

## Sarah M. Smith

### 2018 Asotin County Fair Sheep Judge

#### The Ideal Market Lamb

- A lamb that will produce a high quality carcass and a good eating experience for our lamb consumers.
- Try to select a lamb that can positively represent all segments of the lamb industry from the farm, through feeding, at the packing house and on the consumers plate.
- Ideal lamb will be between 125-145 pounds, however each animal is different at it is more important to go towards an ideal fat thickness than weight. A smaller framed lamb might be finished at a lower weight, while larger framed lambs might require more weight to be finished.
- Blue ribbon lambs will be lambs that are market ready (ready to go to harvest). A Yield Grade 2 or 3.
- Red ribbon lambs will be lambs that are not market ready or past market prime, Yield grade 1 (under finished) or Yield grade 4/5 (over finished).
- White ribbon lambs will be unthrifty lambs that should not be put on a truck/shipped to a packing plant.
- Ideal backfat thickness will be a Yield grade 2, or between .16 to .25.
- Lambs should have above average muscle
- Lambs should be less than 12 months of age. **ADDED NOTE: Market Lambs must be born after July 1<sup>st</sup> according to fair guidelines**
- Lambs should be structurally correct and able to travel smoothly in motion
- Lambs should be free of defects/disease.

#### **Showmanship**

As a showmanship judge, I think there are many different ways to present a lamb. And the best way is the way that makes your lamb look it best. I like lambs that look natural thick, not in a power brace—I'm looking for the best lamb, not the best showed lamb in quality. The best showed lamb is one that shows out the faults and highlights the good qualities of a lamb. Lambs should be showed the same way in showmanship as in quality. I have 3 basic rules:

- 1) Watch the classes before you—I will run each ring very similar to the last—I am not out there to trick you. I am out there to evaluate your lamb and showmanship to help find good quality lambs that represent our industry; that our consumers want to eat; and showmen that I feel are good shepherds, can take care of the lamb both inside (showmanship/presentation) and outside (knowledge—I will ask questions) the showing. I like classes and my showing to be organized and to run efficiently.
- 2) Do not pick the lamb up off the ground by its neck. I will give you one warning to keep the lambs feet on the ground. After the second warning I will stop evaluating your lamb or showmanship skills. Pick your lambs feet up to set them up.
- 3) Do not slap your lambs to get the to brace harder. Not only is this an animal care issue of not how to properly care for your lamb, but I want a lamb in a natural brace (not one when they are pushing so hard that it looks unnatural or the humped up in the back).