

# MARKET LAMB BREED CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

**A QUICK-BOOK FOR REFERENCING THE MARKET LAMB CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES.**

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**UPDATED 2020**

**A collaboration by the Texas County Agricultural Agents Association, Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas, TCAAA Animal Industries Committee, ATAT Major Livestock Show Advisory Committee, Texas FFA, and Texas 4-H.**

\*Please keep in mind, registration papers, breeder affidavits, or other paperwork is not considered in the classification process. Eligibility for the class is determined only by visual appraisal, as evaluated by classifiers appointed by show management.

# CLASSIFICATION TERMS:

- **Acceptable:** Characteristics that represent the breed.
- **Discriminatory:** Characteristics that are not reason for absolute disqualification but in combination with other discriminatory visual characteristics could lead to removal from a breed division.
- **Absolute Disqualifications:** Unfavorable visual characteristics resulting in removal from a breed division.
- **Scur:** Horn growth that is not completely attached to the skull.
- **Birthmark:** Dark pigmented skin with dark fiber present within the margins of the pigmentation.

SCURS:  
HORN GROWTH  
THAT IS NOT  
COMPLETELY  
ATTACHED TO  
THE SKULL



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# CALLIPYGE







FINEWOL

# ACCEPTABLE BREED TRAITS

1. Rambouillet, Delaine, Debouillet, or a cross between these breeds.
2. Silky, white face.
3. Silky ears, medium to moderate in length.
4. Soft pelt.
5. Yellow to white hooves (neutral).
6. Black pads on hooves and black dew claws.
7. Minimal amount of black streaking in the hooves. Less than 1/8 of cumulative hoof surface.
8. Nose should be neutral to pink in color.
9. May be polled or horned. Horns must be indicative of acceptable Finewool breeds.

