

How to Work Through a Wool Class

Introduction

- Understand that every class has logic behind it. A class is **not** just four random fleeces thrown together; somebody designed the class to be placed a certain way.
- Remind yourself of your priority traits before you even look at the fleeces.
- Evaluate the fleeces first by standing off the table. You can typically determine which fleece should win the class and which fleece should be last before you even touch the fleeces.
- Weigh fleeces methodically. Make sure that you weigh each fleece the exact same way for the same amount of time. Holding the fleeces for a few seconds can help in determining the weight of each fleece.
- Trust your first instinct.
- If you have to re-weigh a pair of fleeces more than once, then just call them similar weighing and move on to the next priority trait to place the pair.
- After figuring out weights, then pull about 5 locks from each fleece. Pull your locks from different parts of each fleece; you want to make sure that your locks represent the entire fleece.
- Once you have your locks, find yourself a secluded area on the ground and lay out your locks.
- Answer your reasons questions.

Priority Trait Definitions

- **Weight** – Actual weight of the fleece today. The highest priority trait when judging any class, as the heaviest fleece will make the most pounds of clean wool after scouring (washing), resulting in the most return. Ask yourself, which fleece will net me the most return (money) on my investment? The heaviest fleece will always win the class.
- **Yield** – Made of up a combination of dirt and grease; an estimated percentage determined by the weight of clean wool left after the scouring (washing) process. We can use this to make a placing decision between fleeces that feel similar in weight.
 - 1 pound of clean wool = 10% yield points
 - Ex: Fleece 1 is 10 pounds with a 50% yield & fleece 2 is 10 pounds with a 40% yield. Which is more profitable?
 - Fleece 1 will produce 5 lbs of clean wool & fleece 2 will produce 4 lbs of clean wool.
- **Character** – Examined as three separate parts: 1/3 color, 1/3 crimp, 1/3 condition. A fleece can be good in some areas and bad in others, an excellent fleece will excel in all three traits
 - Color – we want a “bright, white” appearing fleece, not a yellow, dingy looking fleece
 - Crimp – the waviness of the lock; we want a fleece with a bold, distinct crimp
 - Condition – we want an average amount of grease that yields a nice, soft handle; too much grease will make the fleece have a damp or moist handle, and not enough grease will give the fleece dry and harsh handle
- **Uniformity** – Within a fleece’s fiber diameter or staple length, we want a uniform fleece so we can produce a uniform product; this will result in higher premiums and less discounts.
- **Fineness** – Determined by the grade or fiber diameter of the fleece. Within blood grades, the micron diameter differences will not be very apparent, but uniformity is very important regarding fineness.
- **Staple length** – Determined by the length of the lock pulled from the fleece. Uniformity of length is also important.

Priority Traits – Commercial Classes

- 1. Weight**
- 2. Yield**
- 3. Fineness**
- 4. Uniformity**
- 5. Staple length**

Commercial classes are placed based on economic value. Wool is sold by the pound. Therefore, a heavier weighing fleece is more economically valuable than a lighter weighing fleece. If two fleeces weigh the same, then the higher yielding fleece will produce more pounds of clean wool and therefore will be more valuable. While staple length and fiber strength are evaluated are questions for your reasons, contests put on by us will always tell you to judge the classes as sound. This means that breaks and/or locks that are too short for the grade will not affect how classes are placed.

Priority Traits – Breeding Classes

- 1. Weight**
- 2. Character**
- 3. Fineness**
- 4. Uniformity**
- 5. Staple length**

Breeding classes are placed based on genetic value. Weight is a highly heritable characteristic. Therefore, a heavier weighing fleece is more genetically valuable than a lighter weighing fleece. If two fleeces weigh the same, then whichever fleece has better character will hold more genetic value. While staple length and fiber strength are evaluated are questions for your reasons, contests put on by us will always tell you to judge the classes as sound. This means that breaks and/or locks that are too short for the grade will not affect how classes are placed.

Sample Questions

1. Which fleece is the heaviest/lightest?
2. Which fleece is the highest/lowest yielding?
3. Which fleece is the longest/shortest staples?
4. Which fleece is the finest/coarsest?
5. Which fleece has the most uniform staple length?
6. Which fleece has the most uniform fiber diameter?

Wool Value Determination

Follow the steps below to determine the value of the fleeces.

Step 1: Determine the fiber diameter of each fleece.

Step 2: Determine the yield percentage of each fleece.

Step 3: Multiply the **grease fleece weight** X the **percent yield** to determine the CLEAN fleece weight of each fleece.

Step 4: Use the clean prices in the table below and the corresponding fiber diameter to calculate the clean fleece price.

$$[\text{clean fleece weight} \times \text{clean price (from the tables below)}] = \text{Clean price (\$)}$$

Step 5: Deduct discounts from the clean price (if any).

$$[(\text{clean price} - (\text{clean fleece weight} \times \text{discount}))] = \text{total fleece value}$$

Step 6: Fill in the Total Fleece Value for each fleece.

Step 7: Rank the fleeces from most valuable to least valuable.

Fleece	Fiber Diameter	Grease Fleece Weight (lb)	Yield (%)	Clean Fleece Weight (lb)	Clean Price (\$)	Discounts (\$)	Total Fleece Value	Rank of Fleeces
EXAMPLE	Fine (\$3.60/lb)	5.0 lb	50%	2.5 lbs (5 lb X 50%)	\$9.00 (2.5 lb X \$3.60)	\$6.50 (\$9.00-(2.5 lb X \$1.00))	\$6.50	-----
1		11.4 lb						
2		3.0 lb						
3		6.0 lb						
4		10.4 lb						
5		9.0 lb						

Clean Price

Fine	\$3.60/lb
1/2	\$3.20/lb
3/8	\$2.15/lb
1/4 and Low 1/4	\$1.30/lb

Discounts

Short/tender/break	-\$1.00/lb
Purity issue	-\$2.00/lb

****Clean prices and discounts will vary based on current market price.****

WOOL GRADES AND LENGTH STANDARDS

BLOOD GRADE	FIBER DIAMETER		STAPLE LENGTH		
	Spin Count	Micron Diameter	Staple	French Combing	Clothing
FINE	64s, 70s, 80s	22.04 and finer	>3.00"	2.00"-3.00"	<2.00"
1/2	60s and 62s	22.05-24.94	>3.25"	2.25"-3.25"	<2.25"
3/8	56s and 58s	24.95-27.84	>3.50"	None	<3.50"
1/4	50s and 54s	27.85-30.99	>4.00"	None	<4.00"
LOW 1/4	48s and lower	31.00 and coarser	>4.00"	None	<4.00"