



Sheep Showmanship Guidelines

In showmanship, you are judged on your ability to groom, control and present an animal to bring out its best characteristics. The first step is preparation. Starting early, and putting your time and effort into training your lamb to stand and be handled, will put you well on your way to being a successful sheep showman.

Show Ring Procedures:

- ⇒ Be sure to be dressed neatly and be clean when entering the ring.
- ⇒ It is key to be ready to enter the ring when your class is called. This means keeping track of earlier classes and knowing the amount of time needed to have you and your animal ready so that you can arrive early to ringside before your class. It's also a good idea to take your animal for a walk before you enter the ring so that they get used to the surroundings and new noises.
- ⇒ Circle the ring clockwise at a brisk walk, with your animals head held up but in a natural position. Hold your animal with your left hand under the jaw. Ideally you should not have to use your right hand when showing; however it may be placed on the dock in order to urge the lamb on.
- ⇒ Always keep your lamb between yourself and the judge (i.e. when the judge moves around your animal the showman moves as well to achieve this. When switching sides always cross in front of your lambs head. (Figure 1)
- ⇒ Walk your animal straight towards and away from the judge when he/she is directly behind or in front of your lamb.
- ⇒ Always maintain complete control of your lamb; be smooth, calm and confident in your motions when moving around your lamb.
- ⇒ It's important to keep one eye on the judge and the other on your animal at all times. A good showman knows where the judge is and the position of their animal at all times. Always be looking for hand signals and directions.
- ⇒ When directed to stop in the ring or when you are placed in the lineup, your lamb should have all legs placed square underneath of them. The hind feet are positioned with your right hand and the front feet may be positioned with your right hand or by lifting the animal up slightly at the breast bone and setting it down again. This technique is most efficient and will position the feet in the proper place.
- ⇒ When the judge moves in to handle your lamb along the back and loin, you should stand up in front of your lamb and allow your lamb to brace itself and push up against your knee/leg.
- ⇒ Be prepared to answer questions. Questions may include, birth date, breed, weight, best physical quality of your lamb, worst physical quality of your lamb and what you are doing as a showman to fix a bad characteristic.
- ⇒ The judge may look at the fleece of your animal. After the judge has moved on to look at the next animal, be sure to smooth the fleece back into place with your hand and make sure your lamb is still set up properly.
- ⇒ The judge may ask you to flip your lamb. Hold the head with your left hand; reach over and under your lamb and grasp the hind left leg. Lift your lambs head and back leg at the same time, flipping the animal into a sitting position.
- ⇒ If the judge asks to see the feet, flip your lamb into the sitting position and then show each individually.
- ⇒ If the judge asks to see the teeth of your animal, you may flip or leave your lamb standing. To show the teeth separate the lips to expose the teeth with your fingers.

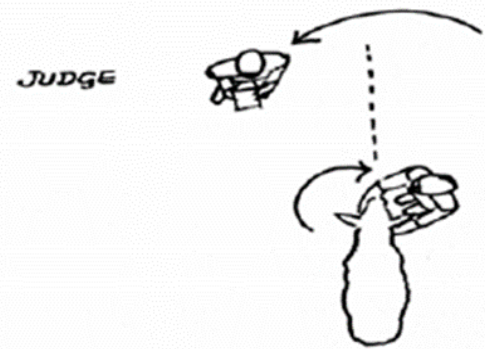


Figure 1: Movement of member from one side of the animal to the other side when judge circles.



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Show Ring Procedures continued...

