

## **SHEEP TEST STUDY GUIDE**

### **Bronze, Silver, Gold**

Male and female sheep are called by different names; males are known as Rams and females are known as Ewes. When a Ram is castrated they are then known as a Wether.

Sheep are known for their wool and meat by most people. Some sheep are known as wool breeds and others are known as meat breeds. Listed below are some of the best known breeds in the United States.

Suffolk – Meat breed

Hampshire – Meat breed

Dorset – Meat breed has medium wool

Southdown – Known for both its meat and wool

Oxford – Meat breed

Rambouillet – Known for both its meat and wool

Merino – Known for its wool

Columbia – Known for its wool

Lanolin is also a product used from sheep. It is used in products such as cosmetics, motor oils, and printing inks as well as many others.

Like most livestock, almost all of the body is used from its meat to its wool, as well as its oils and hide.

When raising a market lamb you will want to choose more from the meat breeds than you would a wool breed.

Getting to know what your lamb project needs from feed to its environment is very important.

When it comes to what feed you choose to give your lamb, you want to make sure it has the right mixture of roughage, fibers, minerals, vitamins, and concentrates to help your lamb gain weight it needs at the proper rate. A good market lamb will gain around a half pound a day when fed right. You need to make sure that it has fresh clean water daily and a clean pen to live in. Feeding your lamb at the same times daily or as close as you can is best. Listed below is what each of these five things do.

HAY – Roughage (Low in TDN or energy, high in fiber)

GRAIN – Concentrates (High in TDN or energy, low in fiber)

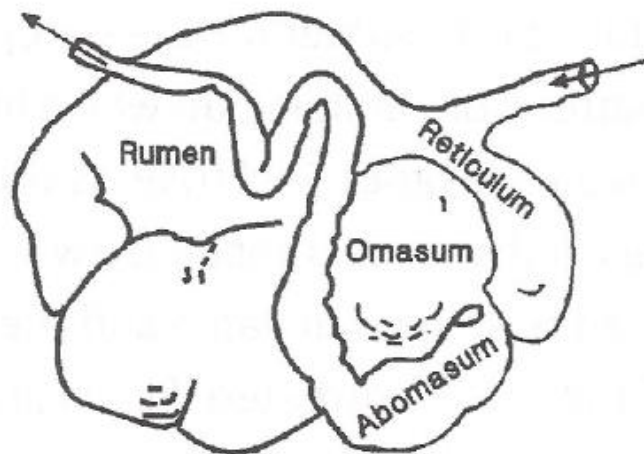
STRAW – Fiber (Hard to digest, such as stems or straw)

MINERALS – (Both minerals and vitamins are food substances)

VITAMINS – (Build bones and promote good health)

TDN (Energy) – (Total digestible nutrients)

Sheep are part of the Ruminant classification of animals; they are classified this way because of their four-chambered stomach and cud-chewing behavior. Cud is regurgitated, re-chewed, and re-swallowed food bolus. The four chambers of the stomach are called the Rumen, Omasum, Abomasum, and Reticulum. Below is a picture showing the chambers of the stomach.



A lamb's body temperature when healthy is 102.3, but it can range from 100.9 to 103.0. If it is over or under that range, there is most likely something wrong.

If your lamb is sick or sometimes because it isn't eating right, it can get the Scours (diarrhea). There are a few treatments for this, but before treating it yourself it is best to contact your leader to find out what will be the best treatment for your lamb.

