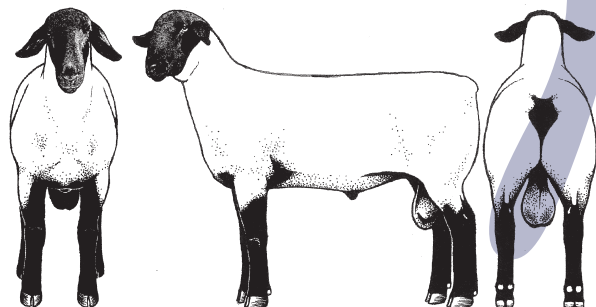


EVALUATION OF THE SUFFOLK



Ram

This is an image of a functional Suffolk ram. He personifies excellent masculinity and Suffolk breed character as evidenced in his deep, wide-set jaw, broad muzzle, long bell shaped ear that is tipped slightly forward, and clean, wool-less, black head and legs. His bold, stout, powerful appearance is apparent in his wide chest floor, moderate length of neck, long body profile, equally deep heart girth and rear flank and rugged flat bone. Additionally, the ram stands square and wide on both the front and rear views, his feet point directly forward, his joints are straight and set at proper angles, his top is wide and he is set wide and level at his dock. The ram presents a silhouette that is long and three dimensionally muscled. His testicular development is balanced and large in circumference. His parts blend smoothly, and he exhibits an attractive and commanding presence.

EVALUATION OF RAM BREEDING SOUNDNESS



SMALL TESTICLES

Associated with low sperm cell counts and viable sperm cells. As a guide, a yearling ram should have a minimum scrotal circumference of about 32 to 33 cm. A ram lamb at eight months of age should be 31 cm at minimum.



UNEVEN TESTICLES

May limit sperm volume and affect fertility. Culling should be considered.



SPLIT TESTICLES

Can affect fertility and proper function of the testicles. Culling should be considered.



TWISTED TESTICLES

Restricts the ability to raise and lower the scrotum to maintain healthy sperm production. Culling should be considered.



CRYPTORCHID

Testicles have not descended into scrotum resulting in infertility. Culling should be considered.



Reproduction of a new lamb crop in sheep depends on fertile rams that reliably breed cycling ewes. Most sheep are somewhat seasonal breeders, with breeding occurring during decreasing day length so that lambing corresponds with natural increases in forage availability. When ewes are cycling, rams must display both adequate libido and appropriate reproductive anatomy to ensure fertility. Prior to the breeding season, a breeding soundness exam to palpate testicular structure and texture, test semen for sperm morphology and motility, and screen for sexually transmitted diseases is recommended. Suffolk rams are most fertile in the fall so that lambs are born in the spring though some rams show some level of fertility earlier than that (ie. Fall lambs born from rams fertile in the spring). The testicles should hang well below the body as body heat or heat in general can contribute to temporary infertility.

In some cases, it may take 60 days for the ram to produce viable semen again. It is wise to have rams semen checked about 30 days prior to breeding to ensure that rams are capable of producing quality semen. In addition, the ram can be evaluated for any abnormalities such as infections or trauma to the rest of the reproductive system. Select for large testicular diameter at the widest point. A ram ready for breeding should have a body condition score of about 3 to 3.5 to be in ideal condition.