No Color Markings in Wool



Soft Britch



Silky white face & Moderate Length of Ears

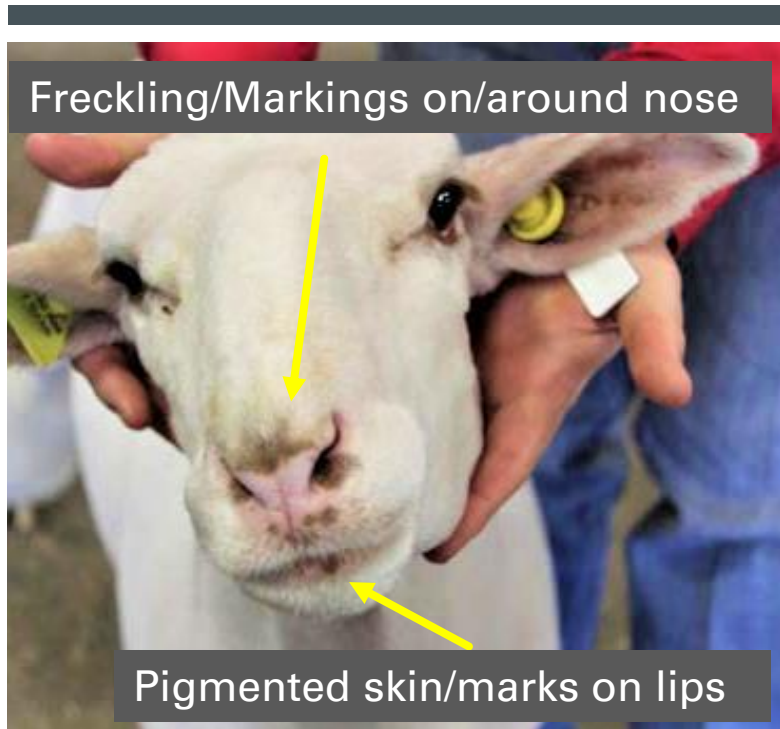


ACCEPTABLE BREED TRAITS

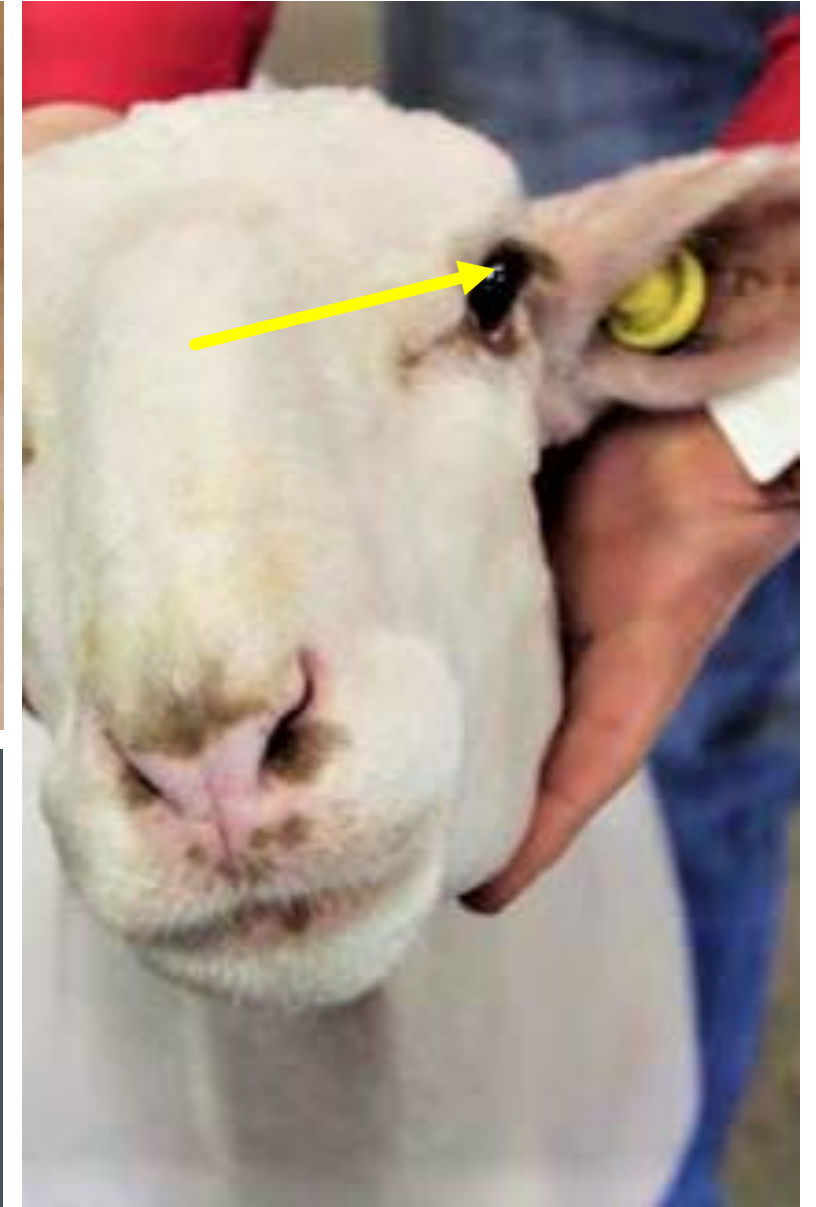
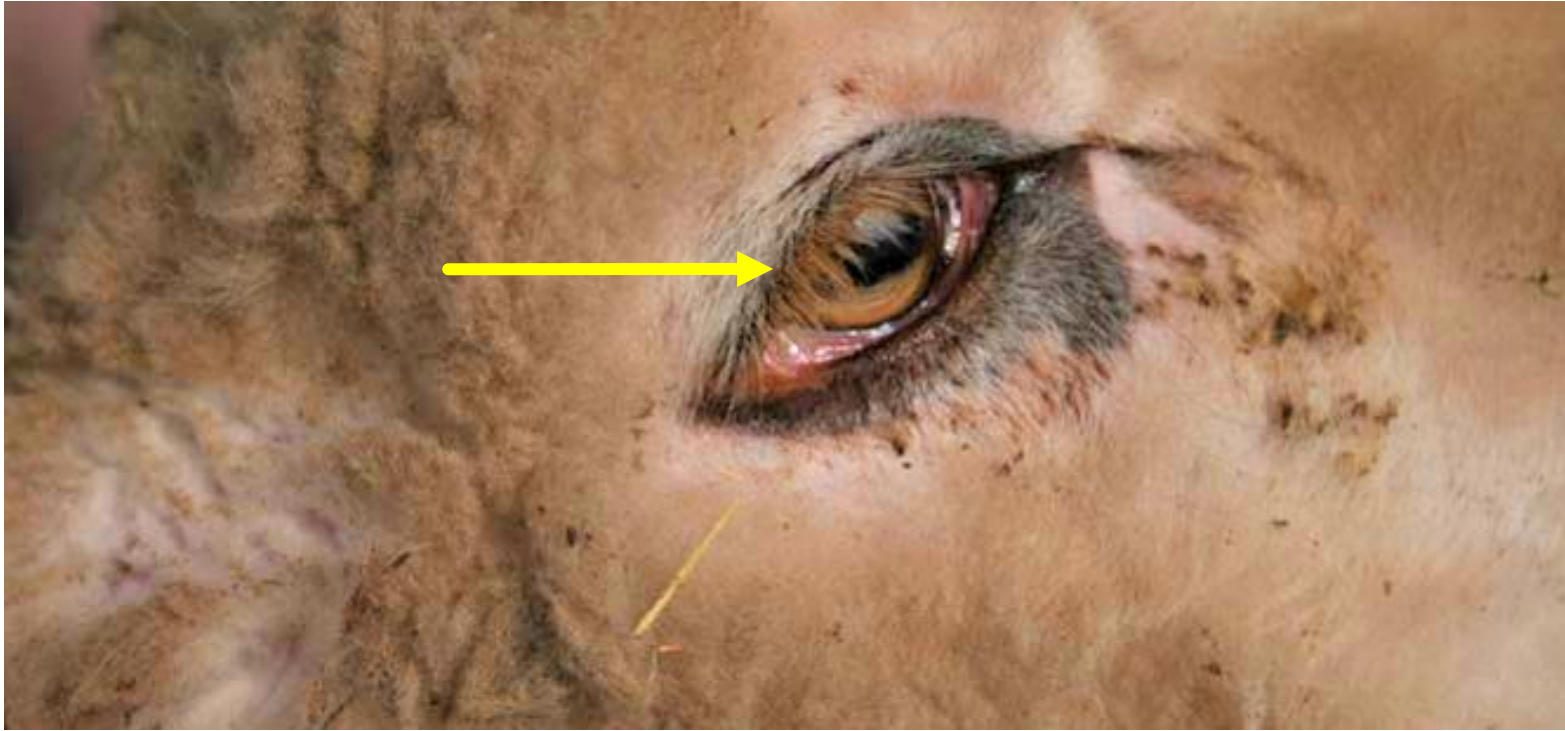
# DISCRIMINATORY BREED TRAITS

1. Moderate amounts of brown or black spots in the skin and/or wool.
2. Moderate freckling or pigmented skin (brown or black) on the ears, eyes, nose, and lips.
3. Black eyelashes.
4. Excessive black streaking in hooves more than 1/8 cumulative of hoof surface.
5. Birthmarks.





