

# Suffolk Structural

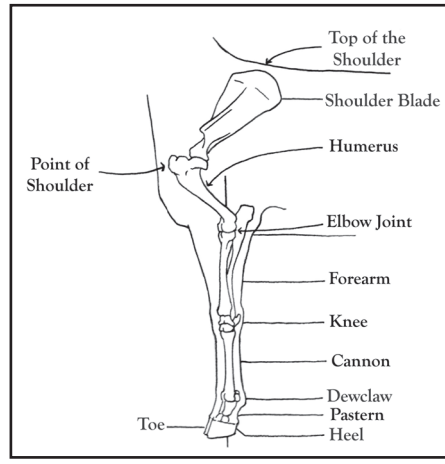
**SUFFOLK**

**CORRECTNESS**

Structural correctness refers to the proper alignment of joints that evenly and naturally distribute a sheep's weight. This allows for free, painless movement and contributes to a sheep's longevity and useful productive life in the flock.

## SHOULDER AND Front Legs

This is a diagram of the proper alignment of the front leg of a sheep. The shoulder blade is set at the correct angle and balances atop the bones of the foreleg. When bones move out of this sort of alignment, there can be excess weight put on a joint that will result in some degree of pain, joint wear and ultimate loss of productive use. Sheep that deal with pain and lameness struggle to move and thrive and are ultimately culled when they do not thrive.



Results from open shoulders (shoulder blades separate) allowing spine to drop. Shoulder blades should come together at the top of the shoulder.



Knee deviates outward affecting longevity and joint stress.

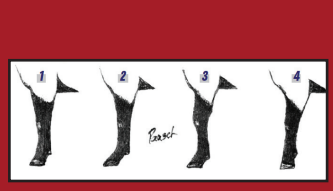


Inward knee deviation causing joint strain and pain that affects hoof wear and longevity.

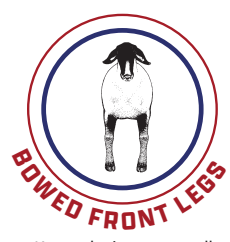


Front legs set close and deviate inward at the knee. Often associated with a narrow chest and lack of capacity.

BY COMPARISON THESE ARE ADDITIONAL ALIGNMENT IMAGES OF THE FRONT LEG AS VIEWED FROM THE SIDE WITH DEVIATIONS THAT SHOULD BE SELECTED AGAINST:



1. Properly aligned front leg, knee is strong and straight and pastern angle set at about 30 degrees for flexibility, heel is deep and toes short suggesting even wear.
2. Weak front pastern, dew claw is lowered, heel is shallow, toe is long. The front leg supports more than 50% of the sheep's weight and this results in painful joints and ability to reach in stride.
3. Over at the knee or "buck kneed". Impairs movement and shortens the life and usefulness of the sheep.
4. Front leg is too straight in joint alignment, a condition that causes lameness due to the excessive concussion and weight distributed on the joints.

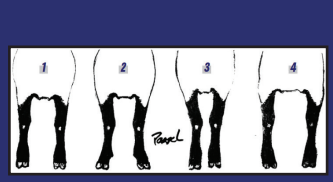


Knees deviate outwardly putting excess stress on joints and affecting longevity and hoof wear.

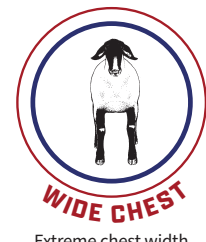


Associated with lack of capacity, vigor and durability.

BY COMPARISON THESE ARE ADDITIONAL ALIGNMENT IMAGES OF THE FRONT LEG AS VIEWED HEAD ON WITH DEVIATIONS THAT SHOULD BE SELECTED AGAINST:



1. Wide, square front leg placement. A plumb line dropped from the point of the shoulder intersects directly through the middle of the knee and foot to evenly distribute weight.
2. Feet and legs deviate outward putting strain on the knee and unevenly distributing weight.
3. Narrow chested indicating lack of capacity and vigor. Legs placed too close together as a result.
4. Wide chested, open shouldered with feet turned inward noticeable in a paddling gait on the move.



Extreme chest width that can be related to a wide shoulder set or over conditioning that affects productivity.



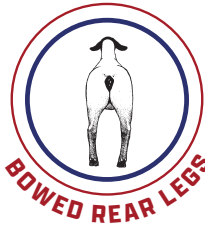
Front feet turn out affecting hoof wear and knee joint function.



