedies the trouble. Sheep dip is a common and effective remedy.

### **Flock Troubles.**

**Foot rot** and parasites are the most common troubles that attack a flock of sheep.

**Foot rot** seldom occurs unless the sheep are in muddy corrals or wet, low-lying ground. It is caused by a germ that thrives in moisture. All sheep that are limping should be carefully examined. Foot rot has a very strong, offensive odor. It can be cured by paring away the hoof until the seat of the trouble is reached and then dipping the foot in a solution of copper sulphate (blue vitriol). Repetition is necessary. Severe cases are successfully treated by applying butter of antimony.

**Ticks** cause much worry to sheep and reduce the production of both meat and wool. The thrift and growth of the lambs are retarded by tick infestation. It is practically impossible to fatten lambs on which ticks are numerous. The use of DDT reduces the number of ticks and in some cases has eliminated them entirely.

**Stomach Worms.** Unless brought in by infected sheep, stomach worms, are not found. Once introduced to an irrigated pasture, they are never eliminated. As long as the sheep are on an infested pasture, they will be picking up worms. The old remedy was to drench with a copper sulphate solution. This eliminated the worms but did not prevent re-infestation. The modern method is to get rid of the adult worm. Feeding one part of phenothiazine to 9 parts of salt prevents re-infestation. This prepared salt is given as long as the sheep are on infested pastures.

#### **Reference reading:**

- Extension Circular No. 92, "Tick Control on Sheep"
- U. S. Department of Agriculture Farmers' Bulletin No. 1943, "Diseases of Sheep and Goats"
- U. S. Department of Agriculture Farmers' Bulletin No. 1330, "Parasites and Parasitic Diseases of Sheep."

## *Fattening Feeder Lambs*

A lamb that is to grade high in the show ring must have a good conformation and be well finished. A blocky, deep bodied lamb with a short, broad head, short neck, straight back, well placed legs and a long rump not too droopy is a good type of feeder.

Lambs shown in competition may be young, not yet weaned, or older lambs of the class known as feeders. The young lamb still on its mother is more easily fattened. On good range or pasture, Idaho lambs make the top market grade at weaning time. A lamb that is to be shown in competition requires special care and additional feed. If it has been creep fed, it will be able to continue on grain and hay without danger of founder. The best lamb is produced by keeping it in on dry feed consisting of good quality hay and grain during the day. The ewe may be turned out to pasture each morning and returned to spend the night with the lamb. The advantage of feeding a show lamb in this way is that there is but little worry and fretting when taken to a show. As a rule, it will have become accustomed to being away from the ewe and will eat proper amounts of hay and grain without trouble. While it is at home being prepared for the show, it should be handled frequently to make it gentle and trained to stand properly.

For the older lambs that are weaned and known as feeders, special care is necessary to start grain feeding without danger of founder. The best system is to start gradually on a light feed of whole oats. The allowance should be  $\frac{1}{10}$  of a pound for each lamb. This should be spread thinly over the bottom of the trough so that only one or two grains can be picked up at a time. Some lambs learn to eat more readily than others. For the first day or two, the grain will be cleaned up by part but not all of the lambs. The lambs that have not started eating the grain at first soon learn from the others. When all the lambs are coming to the trough and eating all before leaving, the grain can be increased to  $\frac{1}{5}$  of a pound per head per day. The amount can then be gradually increased. The rate at which the grain can be increased depends partly upon the way the lambs are taking it and partly upon the kind of grain used. The purpose is to get the lambs on a heavy, carbohydrate, grain ration as soon as possible. Oats are used only as a measure of precaution. In some cases when the lambs are receiving  $\frac{1}{5}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound of oats per head per days, a change is often made to barley, wheat or corn. This is done by replacing part of the oats with a more fattening grain but not raising the amount until the lambs have become accustomed to the change. A safe method is to continue with the oats until the daily ration has been raised to 1 pound per head and then replacing part of the oats with another grain. The effort is to get the lambs on full feed which will be from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 pounds per head per day, the amount depending upon the size and thrift of the lambs and the time re-

quired to eat the grain. No more grain should be fed than will be consumed in from 20 to 30 minutes.