**MODERATE FRECKLING OR PIGMENTED SKIN (BROWN OR BLACK) ON THE EARS, EYES, NOSE, AND LIPS**



BLACK/DARK BROWN EYELASHES





EXCESSIVE BLACK STREAKING MORE THAN 1/8 OF THE  
CUMULATIVE HOOF SURFACE



**BIRTHMARKS- DARK  
PIGMENTED SKIN WITH  
DARK FIBER PRESENT  
WITHIN THE MARGINS OF  
THE PIGMENTATION**



# ABSOLUTE DISQUALIFICATION

1. Excessively coarse britch and/or harsh pelt.
2. Excessive coarse, chalky, white hair on the face, in the flanks, and/or down the front and/or rear legs.
3. Excessive brown or black spots in the skin and/or wool.
4. Excessive freckling or pigmented skin (brown or black) on the ears, eyes, nose, and lips.
5. Brown or black spots in hairline above the hooves to the dew claw.
6. Solid black hooves.
7. Black lambs.
8. Surgical alterations other than re-docking.
9. Steep hip or tendency to show callipyge gene.
10. Head, ear and/or horn shape non-typical to the Finewool breeds (Rambouillet, Delaine, Debouillet, or a cross between these breeds).

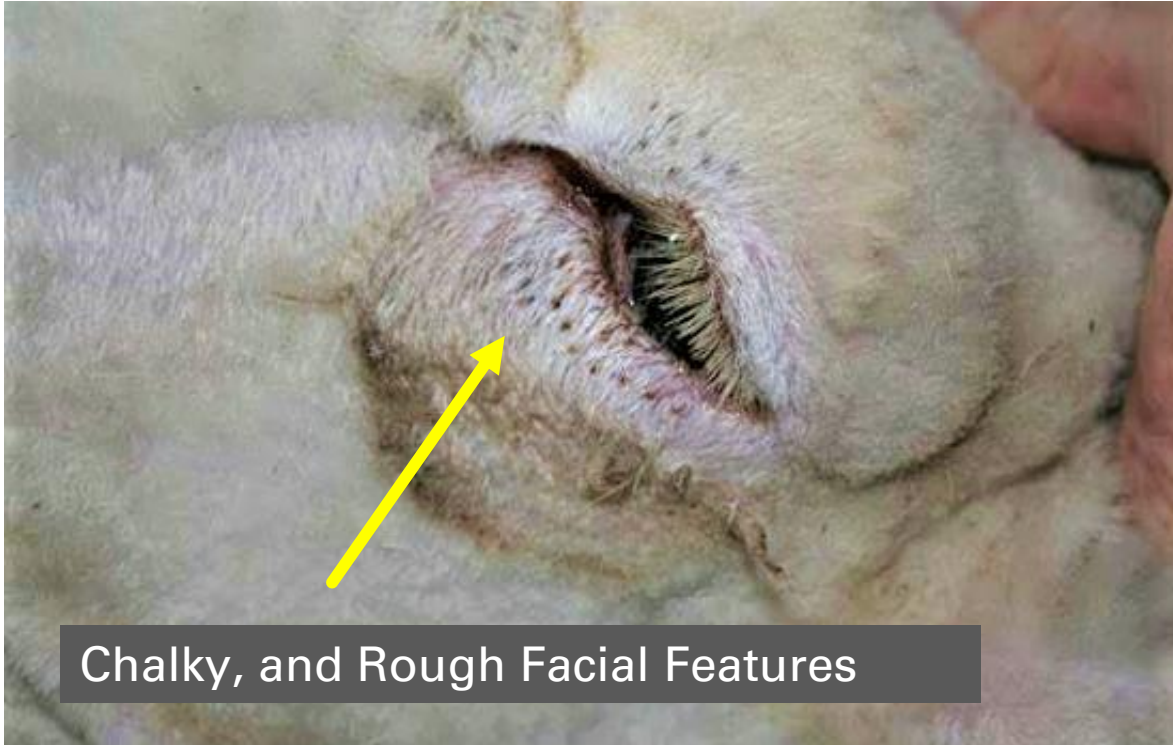
# EXCESSIVELY COARSE BRITCH AND/OR HARSH PELT

Consistent Pattern of Wool



**Inconsistent Pattern of Wool**





Chalky, and Rough Facial Features



Chalky Face and Dark Eyelashes

**EXCESSIVE COARSE, CHALKY, WHITE HAIR ON THE FACE, FLANKS, AND/OR DOWN THE FRONT AND/OR REAR LEGS**

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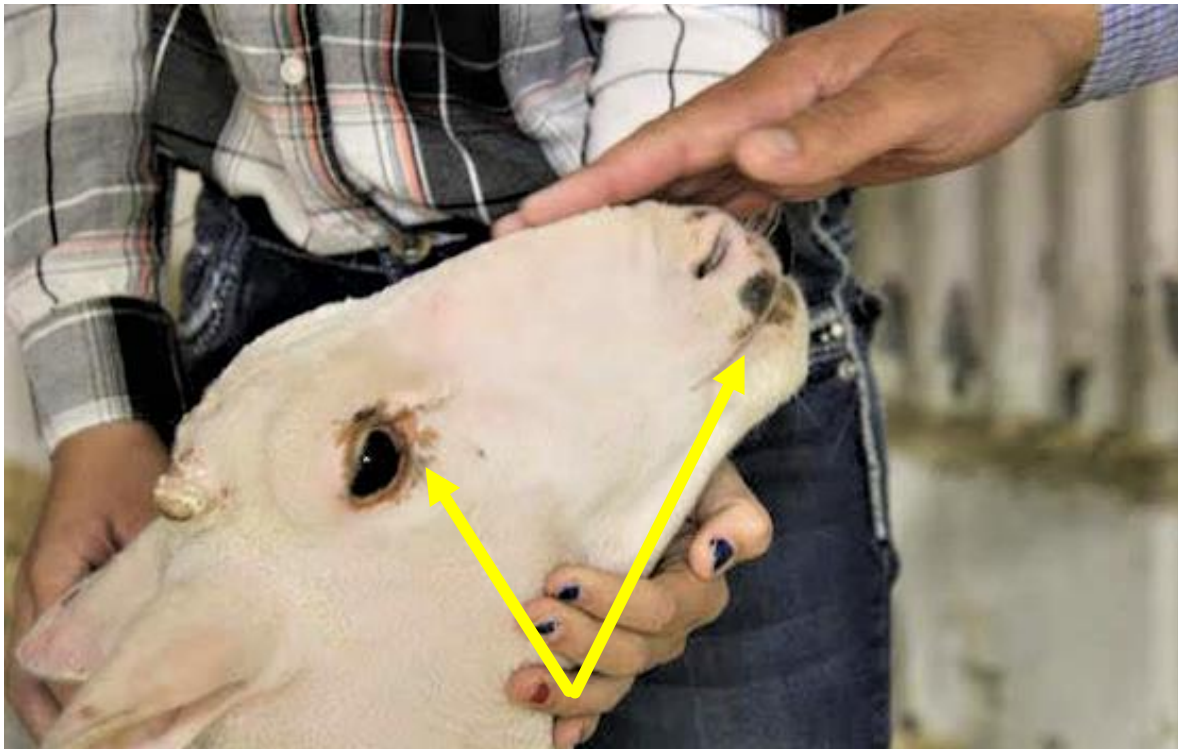
# EXCESSIVE BROWN OR BLACK SPOTS IN THE SKIN AND/OR WOOL



