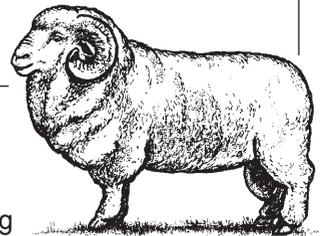


The importance of selection

Before any selection can be done, you, as the farmer, must set specific breeding goals.

You have to decide which sheep will best adapt to your conditions and will provide the maximum income from wool and lambs. Over the years, woolled sheep have shown that they adapt well within the communal grazing system. The selection of rams and ewes is, therefore, important for the improvement of any flock of sheep. It is also important to castrate all other ram lambs, select and then buy the best rams.



When selecting a ram, look for faults that may require you to remove the animal from the rest of the herd. Examine every part of the body starting from the head.

Head: *A ram must have a strong head with good depth, breadth and length*

Pay attention to the following culling faults: Overshot jaws, undershot jaws, loose teeth, inverted eyelids, wooly face, jowls, double row of teeth and too much brown/black pigment around eyes, lips and tongue and brown or black fibres on horn buds.



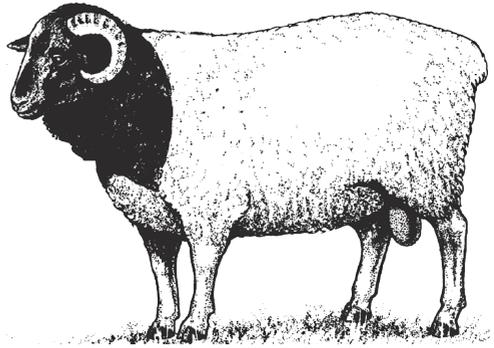
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Body: *The body includes the neck, front quarters, middle and hind quarters*

The body length is important and all the different parts must be joined together symmetrically.

Be on the lookout for the following faults: U-neck, narrow chest/flat sides, devil's grip, hollow back, sharp or loose shoulders, drooping rump and flat hind quarters.



Legs: *In order to obtain food, the animal must be able to move around*

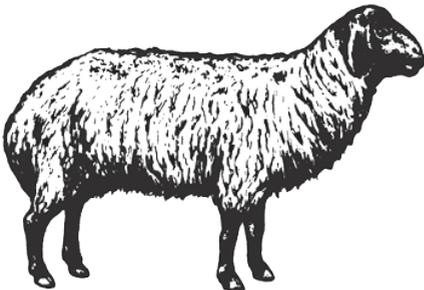
When judging the legs, the following culling faults should be noted: X-hocks and front legs, sickle hocks, weak postern joints, split hooves, upright hocks, sandy legs and brown or black hooves.

Size: *It is determined by the length, breadth and depth of the body*

It is also important for both wool and mutton production. The length of the body is the most important aspect. If the animal is too small for its age, it can be culled.

Rams with the following reproduction faults should be culled: Too small and underdeveloped testicles, abnormally long scrotum, split scrotum, one or no testicles and any abnormality of the reproductive organs.

Wool: *Here it is important to look at the type of wool*



The wool should be judged according to the following characteristics: (Culling takes place according to the degree of intensity)

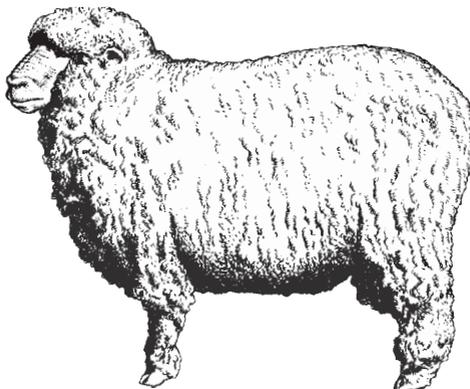
- ❖ *Quality:* This refers to the definition and evenness of crimp, the handle and the

presence of deviating fibres. A lack of definition or regularity of crimp, harsh handling and the presence of noticeably coarse fibres or hair are indications that a sheep should be culled.

- ❖ *Yolk*: The ideal yolk is a white to light cream in colour, spread through the fleece. The absence of yolk indicates that the fleece is dry and weathered, while too much yolk will cause a yellow colour.
- ❖ *Fleece cover*: It is the most important factor when judging wool and is determined by the length, the density and staple formation. The length is judged with regard to the previous shearing date. A sheep can be culled if it has too short wool for a specific length, a watery staple formation, weathered tip or poor density.
- ❖ *Bellies and pieces*: A belly must have a good length, good staple formation and good colour. A sheep with a creeping belly or very short and watery fleece can be culled.

A sheep can have excellent wool but if the conformation indicates a reason for culling it, the animal must be culled, and *vice versa*. The final judging of a woolled sheep must be done by taking into account both its wool and the conformation. If the wool is stronger than 27 microns, the sheep must be culled.

For the selection of the ewes, the same norms and standards are applicable. On reproduction, the ewes are culled for a spoiled udder, too small teats and 'kalbas' teats.



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