- ⇒ The lamb should not be moved or lifted by catching the wool. The proper place for catching the wool when holding or moving a lamb is under the jaw, or on either side of the jaw.
- ⇒ If you have the chance to be the first in to the ring, go for it. First impressions go a long way in the judges' mind. It is important for the first showmen in the ring to set the pace, leading the animal at a brisk pace in a large circle.
- ⇒ When leading sheep into the ring or into position, the left hand should be grasping the wool under the jaw, the right hand is placed on the dock in order to urge the lamb on and also to keep it more under control. For mature sheep, rope or leather halters can be used.
- ⇒ Position the lamb so the feet are squarely under each corner of the body.
- ⇒ The hind feet are positioned with the hands. The front feet can be positioned with the right hand or by lifting the animal up slightly and setting it down again; the feet will set down in their proper place.
- ⇒ The show person's position is at the head of the lamb and a little to the left side. The left hand should have a tight hold under the jaw. Do not pull the wool.
- ⇒ It is optional as to whether a show person kneels on the right knee or remains in a squatting position with both feet squarely on the ground or floor. The latter method lends itself to ease in moving the lamb when required by the judge or ringmaster.
- ⇒ When the judge handles your lamb at the back, stand in front of the lamb and hold fleece on either side of the jaw.
- ⇒ A slight pressure by your knee against the chest or girth of the lamb, when the judge handles along the back, will help keep the back straighter.
- ⇒ Occasionally, you may have to hold your lamb on the right side only when you are blocking the judge's view from the left side.
- ⇒ Sheep members should be aware of accepted sheep dressing, (e.g. card and comb a Suffolk but never card and comb a Scottish Blackface.)
- ⇒ When leading your lamb in the ring, always travel in a clockwise direction, making sure to leave sufficient space between you and your fellow competitors. Make sure you watch the judge closely so you can follow his/her directions accurately.
- ⇒ If the judge asks you to turn your sheep over, there are a number of ways you can do this. You can hold the head with your left hand and reach over and under the animal until you reach her hind left leg. Lift both the head and back leg at the same time flipping the animal into a sitting position.
- ⇒ Once your animal is flipped, the judge may ask you to show the feet. This involves holding each one individually.
- ⇒ The judge may also ask to see the teeth of your animal. This too can best be achieved when the animal is in a sitting position. Merely separate the lips to expose the teeth with your fingers.
- ⇒ Walk the animal straight away from or towards the judge when he/she is directly behind or in front of the sheep.
- ⇒ When asked to move your lamb to another place in the line, you may lead forward, turn and come back through the spot exited, turn again and lead into the position designated by the judge, or lead to the end of the line and into the designated place, depending on how large the class is.
- ⇒ When the judge motions your placement, proceed promptly to the lineup, and pull in so that you are even with the animals already placed.
- ⇒ When instructed to change place in line, lead forward and turn right. Learn the below figures 2 – 5 to know the correct direction to take.