**EXAMPLE OF A  
BLACK SPOT**

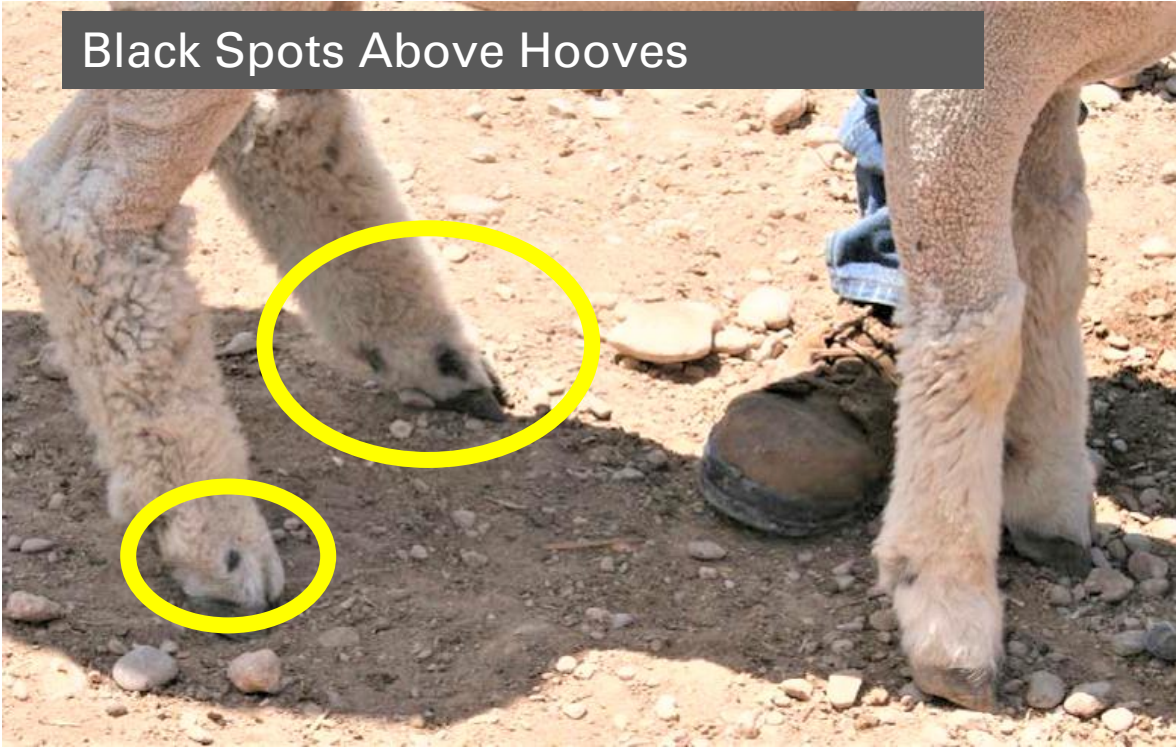
If excessive, these may  
result in disqualification





EXCESSIVE FRECKLING/PIGMENTED SKIN (BROWN OR BLACK) ON THE EARS, EYES, NOSE AND LIPS

Black Spots Above Hooves



Discoloration of Wool Around Hooves



**BROWN OR BLACK SPOTS IN HAIRLINE ABOVE THE  
HOOVES TO THE DEW CLAW**

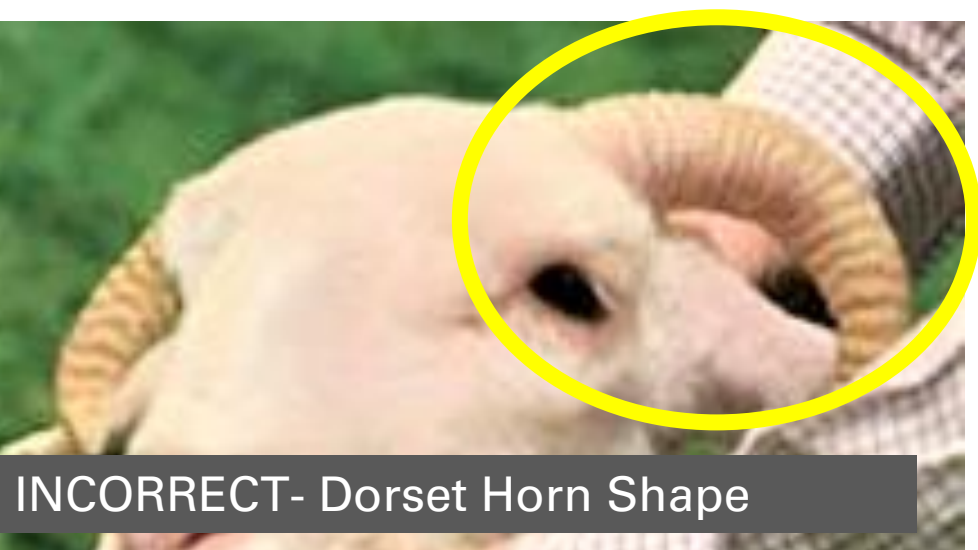




INCORRECT- Head Shape



GOOD- Head Shape VS. INCORRECT- Dorset Head Shape



INCORRECT- Dorset Horn Shape

HEAD, EAR AND/OR HORN SHAPE NON-TYPICAL TO THE FINEWOOL BREEDS (RAMBOUILLET, DELAINE, DEBOUILLET, OR A CROSS BETWEEN THESE BREEDS)