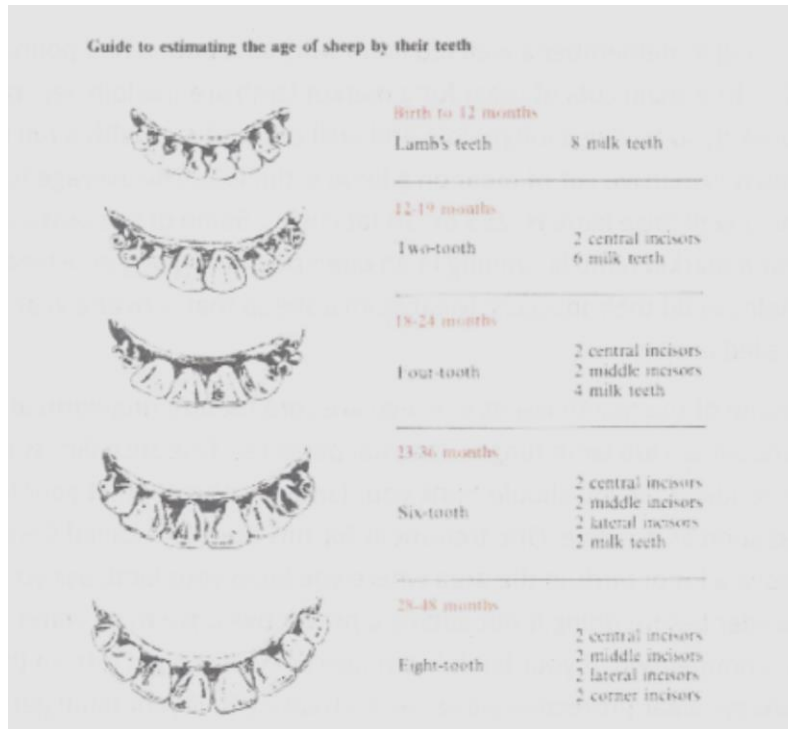
Scrapie tags are used to track the sheep back to its birth place (farm). Scrapie's is a fatal degenerative disease similar to mad cow disease but so far it has not been shown to be able to pass to humans like mad cow. There is no treatment at this time, until recently the animal had to be killed to check for Scrapie, but there is now a test where the animal does not have to be. If the sheep is infected it must be destroyed.

Keeping your lambs hooves trimmed is very important, if the hooves are not maintained well they can develop hoof rot. If hoof rot is left untreated, the lamb can become lame and in severe cases can cause death.

Most 4-H project lambs will have been bought when the lamb is between 2 ½ months old and 3 months old. If it is a male lamb it will already have been castrated, which is the removal of the testicles. Your lamb will have been docked as well by the time you get it. Docking is the removal of the tail. It is healthier for the sheep to be docked as it helps prevent fecal matter from building up, which in turn helps to prevent fly strikes and wool maggots. Fly Strikes is the name for when blow flies lay their eggs in the feces trapped between the tail and body. If the lamb is not docked, the eggs will hatch and the maggots will start eating on live flesh. If this is left untreated it can kill the lamb. When you first get your lamb you will need to keep an eye on the dock to make sure it has fully healed and is kept clean.

The male and the female lambs should have had their over-eating shots and their first dose of wormer. A lamb needs to be wormed every 30 days, it's best to rotate 3 different kinds of wormer. Ask your breeder what they wormed with; if the breeder used Ivomec than you could use Valbazen after 30 days, then Safe Guard 30 days from then. You want to try and end with Safe Guard 30 days from then. You want to try and end with Safe Guard because it has one of the shortest withdrawal times, Ivomec has an 11 day withdrawal time and Valbazen has a 7 day withdrawal time. Valbazen isn't to be used in pregnant ewes in their first trimester. There are other kinds of wormers; these three are just the most common. Withdrawal time is the amount of time you have to wait before slaughter from the time you gave the dose.

A lamb has 8 incisors (teeth), a full grown sheep has 8 incisors and 24 molars for a total of 32 teeth. Sheep do have upper teeth in the back; they do not have upper teeth in the front.



When showing your lamb at fair, the judge may ask you to mouth your lamb. They are asking you to show them the lamb's teeth. You use your index and middle finger to do this. You place these fingers between the lamb's lips and spread them apart. Which hand you use depends on what side of the lamb you are on. You can tell a lamb's approximate age by their teeth as shown in the diagram above.