## *The Orphan Lamb Project*

In the early range lambing districts, 4-H Clubs are sometimes organized and conducted as a "Bum Lamb Club." Orphan and dis-owned lambs are secured from the lambing camps and raised on the bottle. It is desirable for each member to make a start with at least three lambs.

Success in raising orphan lambs depends upon a proper start. It is important that they get the colostrum or first milk of the mother or another newly freshened ewe. This acts as a necessary laxative. If it is impossible for the lambs to obtain the first drawn milk, a teaspoonful of milk of magnesia should be added to the milk the first day.

Nearly all the losses of orphan lambs are caused by overfeeding or failure to have the milk at the proper temperature or to have the nipples and utensils scrupulously clean. Time and patience are necessary the first ten days.

**Feeding Schedule.** Unless a milk goat is available to serve as a foster mother, warm cow's milk is the only substitute for ewe's milk. It is necessary that the milk be fed at approximately blood heat. Bottles and nipples be kept perfectly clean. From 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. of the first day, feed 1 to 2 tablespoonfuls every 2 hours. On the second and third days, feed 2 to 3 tablespoonfuls every 3 hours. For the next 7 days, feed 4 ounces—about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cupful—or less 5 times a day at regular intervals from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The next 7 days, feed 6 ounces—about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cupful—4 times a day at regular intervals from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Next week, increase the milk gradually.

By the time the lamb is 3 weeks old, it will begin to eat other feed. By this time, a good growthy lamb that has made a good start will be able to take  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of warm milk 3 times a day.

As the lambs grow older, the milk can be increased and given 3 times a day.

Whole milk is necessary for the first 6 weeks to give the lambs a good start. After this period, a change may be made gradually to skim milk over a 2 week period. Grain may be used as a substitute for the fat of the milk. However, if they are to be kept fat, they will do better on all or part whole milk until weaning time.

During the early part of the feeding, the lambs will be fed from a nursing bottle with a lamb nipple. Later they may be taught to drink by giving them a detached nipple and directing their heads to the milk in the pan.

**Care of the Lamb.** During the time the lambs are being started, they should have a warm, dry, bedded place to sleep. They should

not be closely confined but permitted to run loose on pasture as soon as possible. Exercise, sunshine and green grass are all beneficial.

A small amount of good, green, leafy alfalfa hay should be kept before the lambs at all times. They cannot be expected to eat the stems. At the age of 3 weeks or less, they will begin to eat hay and grain. They will usually start more quickly on rolled or ground than on whole grain. A little brown sugar added to the first feed of grain sometimes helps in starting. As soon as they are eating ground grain, a change may be made to whole grain. Favorite lamb feeds in Idaho are mixtures of oats and barley. Some special feeds or bran is sometimes added.

Only the amount of grain the lambs will clean up in a few minutes should be given.

Success in raising lambs depends upon: Regularity; having the milk at the proper temperature; cleanliness of all milk utensils; and feeding proper amounts.

## *Fitting and Showing*

Sheep are shown with the wool trimmed and squarely blocked. The purpose is to improve the appearance by giving it a straight top and under line and a square blocky form that is even and well-balanced throughout.

