SHEEP CONFORMATION
What is Conformation?

- Conformation is the anatomy and skeletal function and how it impacts the animal’s health, adaptability, longevity, and productivity.
- Made up of Structure, Balance, and Soundness, plus breed traits.
- Visual confirmation scores run from 1-5. 1=best 5=worst
SOUNDNESS

- Animal should be able to move and subsist painlessly, efficiently, and productively throughout its life.
  1.) Should be in good condition and healthy
  2.) Should have a firm foundation
  3.) Sound feet
  4.) Stand squarely
  5.) Should have all body parts in correct position, number, and condition especially: teats, testicles, and teeth.
The way a sheep’s body parts are put together or arranged to form the whole animal.

Structural correctness is important: it includes:

1.) Growth Potential
   - 2.) Volume/Capacity or depth of body
   - 3.) Condition
   - 4.) Legs
   - 5.) Back
   - 6.) Neck
   - 7.) The eye socket
Back should be level and strong with no dip behind shoulders
No weak or splayed backs
Score 1 = Very good, shoulder blades sit squarely on either side of the spine with no ridge between the shoulders, back straight between shoulders and hips.
Score 2 = good
Score 3 = Average, shoulders positioned below the spine to create a ridge.
Score 4 = poor
Score 5 = Extremely high and wide shoulders that create a trough above the spine or extremely low and narrow shoulder blades that create a sharp ridge, back dips severely behind the shoulders.
GROWTH POTENTIAL

- Growth can be estimated in lambs by comparing the cannon bones.
- Through comparison, it can be estimated the size of the lamb at maturity.
VOLUME/CAPACITY OR DEPTH OF BODY

- Basically means that the animal has room inside for heart, lungs, rumen, etc.
- Ewes should have a broad and wide stance in the rear. (close-set rear legs can rub against udder and teats when full of milk.)
Whether a sheep is overly-fat, overly-finished, or thin.

Body condition scoring can be assessed through the fat and muscle over and around the first lumbar vertebra.

System uses the six point system:
0 = emaciation
5 = extreme obesity

Ewes should have a body condition score of 2.5-3.5 during breeding.
LEGS

- Should be straight
- Come out of each corner of the body squarely and end in strong pasterns for fleetness and agility.
- Below knee should be slight and slender from absence of muscles.
- Upper leg should be larger.
- Leg/feet are a combined trait.
Neck and Eye Socket

- Neck should be full and entering the shoulders high up
- "ewe-necked" appearance = where neck enters the shoulders low and there is a dip between the neck and the shoulders.
- Eye socket should be prominent giving the animal all around vision.
http://www.thebigem.com/agriculture/images/08showphotos/P%20Dorset-Ch%20Ewe-low-res.jpg
Letty Klein, Pine Lane Farm Karakuls, Kalamazoo, Michigan, http://www.shetlandsheepinfo.com/CONFORMATION/
Danekeclublambs.com/sheepfeetlegstructure
Nzsheep.co

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