



Interested Fairs and Expositions:

Re: Market Lamb and Goat Fair Weights

From an industry standpoint we are accustomed to dealing with a wide spread of weights at the time of harvest. We recognize that due to the diversity of genetics that are present in market lambs there is a wide range of acceptable endpoints for those animals in terms of weight – and our main concern is that those animals be at a natural endpoint in terms of carcass composition regardless of weight. It is our firm belief that we should aim for fair lambs to fall within what we would consider to be an optimum range (roughly speaking 100-110 on the bottom side, and 140-150 on the top side), but we would advise against automatically sending an animal home and excluding it from the show due to it exceeding the top weight.

To accomplish this in many instances we have seen the following happen: the fair has a maximum “pay” weight that the exhibitor will receive compensation for via the Junior Livestock Auction. Many fairs have adopted this type of scenario with their steer shows for a great number of years. There are multiple benefits to this scenario: the exhibitor has no economic incentive to bring a larger animal than this optimum, the animal is more likely to be appropriately managed and hydrated (we’ve seen a much higher incident of dehydrated and stressed animals from fairs that enforce a maximum top weight) which allows for a better experience for either the fair’s customer or our customer depending on the ultimate disposition of the animal, and from an animal management/public perception standpoint we are putting forth a more appropriate view of animal agriculture when people see content healthy animals laying in a pen at the country fair.

If the judge that you have selected for your fair is following the market lamb scorecard that is put out by the division of Fairs and Expositions you will be providing both the general public and we as your processors a consumer acceptable product. The scorecard is as follows:

*Market Ready: Backfat of .16”-.35”, yield grades 2 and 3, average or better conformation*

*Not Market Ready: Backfat of .15” or less, or backfat greater than or equal to .36” (lambs with a corresponding yield grade of 1 are too lean, yield grades of 4 and 5 are too fat). In this scenario, Market ready would sell, not market ready would not sell.*

Another area of interest has been weight ranges for market goats. Overall, the numbers being shown are showing tremendous year over year growth, but there is still some confusion on what the parameters are for their weights. Because the majority of goats that we process go into the ethnic trade, we have no issues currently with the lighter weight animals (starting at around 60-65 pounds), but however we have found that goat greater than 110 pounds have become an issue. With that being said, we’re advocating a market goat weight range of 60-110 pounds. This is a reduction on the top end weight for goats as compared to what we’ve advocated in the past. **New for the 2012 year, the top pay weight that Superior will agree to is 110 pounds.** We do understand that some premium books may have already gone to print, and we are not asking for you to amend what you’re doing for this year in that case; however, please understand that we are encouraging a migration in this direction as soon as it logically makes sense. Also, similar to the lambs we don’t advocate sending animals home if they are above the 110 pound weight, but we would like to lessen the incentive for those animals to be exhibited.

Hopefully this information will be beneficial to you to help send a better product to our facility.