

Hampshire Breed Standards

revised November 2007

1. GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Hampshire is a large, open faced and active sheep with a mild disposition.

Appearance: Major emphasis, is placed on such traits as weight per age, muscling, freedom from unsoundness, breed type, multiple births and strength while maintaining quality and general balance. Hampshires are noted for their rapid growth and efficient feed conversion. Lambs should be youthful in appearance.

Size: Mature rams should weigh 300 pounds or more and mature ewes should weigh 200 pounds or more in breeding condition.

2. BREED TYPE

Head: The face should be of good length, dark in color, and practically free of wool from the eyes down. An unbroken wool cap should extend from the neck over the forehead.

Ears: The ears should be moderate in length, thick, covered with a coarse dark brown or black hair and free from wool.

Nose: Broad muzzled, covered with a coarse dark brown or black hair. Wool feathering is acceptable and desirable. Should be open around the eyes. Small amount of "frostiness" on the nose is acceptable.

Legs: Some wool is desirable below the knee.

Off Color: The Hampshire should be free of white spots on jaws, legs and ears. Judges should be encouraged to discriminate against off color.

General: The Hampshire should show quality without weakness and size without coarseness. Masculinity in the ram and femininity in the ewe should be notable.



3. STRUCTURE

Feet and Legs: Both the front and rear legs should be well placed under the corners of the body with ample elevation off the ground to give it the height to balance with the body size. Short legs are associated with a small short body and early maturity. The legs should be of ample bone as noted by the circumference below the knees. Hocks that are straight (post legged) or have too much set (sickle hocked) are indicators of unsoundness. The angle of the hock should allow free movement. Proper shoulder angle and neck set should allow sheep to reach with a long stride in front. The pasterns should be strong with toes rather close together, even in size with a deep heel.

Movement: Should be free with long fluid strides. Should stand squarely with no bends in the knees. Toes should face forward.

4. BODY

Neck: The neck should come out of the top of the shoulder.

Shoulders: The shoulders should be smooth in appearance. Not extremely course.

Chest, Brisket and Heart Girth: Should have width of chest and smoothness of brisket.

Back: The body should be relatively deep with a strong level top and the greater length from the last rib to the base of the dock. The back should be strong, well muscled and uniform throughout. It should be covered well with muscle and not fat.

Ribs: Should have adequate spring and depth of the rib.

Loin: Loin should be long, deep and wide

Rump & Hip: Should be long, level and wide at the pins.

Hindquarters: Considerable depth and bulge should be displayed in the leg muscle.

Underline: Should extend relatively straight from chest floor to flank. It is an indication of depth of body and capacity.

Skin: Should be relatively free of wrinkles

Fleece: The fleece of the Hampshire should be of good length, uniform and grade 1/4 to 3/8 bloods (54's to 60's spinning count). Black fibers in the fleece and hairy breeches should be avoided. A pink skin in a healthy animal is preferred. A year's production of wool should weigh approximately 8 pounds.

5. REPRODUCTIVE TRAITS

The reproductive organs of both the ram and ewe should be normal and well developed.

Rams

Testicles: At 12 months of age scrotal circumference should be 33 cm. Larger testicle size in rams has proven them to be fertile for more extended periods of time and to sire daughters with earlier puberty.

Fertility: High fertility and sex drive in rams. Regardless of season of year, the ram should breed a large number of ewes, which produce a high percentage of multiple births. The sire should transmit livability and ease of lambing to his offspring.

Ewes

Conception Rate: Ewes should conceive on first service regardless of the season of the year. Replacement ewes and prospective sires should be selected from ewes that settle within 42 days after the introduction of the ram to the breeding flock.

Parturition: Ewes in satisfactory physical condition should need minimal assistance when lambing. They should have the ability to produce, at least, two strong and active lambs. They must provide adequate milk supply to insure maximum growth. The ewe should exhibit a strong desire to protect her offspring. Ideally a ewe should produce 100% or more of her body weight in 120 days.

Teats and Udder: Should have two moderate size and shaped teats and tightly attached udders.

Other Desirable Traits

Parasite and Disease Resistance: Breeders are encouraged to select animals that exhibit resistance to disease of hoof and body.

Environmental

Adaptability: The ability of an animal to adapt to immediate surroundings is reflected in a faster rate of growth and an increased reproductive capacity. Hamps are quiet and not easily excited.

6. HIGHLY OBJECTIONABLE

CHARACTERISTICS

- Scurs
- Split scrotum
- Black fiber
- Insufficient weight for age
- Over aging

7. DISQUALIFYING

CHARACTERISTICS

- Absence of Breed Type (no wool cap or leg wool)
- Mal-formed mouth



- Less than 2 testicles in rams
- Less than 2 teats in ewes
- Excessive white spots
- Narrow/shallow body appearance

8. DNA TESTING INFORMATION

Scrapie:

- Scrapie is an infectious disease caused by a prion which is transmitted through placental tissues and fluids.
- The presence of Scrapie can be detected only in the brain and lymph tissue, including tonsils and third eyelid tissue, but not in blood.
- Genetic testing called Codon 171 & 136 indicates whether sheep are resistant or susceptible to the scrapie prion.
- Codon 171 classifications (hereinafter referred to as genotype) are RR, QR and QQ.
- Sheep with RR and QR genotypes are resistant to scrapie. Those with QQ are susceptible to scrapie only if exposed to the scrapie prion.

- Codon 136 classifications hereinafter referred to as genotype) are AA, AV and VV.

- Sheep with AA genotypes are resistant to scrapie. Those with AV and VV are susceptible to scrapie only if exposed to the scrapie prion.

- Ewes with a QQ genotype can only have lambs with a QQ or QR genotype

Spider Syndrome:

- Genetic Testing is also available for this disease. An NN result is means that animal is not a carrier. An NS indicates a carrier for this disease.



American Hampshire Sheep Association
PO Box 231, 305 Lincoln - Wamego, KS - (785) 456-8500
www.hampshires.org