**Equipment.** Equipment needed is a rope halter, a wool card,

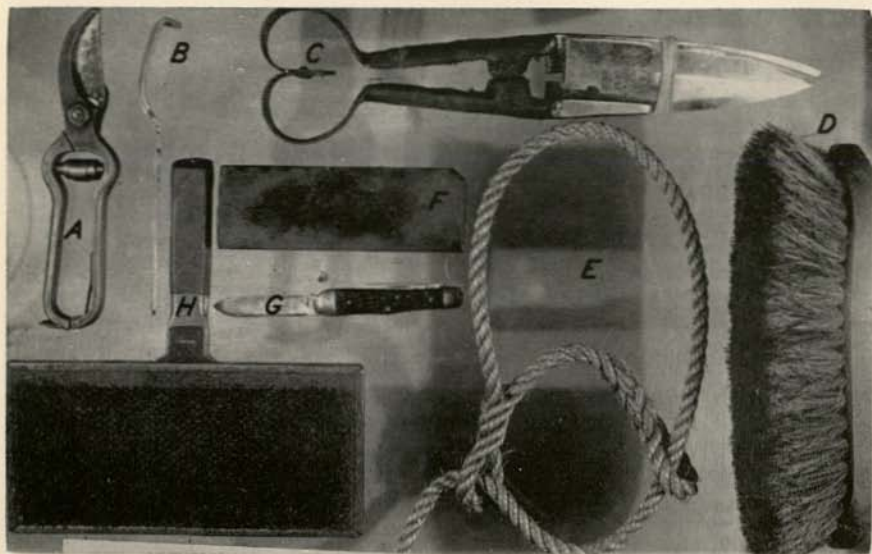


Fig. 6 Equipment for use in fitting sheep. (a) Pruning shears for cutting toes. (b) Bent table fork for raking wool out of card. (c) Shears. (d) Brush. (e) Rope Halter. (f) Hone. (g) Pocket knife. (h) Card.



a round curry comb, fiber brush, woolen cloth, a pail of water with soap and sheep dip, a pair of shears, oilstone, pocket knife and sometimes pruning shears.

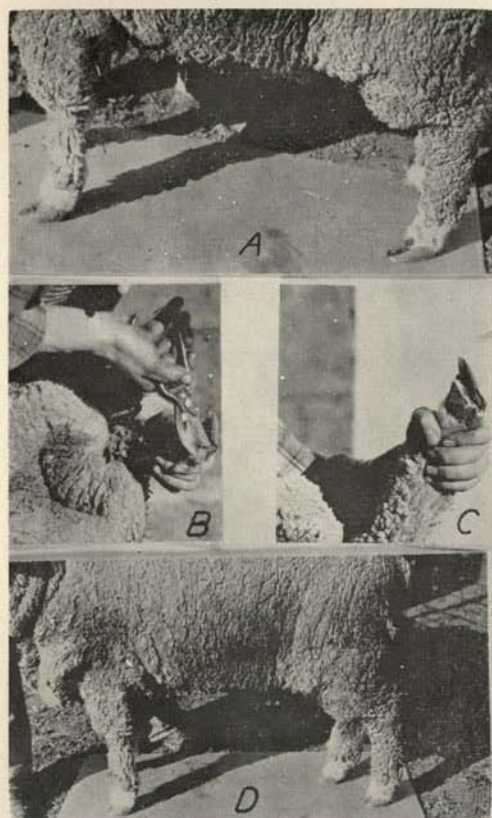


Fig. 7 Shows improvement of appearance of hoofs with proper trimming.

**Catching Sheep.** From the rear, a sheep is caught by a firm grasp of the flank. From the front, the loose skin under the chin is grasped with one hand while the other hand holds the back of the head. A sheep is never caught by the wool. Doing so pulls the pelt loose from the flesh and leaves it sore and bruised.

**Trimming the Feet.** The first task is to set the sheep on its rump and see that the feet are well shaped and the outside horny part not grown out too long. Such long growth may prevent the animal from walking properly or from standing squarely on all four feet. The excess horn is trimmed off to be even and almost level with the sole. If the feet are soft, they can be trimmed with a pocket knife, but when dry and hard, it may be necessary to use pruning shears.

**Preparing the Fleece.** The fleece should not be washed unless it is very dirty and then preferably 5 or 6 weeks before a show. Washing is done with warm water to which sheep dip and soap have been added. Washing tends to remove the yolk and make the fleece appear fluffy, less dense and lacking in luster. Do not wash if the dirt is only toward the outside of the fleece. In that case, it can be cleaned by using a woolen cloth dampened in warm water. Usually, all that is necessary to wash are the stained spots at the dock and thighs.

**Trimming and Blocking.** It is best to practice on a lamb that is not going to show. This should not be attempted until the club has had a demonstration showing how to handle the card and the shears.