FINEWOL CROSS



# ACCEPTABLE BREED TRAITS

1. Must be a cross with evidence of at least 50% Finewool breeding and the remaining percentage exhibiting predominance of ONLY Hampshire and/or Suffolk breeding.
2. Soft pelt which is characteristic of ½ blood wool (60's -62's spinning count).
3. Face and ears should be soft and silky.
4. Spotting and/or brown face and ears.
5. Moderate spotting and/or brown legs not extending above the rear flank and fore flank.
6. Wool must be present below the hocks on the rear legs; wool below the knees on the front legs is not necessary.
7. Reddish, rust colored legs are acceptable.
8. White-faced or ring-eyed crosses are acceptable if pelt is acceptable – as long as no discriminatory characteristics are present.
9. Birthmarks.
10. Scurs and/or horns are acceptable. Horns must be indicative of acceptable Finewool breeds.



Good Wool Covering and Color



Ring-Eyed



Red Leg Wool

## ACCEPTABLE BREED TRAITS

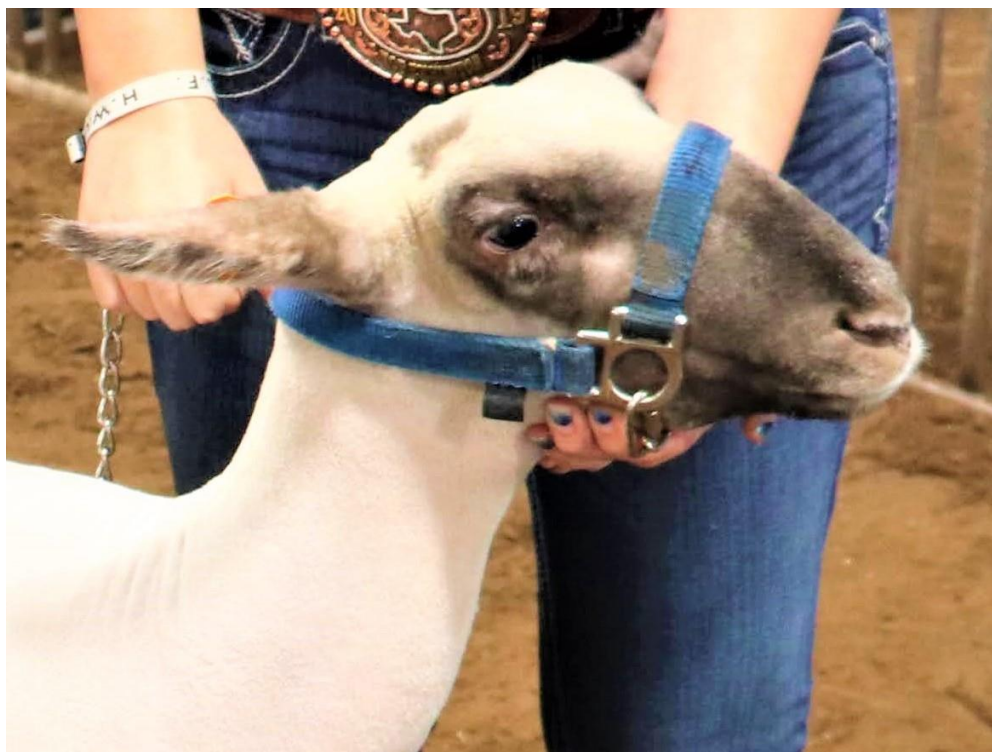
# DISCRIMINATORY BREED TRAITS

1. Excessive black spotting in the skin above the knees and hocks.
2. Moderate black or chocolate brown color on face, ears and legs (including wool).
3. Moderately coarse britch and/or harsh pelt.
4. Moderately coarse, chalky, white hair on the face, in the flanks, and/or down the front and/or rear legs.



