

*Border Cheviots are a small-framed breed of sheep known for their vigor, mothering ability, muscle and ease of fleshing. Along with their size, the head is another unique characteristic of the Border Cheviot.*

## I. GENERAL APPEARANCE 25 POINTS

- A. **APPEARANCE:** Alert, active, stylish and symmetrical, standing on moderate leg length. The overall body exhibits balance.
- B. **SIZE:** The preferred Cheviot is proportional in height and length with length equal to or exceeding the height of the animal. The average Cheviot ram should weigh approximately 200 pounds at maturity. The average Cheviot ewe should weigh approximately 150 pounds at maturity.

## II. BREED TYPE 25 POINTS

The beauty of the Cheviot head is one of the breed's distinguishing features. The Cheviot style, alertness and contrasting colors set the breed apart from others.

- A. **HEAD:** Medium in length and broad, with ample width between the eyes. Straight with little arch between the eyes and nostrils; more strongly arched in rams.
1. **EARS:** Medium in length, sharply erect, of medium thickness, and placed on top of the head. The circumference of the ears should give a curved appearance, rather than flat and open. From a side view, the ears should be pointed slightly forward.
  2. **EYES:** Large, round, clear and alert, with black pigmentation around the rim of the eye.
  3. **NOSE:** Broad muzzled, with large nostrils forming a black "T" at the end of the nose.
  4. **MOUTH:** Black lipped with a strong, deep jaw.
- B. **HAIR COVERING:** Head, ears, and legs well covered with fine, short, white hair. Black spots are acceptable on the ears and poll. Black spots on any other part of the body are objectionable. Brown hair on any part of the body is HIGHLY objectionable.
- C. **HOOVES:** Black in color.

## III. STRUCTURE

25 POINTS

Soundness is imperative in useful Cheviot sheep. Incorrectness decreases the animal's movement, growth, reproductive rate, longevity, usefulness and ultimate value. Additionally, structure and soundness are highly inheritable traits.

Cheviots should stand on large circumference of bone with adequate size to the foot.

Structural soundness relates to the skeleton. Incorrectness in one part of the skeleton usually is connected to incorrectness in other parts of the skeleton. For example, usually post-legged animals are also too straight in their shoulder angle.

### Areas of Structural Correctness

**FOREQUARTERS:** Shoulder blades should be set in uniformly and smoothly to the rest of the body.

**BACK:** The back of Cheviot sheep should be straight as possible from the top of the shoulder to the dock. A slightly elevated shoulder in comparison to the hip is acceptable. Additionally, slight slope of the hip from the hook bones to the pin bones is acceptable.

### **FRONT FEET:**

**Front View:** Both feet should point forward and be perpendicular to the body with straightness from the chest floor to the toe.

**Side View:** Feet should be straight from the chest floor through the knee and to the pastern. The angle of the pastern should be approximately 45 degrees. Less of an angle allows for weak pasterns and more of an angle allows for extreme straightness.

### **REAR FEET:**

**Side View:** The back of the rear leg should be perpendicular to the pin bones of the hip. Less angle allows for post-legged individuals. More angle causes sheep to be sickle-hocked.

**Rear View:** Legs should be square and perpendicular to the corners of the body with equal distance between legs at the hock and the toe.

**MOVEMENT:** Animals should maintain the proper correctness to the skeleton both while standing and moving. Many times structural defects are not evident until the animal moves about. It is then important to assess structural correctness both while the Cheviot is standing and moving.

For the beginner and western breeder alike, an excellent article on feet and leg soundness in sheep is "Feet and Legs" (North Central Regional Extension Publication #101) by Dr. Harold Hermsman and Margaret Benson of Michigan State University.

#### IV. BODY

25 POINTS

- A. **NECK:** Moderately long, trim, and exhibiting extension, blending smoothly into shoulders, and contributing to an overall balanced appearance. The skin should be free of wrinkles or folds.
- B. **SHOULDERS:** Smoothly laid in from neck to back. Tight at top of the shoulder, also smooth at the point of the shoulder.
- C. **CHEST, BRISKET AND HEART GIRTH:** Chest deep and moderately wide, but trim, with adequate capacity, and fitting smoothly into neck and shoulders. Brisket also trim. Heart girth full, broad and deep to promote longevity.
- D. **BACK (TOPLINE):** Long and level, no weakness in front or behind the shoulder.
- E. **RIBS:** Deep and well sprung with adequate cover. Essential for vigor and ease of fleshing.
- F. **LOIN:** Long, wide, deep, and well covered.
- G. **HINDQUARTERS:** Hip broader than shoulders. Rump wide, long and level out to the dock. Leg heavily muscled.
- H. **UNDERLINE:** Level and as parallel to the topline as possible. Flanks deep and full.
- I. **FLEECE:** Chalky white in color, uniform crimp with blunt ends; staple is definite. Covers the body completely from behind the poll and ears to slightly above the knees and hocks, including the belly.  
Wool Grade:  
1/4 to 3/8 blood combing  
(48s to 58s or 33 to 27 microns)  
Weight of fleece:  
Rams, 8 to 14 pounds.  
Ewes, 6 to 10 pounds.  
Fleece Characteristics highly objectionable but not disqualifying:  
A. Black, brown or grey spots in the fleece  
B. Hairy britch  
C. Kemp through the fleece  
D. Shiny fleece
- J. **TESTICLES (RAMS):** Uniform and adequate size for age, and well descended from body. Free from any abnormalities. Scrotum free from any split.
- K. **TEATS (EWES):** Two well placed teats of moderate length, free from any abnormalities.

#### V. HIGHLY OBJECTIONABLE CHARACTERISTICS

1. Poor breed type
2. Scurs
3. Bare belly
4. High shoulders
5. Pink or white hooves
6. Nose not totally black
7. Sandy or brown hair on any part of the body
8. Split scrotum
9. Fleece characteristics per paragraph IV (I)

#### VI. DISQUALIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

1. Horns
2. Malformed mouth (overshot or undershot jaw)
3. Less than two testicles in rams
4. Less than two teats in ewes
5. Totally pink nose

### Implementing New Breed Standards

The new Cheviot Standards of Excellence were adopted at the 2004 annual meeting of the American Cheviot Sheep Society. The new Breed Standards are the result of more than two years of work by a committee formed in 2002. Through the process of updating the Cheviot Breed Standards, members presented many thoughts and proposals. These thoughts were debated until the final draft was approved by a vote of the members in November 2004.

While probably not perfect, these Standards represent a significant step forward in the preservation of both the desirable carcass and the beautiful and distinctive Cheviot appearance. Now the important task of applying these Standards is up to all Cheviot breeders. Taking time to explain and demonstrate the preferred Cheviot characteristics to young 4-Hers and others who desire to be Cheviot breeders is critical.

Another important task in assuring that these Standards are followed is to choose judges for national Cheviot competitions who will apply them in the show ring. To help the Board of Directors evaluate how an individual judge applies the Breed Standards of Excellence, we ask that you fill out the critique form found on the back page of the Cheviot Journal. If you need extra copies of the critique form, please contact the ACSS office. It is very important for each member to do this so we can establish a judge's review to assist in the selection of judges for national shows who follow the Breed Standards.

The American Cheviot Sheep Society has taken a large step forward in guarding and maintaining the quality of our Cheviot breed. It is now up to each one of us to complete this task. Please fill out a judge critique form for each show you attend and follow the instructions for submitting the form. If you would like extra copies of the Cheviot Breed Standards of Excellence to share with judges in your area, please contact the ACSS office.