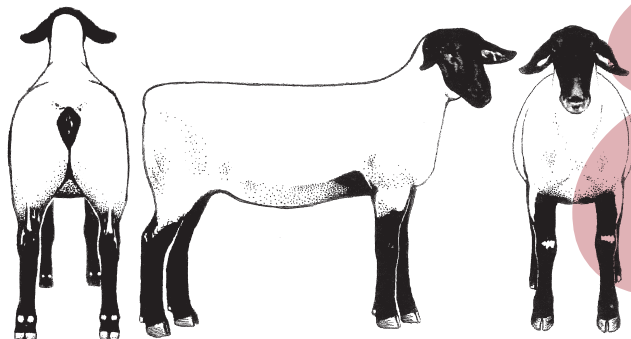


EVALUATION OF THE SUFFOLK



Ewe

This is an image of a broody and maternally functional Suffolk ewe. Her black wool free head is of moderate length, yet strong and feminine and her long bell-shaped ears set low beneath the high crown further identify her as classically Suffolk in character. Her neck and smooth shoulder blend smoothly into a deep flanked, well sprung, high capacity, long mid-section. She is built to easily carry lambs and large amounts of feedstuffs to allow for heavy milk production in lactation. She is deep, yet clean in her chest and set wide and level in her rump structure with a large pelvic area for ease of lambing. Her strong, well angled joints and deep heel on forward pointing feet will contribute to her longevity in the flock.

A ewe should have neither an infantile or upturned vulva as this can affect drainage and lambing. Highly excitable or aggressive ewes can be a danger to their lambs or those of others. A Suffolk ewe should be of calm demeanor but protective and attentive. She should lamb easily, clean her lambs and have them up and nursing within 30 minutes of birth. The ewe should be able to easily raise twins to weaning and additional lambs with extra care and feeding. Many flocks maintain ewe families that consist of daughters and granddaughters of highly productive, easy care ewes.

UDDER EVALUATION



WELL SHAPED UDDER + TEATS

Suspended above the hocks, full, level and balanced with teats set at a slight angle for lamb attachment to nurse.



SWING TYPE UDDER

Weak suspension, low hanging, subject to injury. As the suspensory ligament weakens with age the udder becomes pendulous and can hang below the level of the hocks where it can be easily damaged. As the udder drops the teats may actually become horizontal and rub against her inner leg making them difficult for a newborn to easily access.



TEATS TOO LARGE

Balloon teats that are more difficult for lambs to nurse easily.

As mammals, the sheep's mammary system (udder) provides a critical source of nutrition for young lambs. Even in meat breeds of sheep, udder conformation and milk production is important because it relates directly to lamb growth and increases saleable product.

The strong, well supported, functional udder is of major importance in a useful, productive Suffolk ewe. It allows her to milk heavily, nurse easily, and raise fast growing lambs. The central supporting ligament holds the udder protected, high above her hocks. A pendulous udder is more susceptible to physical trauma. Her teats are moderate in size and easily accessible for her lambs to grasp and nurse. Very small teats or large "balloon" teats would be reason to consider culling the ewe. The udder halves should be equally balanced in size and free from lumps and damage. At weaning they should atrophy and be small and pliable to the touch.