EXCESSIVE BLACK SPOTTING IN THE SKIN ABOVE THE KNEES AND HOCKS



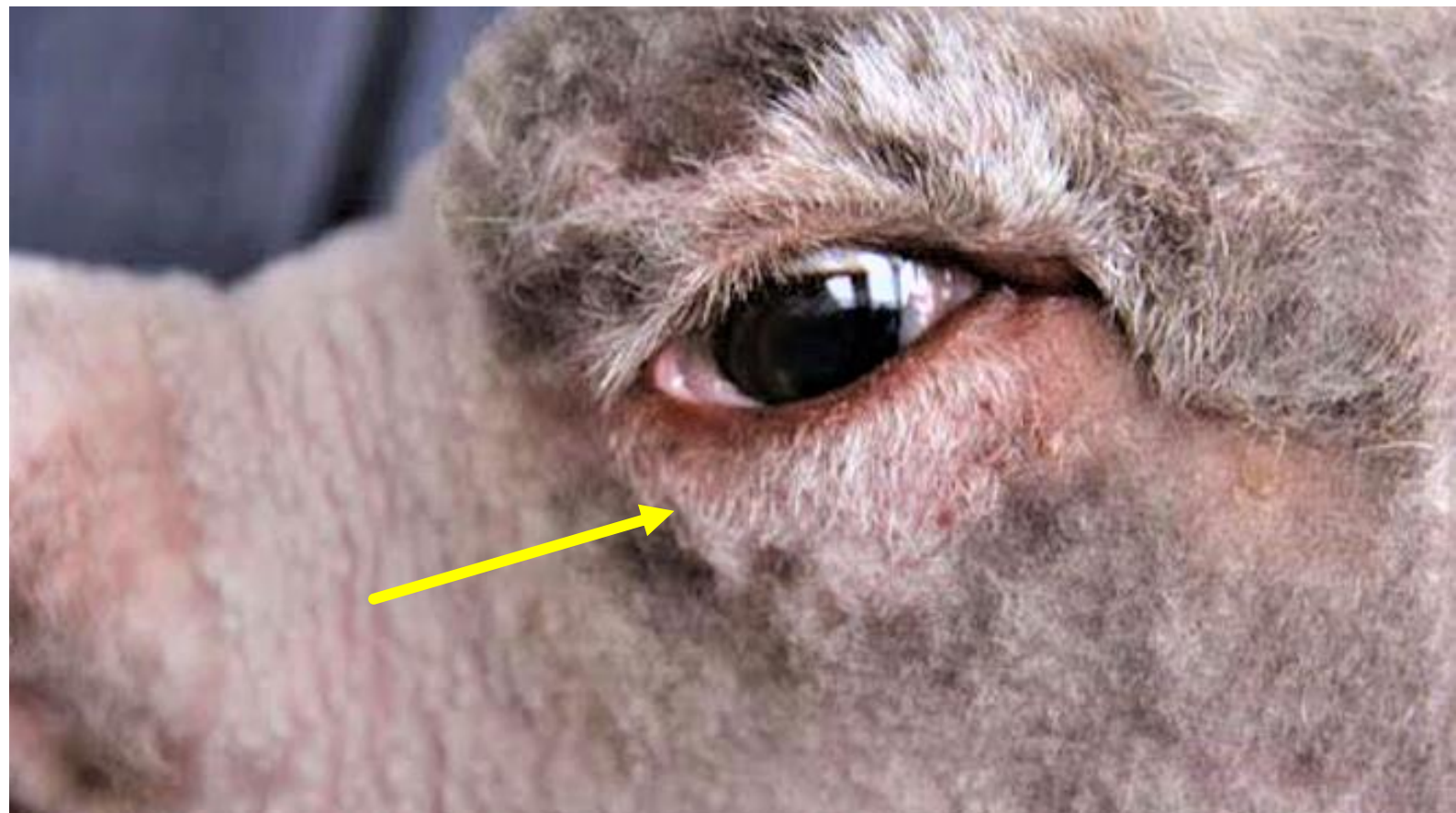


MODERATE BLACK OR CHOCOLATE BROWN COLOR ON  
FACE, EARS, AND LEGS (INCLUDING WOOL)