When you go to choose your feeder lamb (market) you will be looking for an animal that has good conformation, is in good health, and at a weight that is within range to be able to show when you are finished raising it. Remember a well fed lamb will gain about half pound a day.

The four main cuts of meat for a market lamb are the loin, leg, rack, and brisket. The most expensive cut of meat on a lamb is the loin, so having a longer loin and well covered rack with a full leg is preferable. The average back fat on a well raised lamb is .255 or .16 fat cover. Some of the best exercise for a market lamb

is running in an open pen or walking on a treadmill, as it helps build their muscles. Meat from a sheep that is over a year old is called mutton. Some of the health issues in sheep are sore mouth, ringworm also known as club lamb fungus, and internal parasites. One such illness is called Coccidiosis; if you should think your lamb has this, contact your leader as soon as possible. One treatment for this disease is called Corid. If you have a lot of birds in the area where you keep your lamb, ask your leader before doing it, but adding a preventative dose to its water may be recommended. If your lamb has ringworm you can get it from them; always wear protective gloves when treating it. If your lamb gets sore mouth, treat the sores on the outside of the mouth with iodine using gloves whenever treating or touching it, as this could be contagious to you as well.

### **Breeding**

During breeding and lambing season there are things to do and watch out for. About two weeks before breeding, ewes should be fed a half or one pound of grain per day, this is called flushing. This works better in mature ewes than it does in younger ewes. When a ewe is in estrus it means she is receptive to mating with the ram. The gestation period for sheep is 145 to 155 days, some will say 5 months. After breeding season, the weight of the ewe should be watched, a ewe that gets too fat has a higher chance of having vaginal prolapsing. Pregnancy toxemia is another disorder to look out for ewes that are too fat or too thin, and old ewes are more prone to this. Treatment for this is to increase their blood glucose level. Treatments other than feeding concentrates might include; oral propylene glycol, or corn syrup. They are quick sources of energy and should be given at the rate of 200 ml 4 times daily along with 3 to 4 liters of an electrolyte solution designed for dehydration in livestock.

Colostrum is the first milk the ewe produces and it is important that the lamb gets this first milk, it is high in antibodies and helps protect the new born lambs against diseases.

When it is time for weaning, it is best to stop feeding grain at least two weeks before the lamb is removed from the ewe. This will help the ewe start drying up her milk; it will also help prevent Mastitis. Mastitis is inflammation of the ewe's udder which left untreated can cause her to not be able to produce milk. A lamb will start nibbling on creep feed when it is 7 to 10 days old, so having it available for them is smart. A creep feeder is a feeder that the lamb can get to freely, but the ewe has no access. It should have feed in it at all times for when the lambs wish to eat.

When it comes to docking a lamb's tail, this should be done after the lamb is over 24 hours of age but fewer than 10 days old. When banding, the area should be clean, spray an antibiotic around the area and give a tetanus antitoxin shot. Place the elastrator/band at the desired location and release. Placing two bands

is also done by some, so if one band breaks the other is still in place. After banding, the tail should fall off between 7 and 10 days. If it doesn't, it is fine to cut it off on the far side of the band from the body. The blood flow has been cut off long enough that the tail is dead from the bottom of the band down.

Castrating a ram lamb should be done before they are 3 months old. Many will hold off castrating ram lambs until they are 2 ½ months old, because ram lambs grow faster and bigger than wether lambs. Some lambs are called bummer lambs; these are the ones that were not raised by their mothers, some also call them bottle babies. A lamb born from two different breeds of sheep is called a cross bred.

Lambs are given overeating shots; the medical term for this is **Enterotoxaemia**. The first of these shots aren't given until the lamb is over 6 weeks of age, the second one is given 4 to 6 weeks later.

Of the different shots sheep get from wormers to overeating shots, some are given subcutaneous and others are given intramuscular. Always check to make sure what is called for with what you are giving. Subcutaneous is directly beneath the skin whereas intramuscular is into the heavy muscle.