## HIP AND

## Rear Legs

The hind leg and all its structural parts bear the weight of the rear portion of the sheep and are used to propel it forward when in motion. As such the weight is aligned evenly under and supporting the pelvis above. When joint angles are optimal, the joints receive minimal stress and function as designed. This allows the sheep to move freely. The images below show how the rear leg should be positioned under the pelvis. Deviations from ideal often result in shortened longevity, lameness and limited utility over the life span of the sheep.



**BOWED REAR LEGS**  
Hocks deviate outward affecting longevity and hoof wear.



**STRAIGHT HOCKED**  
Or post legged, affects joint flexibility resulting in joint pain and reduced longevity.



**SHORT ROUND RUMP**  
Small pelvis that may relate to lambing concerns.



**COW HOCKED**  
Hock joints set close behind affecting longevity and joint stress. The hocks should not rub or touch each other and should therefore be spaced adequately to allow for free unhindered movement.

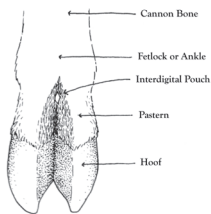


**SICKLE HOCKED**  
Extreme hock angle putting excessive strain on the hock joint and reducing longevity.



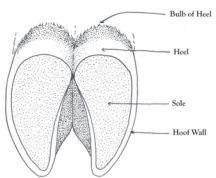
**HIGH FLANK**  
Associated with lack of body capacity needed for high production, hoof wear and longevity.

### ANATOMY OF THE FOOT



Note that for ease of viewing this foot has the toes separated. The ideal foot will have space between the bulbs of the heel and the toes will meet at the front. Open toed sheep will tend to get foreign bodies lodged between the toes causing pain and lameness.

### ANATOMY OF THE HOOF



A properly trimmed foot or one that wears naturally on a structurally correct sheep will look like this at the bottom of the foot. The heel is deep and the toes short. When trimming a foot it is the hoof wall that can grow out of shape and need reshaping.

### WEAK PASTERNS

Causes joint pain, excessive heel wear and severely reduces longevity.



### IDEAL MOVEMENT

The limbs described allow for free, flexible, pain free movement that rewards with longevity and freedom from lameness. A free moving, long-strided sheep will reach forward with its front foot on the ground, as far forward as its nose on profile. It will meet the track of its front foot with its hind foot. Its top will remain level and spine will show flex and lack of stiffness. Weight will be distributed evenly on all four feet and the sheep will stand squarely on all four corners.

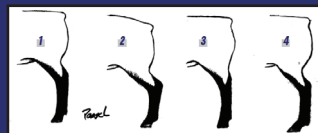
## VISUAL DESCRIPTIONS OF HIP AND REAR LEG STRUCTURAL ISSUES BY COMPARISON THESE ARE ADDITIONAL ALIGNMENT IMAGES OF THE REAR LEG AS VIEWED FROM VARIOUS ANGLES:

### COMPARISON OF PROPER ALIGNMENT OF THE REAR LEG [REAR VIEW] AND THE USUALLY SEEN DEVIATIONS THAT SHOULD BE SELECTED AGAINST:



1. Wide, square, rear leg placement. A plumb line dropped from the pin bones to the hock intersects directly through the middle of the foot to evenly distribute weight.
2. Hocks turned inward, stance is narrow and feet turn outward, uneven weight distribution on the foot.
3. Over at the knee or "buck kneed". Impairs movement and shortens the life and usefulness of the sheep.
4. Bow legged, hocks turn outward, uneven weight distribution on the foot.

### COMPARISON OF PROPER ALIGNMENT OF THE REAR LEG [SIDE VIEW] AND THE USUALLY SEEN DEVIATIONS THAT SHOULD BE SELECTED AGAINST:



1. Rear leg profile correctly aligned. A plumb line dropped from the pin bone touches the front of the hock and intersects the foot in the middle. Joint angle allows for flexibility and even weight distribution.
2. Sickle hocked, weak rear leg rear leg often associated with a sloped rump and sore hocks as the leg is set under the body.
3. Post legged hock that is too straight and lacks flexibility. This puts great strain on the hock joint due to the jarring movement of the limb in motion.
4. A weak rear pastern, dew claw is dropped, heel is shallow and toes grow long and can be swollen and painful over time.