MODERATELY  
COARSE BRITCH  
AND/OR HARSH  
PELT





MODERATELY COARSE, CHALKY, WHITE HAIR ON  
FACE, IN THE FLANKS, AND/OR THE FRONT AND/OR  
REAR LEGS

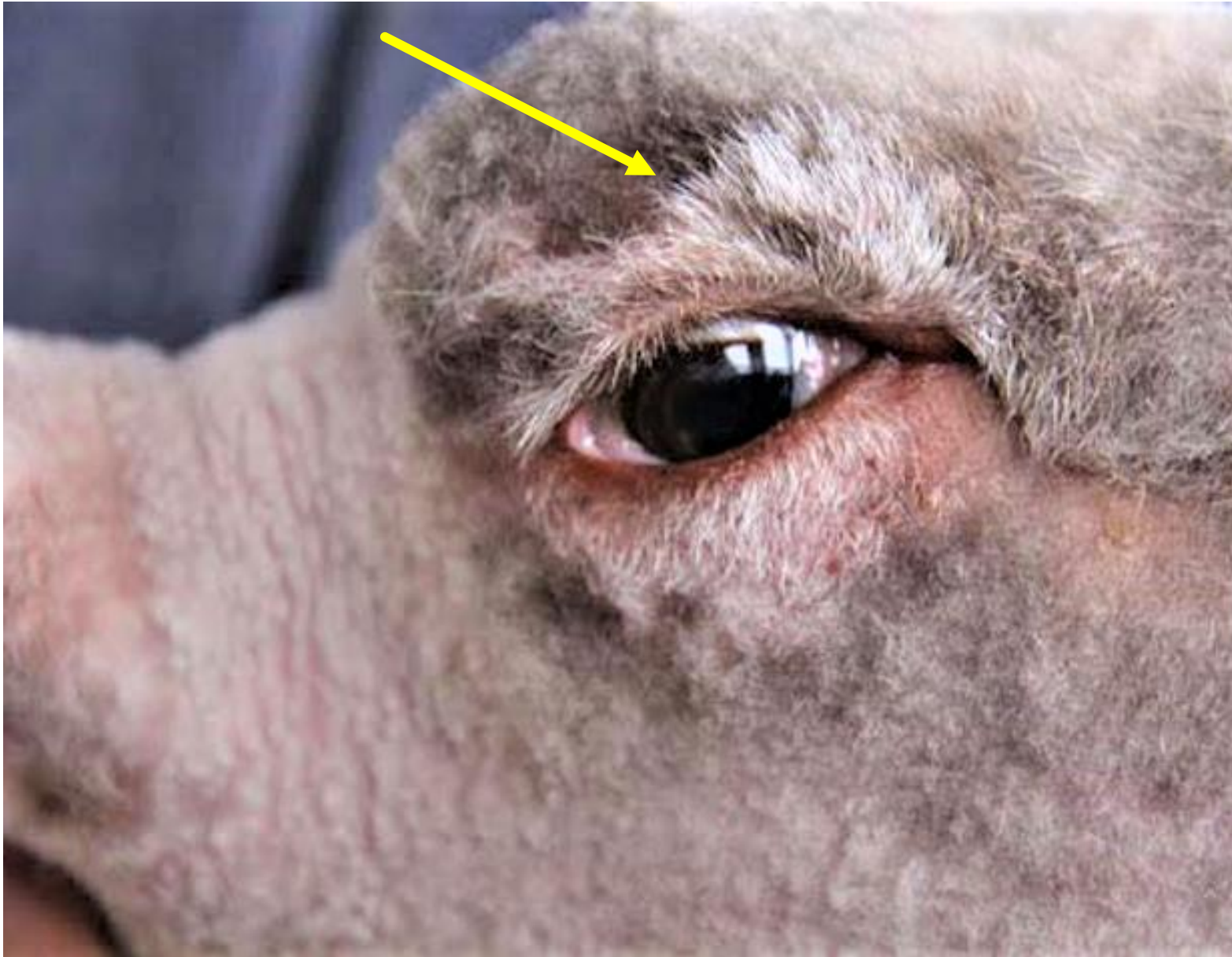


# ABSOLUTE DISQUALIFICATION

1. Excessive black or dark chocolate brown color on face, ears, and legs (including wool).
2. Excessively coarse britch and/or harsh pelt.
3. Excessive coarse, chalky, white hair on the face, in the flanks, and/or down the front and/or rear legs.
4. Total absence of wool on rear legs.
5. Black lambs.
6. Evidence of other breeds including, but not limited to Dorset and Southdown breed types (head and ear shape of Dorset and/or Southdown).
7. Surgical alterations other than re-docking.
8. Steep hip or tendency to show callipyge gene.



EXCESSIVE BLACK OR CHOCOLATE BROWN ON FACE, EARS, AND LEGS  
(INCLUDING WOOL)



EXCESSIVE COARSE,  
CHALKY, WHITE HAIR ON  
FACE, IN THE FLANKS,  
AND/OR DOWN THE  
FRONT AND/OR REAR  
LEGS



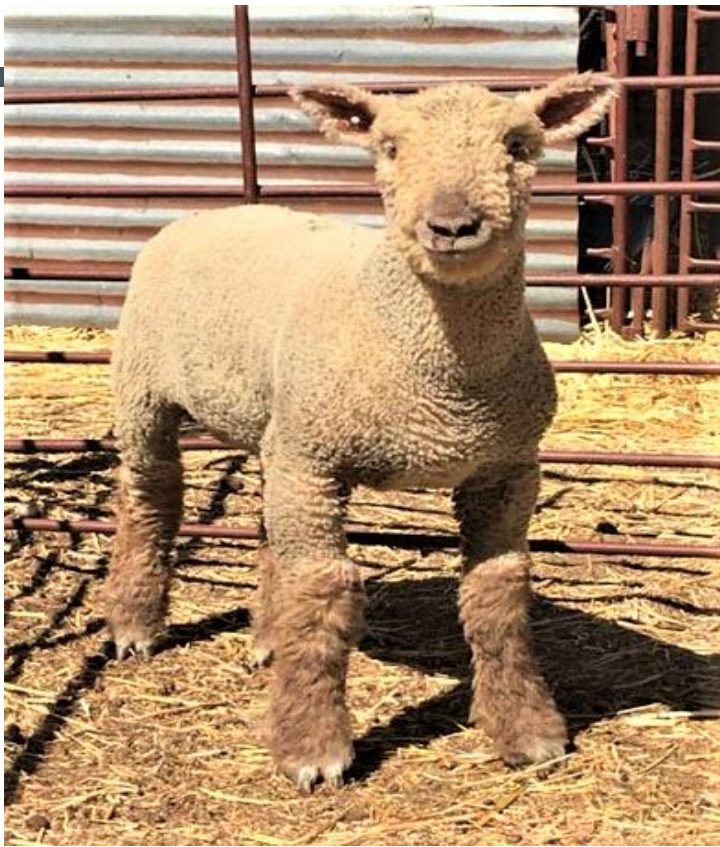


INCORRECT: Other Breed Characteristics



INCORRECT: Small, Pointy Ears

EVIDENCE OF BREEDS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:  
DORSET AND SOUTHDOWN BREED TYPES (HEAD, EAR SHAPE)



SOUTHDOWN

# ACCEPTABLE BREED TRAITS

1. Hair color on muzzle should be mouse-colored, gray to brown and match color on legs and pasterns.
2. Nostril pigmentation may be black to purplish-gray.
3. Head and muzzle should be broad and proportional to body.
4. Head of moderate length and in proportion to body.
5. Ears of moderate length, in proportion to body, and covered with short hair or wool.
6. Black hooves.
7. Slight chalk around eyes.
8. Slight chalk around muzzle.
9. Spots or speckles in the skin only when shorn.



# ACCEPTABLE BREED TRAITS



Good Wool Covering and Color



Acceptable Hoof Color

# DISCRIMINATORY BREED TRAITS

1. Solid white color or dark chocolate color on muzzle.
2. Coarse britch and/or harsh pelt.
3. Predominantly pink nose with few black spots.
4. Long, narrow muzzle.
5. Excessive black pigmentation on ears.
6. No hair or wool on ears.
7. Scurs
8. Absence of wool between scur areas.
9. Striped hooves.
10. Reddish, rust colored hair above hoof to pastern.
11. Black fibers in wool outside of birth mark.
12. Birthmarks.

# SOLID WHITE OR DARK CHOCOLATE COLOR ON MUZZLE



White, Chalky Muzzle



Chocolate Brown Coloration



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PREDOMINATELY  
PINK NOSE WITH  
FEW BLACK  
SPOTS



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# COARSE BRITCH AND/OR HARSH PELT







Long, Narrow Muzzle- Not  
characteristic of Southdown



Slick Ears





Dark Pigmentation on Ears-  
Indicative of Other Breeds

## Excessive Ear Length Not in Proportion to the Head







No Wool or Hair on Ears



# ABSOLUTE DISQUALIFICATION

1. Speckled face, ears, or legs.
2. Horns
3. White Hooves
4. Intentional alteration of hair color or skin pigmentation.
5. Total pink pigmentation of nostrils
6. Black lambs
7. Surgical alterations other than re-docking
8. Steep hip or tendency to show callipyge.

