

# Suffolk Breed Standards

The Suffolk sheep is a superior producer of lean meat due to rapid early growth, heavy muscling, and efficient conversion of forage and other feedstuffs. Suffolks are striking in breed character and unrivaled in beauty, having jet black, wool-free heads and legs that sharply contrast their clean white fleeces and pink skin. Suffolk genetics are highly-prized by commercial shepherds to improve the weights and carcass quality of their lamb crops, while the Suffolk head is designed to facilitate ease of lambing. All Suffolk sheep should be structurally and reproductively sound. Rams should be robust and masculine, with significant muscling, body volume, and mass as well as ample fertility and libido. Ewes should be feminine yet thickly-muscled, and demonstrate strong capacity for breeding, lambing ease, mothering instinct and milking ability. In both sexes, preference is given to naturally wide-based, deep bodied, easy fleshing animals free of coarseness or over-refinement. As a meat breed, Suffolk breeding rams and ewes should produce fast-growing lambs that yield carcasses with superior composition and conformation, regardless if purebred or commercial crossbreds. While the mature weights of Suffolk sheep may vary considerably, breed character and general proportionality of body should be similar across the breed. Appropriate frame size and growth curve should be chosen to match the specific commercial production environment and target carcass weight.

The USSA exists to define, register, promote, and improve the Suffolk breed for the entire U.S. sheep industry. The commercial sheep industry is diverse in its geography, production systems, products, and markets. Suffolk sheep are useful in a wide variety of commercial applications, from terminal range rams to farm flock ewes, as part of composite breeds and as market lambs. Suffolks are also exhibited in various show classes, from fitted and slick sheared breeding sheep to club lambs and wether sires and dams. Nonetheless, the Suffolk breed standard provides a common identity for all Suffolks and Suffolk breeders. The breed standard serves as the ideal relative to which Suffolk sheep are to be evaluated and improved, in terms of their own phenotype as well as the genetic potential they offer to the industry.

## General Body Shape and Capacity: ..... 20 points

Chest; wide and deep, with these dimensions carrying back into the lower rib. Side Profile; depth of body that carries through middle rib and rear flank. Muscularity; roundness of shape in muscle patterns throughout the body

## Back, Rack, & Loin: ..... 20 points

Back; level from base of neck to tail head. Rack; blends smoothly from the apex of the shoulder and flairs to express muscling. Loin; three dimensional and blends smoothly to the hip

## Rump and Twist: 20 points

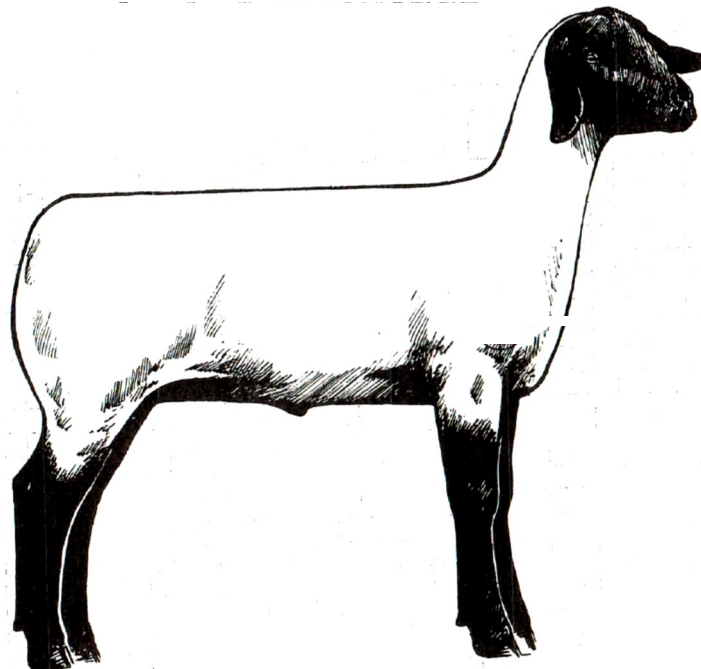
Rump; long and wide, level from hooks to pins, with width at tail head carrying down through a wide stifle, Twist; should be full, broad and deep

## Legs, Feet, & Gait:..20 points

Legs; black with smooth heavy bones, front and rear legs set wide enough to exhibit body width  
Feet; short pasterns with toes pointing straight forward.  
Gait; long and smooth strides, tracking as wide in rear as in front

## Disqualifications:

- \*over-shot or under-shot jaw
- \*Hermaphrodite (animals having both male and female organs)
- \*Inguinal hernia
- \*(rams) very small testicles or single testicle



## Head, Mouth, & Ears:.....15 points

Head; black from poll forward with wide skull, long muzzle, and deep jaw. Mouth; sound, with incisor teeth meeting the pad  
Ears; long, black, bell-shaped, pointing down

## Neck & Shoulders: .....5 points

Neck; moderate length, set smoothly into the shoulders  
Shoulder; smooth with adequate width to enhance functionality and longevity

## Discriminate Against:

- \*upturned vulva
- \*Inverted eyelids
- \*horns
- \*flat or weak pasterns
- \*excessive black fiber in woolled areas
- \*post or straight legged, or sickle hocked, or crooked, bowed, or bent legs
- \*white speckling or splotching on bellies, inner legs, neck or jaw
- \*asymmetrical or split testes
- \*inadequate scrotal circumference (yearling ram < 35 cm.)
- \*pendulous udders, low capacity udders, balloon teats
- \*wild or uncontrollable dispositions
- \*prolapsed uterus or rectum
- \*extreme width at shoulder
- \*unsound movement or gait