The rope halter is used to tie the lamb short with its head in a natural position. Loose, dirty, projecting locks of wool should

be clipped off. The fleece is then dampened by using the fiber brush dipped in water. About 2 tablespoonfuls of sheep dip are usually used to a gallon of water. When damp, the fleece is carded or carried out and then brushed thoroughly.

Before starting to trim, the lamb must be standing naturally and not out of position. The lamb is looked over carefully and the task considered. The plan is to make the back appear level and the sides straight, giving the appearance of an evenly balanced body. By proper trimming, the appearance of a low back, slack heart girth, droopy rump or narrow hindquarters can be improved.

In starting, it is well to remember that a trimming job can be spoiled by cutting too deep the first time over. High spots can be trimmed down later but a low spot caused by cutting too deep can be remedied only by time.

On breeding sheep, a fleece about  $\frac{3}{4}$  or possibly 1 inch long is left. Fat lambs have the fleece shorn down to  $\frac{1}{4}$  or not more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch length. These lengths refer to the wool on the back. Naturally the length of wool varies all over the body. A sheep is trimmed to make it have a square blocky appearance and not to have wool of equal length all over.

The start with the shears is made on the withers and worked backwards. They are held level at right angles to the back and a straight line cut to where the rump begins to droop. Keep going over the back until it is completed, giving it a wide, level appearance.

To do a good job, the shears must be kept sharp. They will work better if dipped in water frequently.

The left side is then carded, brushed and clipped from front to rear and the right side from rear to front. The ends of the wool are clipped until the sides have a straight, flattened appearance.

It is desirable to have the rump, shoulders and thighs appear as plump as possible. The wool is carded out and only enough taken off to give the appearance of fullness. The rump is clipped to conform as nearly as possible with the width and straightness of the back and then rounded out over the dock. The dock is squared straight across at the base and the twist and thighs trimmed to give a full appearance. The legs are trimmed to make them appear as straight as possible. The wool or hair is clipped closely from inside the knees and hocks to make the legs appear far apart. The neck is trimmed full at the shoulder tapering to the head and the head trimmed to give an even, neat appearance.

The fleece can be kept clean and improved in appearance by blanketing. An old burlap sack can be made into a satisfactory blanket.

**Showing.** It is important that the lamb be trained to stand and show properly. A little practice every day saves trouble and embarrassment at a show.

In the show ring, the shepherd kneels at the left with the left

hand under the chin and the right hand on top or back of the head or left free to keep the legs in proper position. When the sheep is being handled by the judge, it is permissible to stand in front holding the head firmly to keep it braced in position. When the sheep is moved, the left hand is kept under the chin and the right hand placed at the base of the dock. Figures 8 and 9 demonstrate fitting and showing.

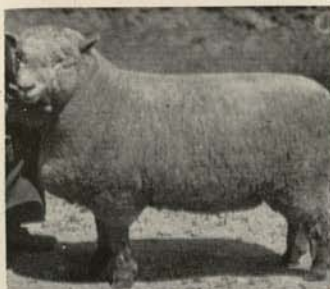
One regular club meeting can be devoted to making rope halters. Each member should bring a three strand,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch rope,



A



B



C

Fig. 8 A. Southdown ewe before trimming.

B. Trimming the back down.

C. Same ewe after trimming.



Fig. 9 The rear view of the Southdown ewe shown in figures A, B, and C.

8 feet long. The only other equipment needed is a hard wooden peg or a large spike nail for lifting the strands. Both calf and lamb halters are made the same way with different dimensions. The detailed instructions and cuts are given in Table 2 and Figure 19 on pages 38 and 39 of Idaho Extension Bulletin No. 128, "Selecting and Fattening 4-H Beef Calves."

For lamb halters, lay off 5 inches from one end of the rope and keep the place marked by a tight rubber band or string. Beyond this, lay off the length of the nose piece desired. The average size is 9 inches, made longer for very large sheep and an inch or two shorter for lambs. Measure off 9 inches beyond the 5-inch marker and mark the place with a rubber band or string.

After the dimensions of the halter have been determined, the halter is completed in the same order and manner as the cattle halters. This is described in detail in the 4-H Beef Calf bulletin.

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