# SPECKLED FACE, EARS, OR LEGS



# PINK PIGMENTATION OF NOSTRILS



Speckling





Typical dorper breed- Black head,  
white body, hair lower 1/3 body



White dorper breed- White head  
and body, hair lower 1/3 body

# DORPER

# ACCEPTABLE BREED TRAITS

1. Must be a Dorper or White Dorper.
2. Conformation: long, deep, wide body with well sprung ribs and excellent muscling.
3. Color: Dorper– white sheep with black limited to head, neck, and forequarters not below the knee or behind the heart girth; White Dorper– white sheep.
4. Must have at least 1/3 hair primarily on belly, forearm, and britch.
5. 100% hair below the knees and hocks.
6. 100% hair forward of poll.
7. Moderate size ear with no wool covering.
8. Head should be strong, bold with a deep jaw.
9. Polled or small horns or scurs.
10. Spots or speckled pigment in the skin only when shorn.
11. Black spots above the hoof line and below the dewclaw.



# CORRECT HAIR AND WOOL COMBINATION





# PIGMENT AND SPOTTING IN SKIN



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# ACCEPTABLE COLORING



## DISCRIMINATORY BREED TRAITS

1. Tall, leggy, shallow, and/or narrow-bodied lambs
2. A limited amount of dark gibbered spots on body and underline behind heart girth not to exceed the cumulative total size of a softball
3. A white sheep with brown or red colored speckles in the covering, confined to the head and neck.
4. Tri-colored sheep
5. Excessive wool covering more than 2/3 of body (belly, forearm, and britch)
6. Wool forward of poll
7. Heavy horns
8. Long, pendulous ears
9. Long, narrow muzzle

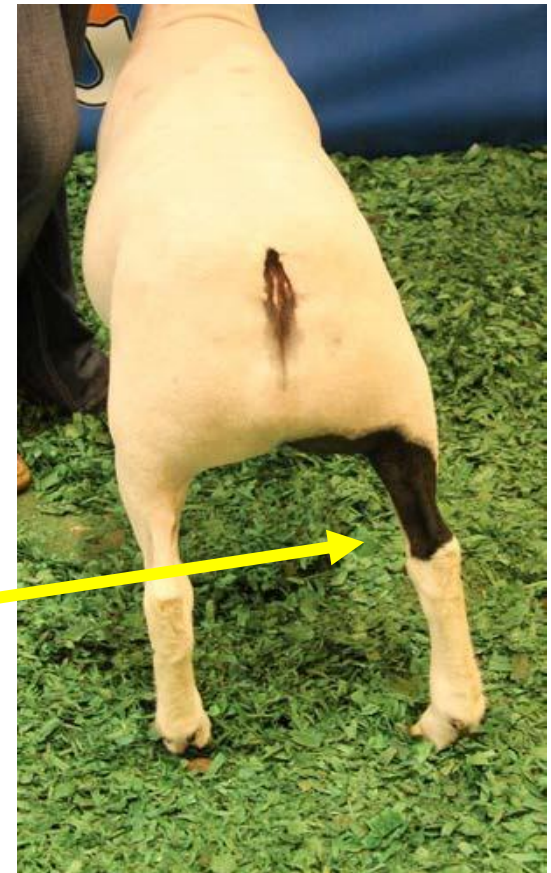


# LIMITED AMOUNT OF DARK FIBERED SPOTS ON BODY



Acceptable amount of color

Excessive black coloring



# TRI-COLORED SHEEP



# EXCESSIVE WOOL COVERING MORE THAN 2/3 OF BODY (BELLY, FOREARM, AND BRITCH)





# LONG, NARROW MUZZLE



# ABSOLUTE DISQUALIFICATION

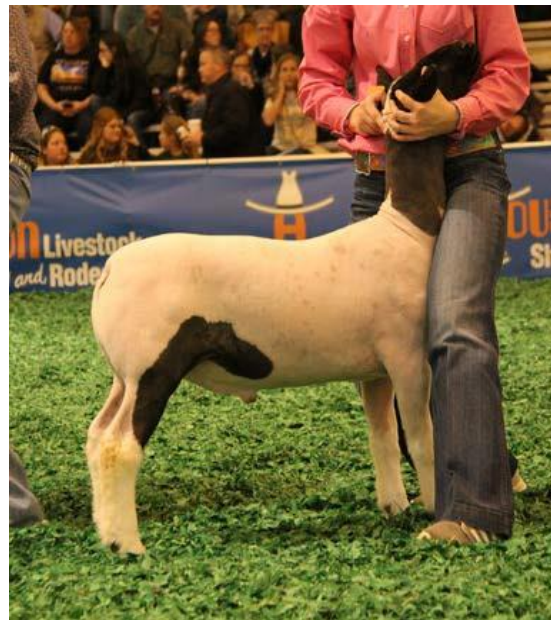
1. All wool or very little evidence of hair on belly, forearm, or britch
2. Wool below the knees or hocks
3. Wool on the ears
4. Excessive amount of dark fibered spots on body and underline behind heart girth exceeding a cumulative total of the size of a softball
5. Solid brown, red, rust colored head
6. Speckling or spots from knee to dewclaw or from hock to dewclaw
7. Strong breed characteristics of breeds other than Dorper or White Dorper
8. Surgical alteration other than re-docking
9. Steep hip or tendency to show callipyge gene
10. Evidence of color alterations

# WOOL BELOW THE KNEES OR HOCKS





EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF DARK FIBERED SPOTS ON  
BODY AND UNDERLINE BEHIND HEART GIRTH  
EXCEEDING A CUMULATIVE TOTAL OF THE SIZE OF  
A SOFTBALL





# MEDIUM WOOL

This class generally includes the Suffolk and Hampshire breeds, plus all lambs that do not fit into the Finewool, Finewool Cross, Southdown, or Dorper breed class.