Sheep Showmanship Guidelines

Figure 2:
Switching placings in a sheep showmanship class

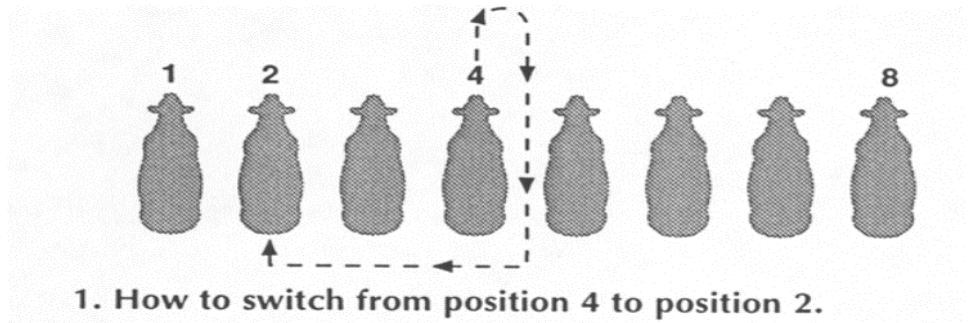


Figure 3:
Repositioning your lamb in a sheep showmanship class

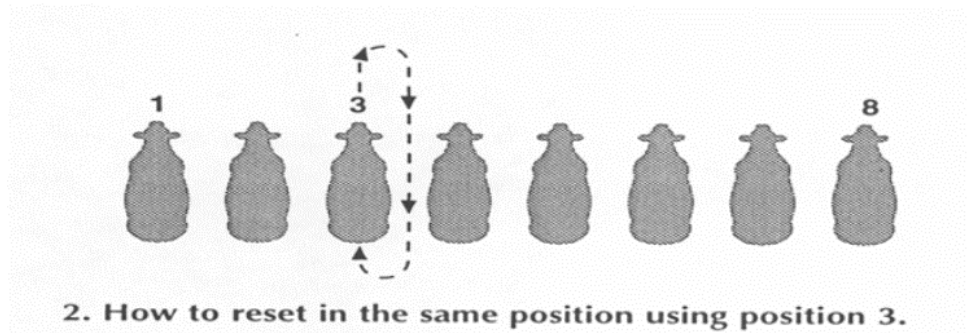


Figure 4:
Switching positions in a sheep showmanship class

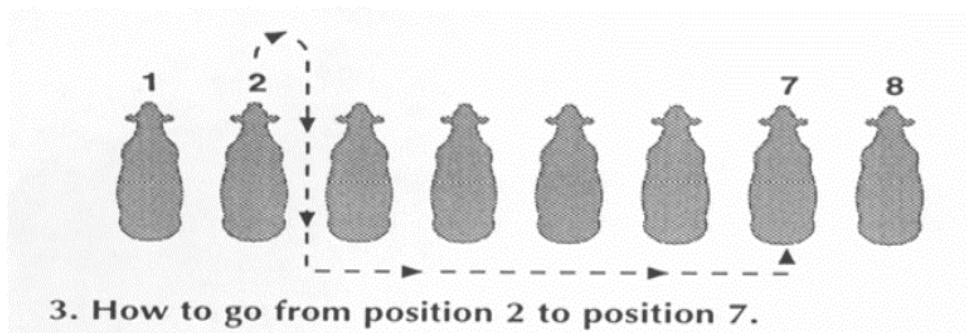
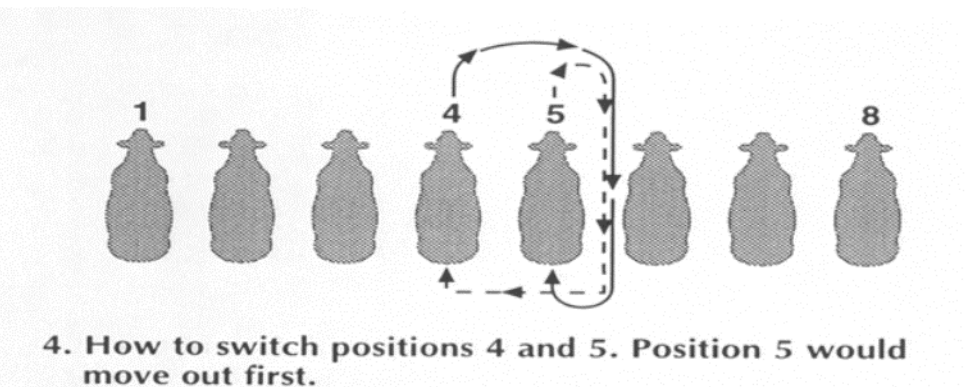


Figure 5:
Switching placing's in a sheep showmanship class





Sheep Showmanship Guidelines

Top Showperson Tips:

- ⇒ Start early, a small lamb is much easier to handle and therefore train to stand. If you wait until your lamb becomes big and strong, it may get away and never learn how to pose to its best advantage.
- ⇒ Know the standards for your breed of lamb when it comes to fitting (i.e. a Suffolk Sheep is card and combed but a Scottish Blackface is never fitted in this way).
- ⇒ Arrive early before the show, have a schedule and plan to follow according to when you show. Make sure your animal is taken care of at all times. Coming prepared will set you on the right pace for the day.
- ⇒ If you are not the first showmanship class in the ring, one should use the opportunity to watch the first class and learn how the judge is moving the animals and what he/she is asking them to do. This will better prepare you, by knowing what to expect when you enter the ring.
- ⇒ Always be calm when showing. This will also help keep your lamb calm if it has been sufficiently trained.
- ⇒ When the judge moves in to handle your lamb along the back and loin, you should apply a slight pressure with your knee against the chest of the lamb; this will help keep its back straighter.
- ⇒ The judges' first line up is generally not their final placing's, and therefore you shouldn't become discouraged or quit showing until you leave the ring.
- ⇒ Listen to the judges' reasons. If there is something that they pinpoint that you can improve on, take that lesson and either practice it or remember it for your next show. Build on the skills you have!
- ⇒ No matter where you place, at the end of your class you should feel confident knowing that you have competed and presented yourself and your animal to the best of your ability and in a professional manner.
- ⇒ A good showman will always be courteous and maintains a sportsmanlike attitude throughout the show. Always maintain a positive attitude and learn by watch more experienced showmen, to help you gain useful skills.

General Showmanship Score Card

Evidence of training and preparation of the animal 30 points

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ⇒ Animal leads well | ⇒ Appears accustomed to handling |
| ⇒ Starts and stops easily | ⇒ Stand quietly |
| ⇒ Poses easily | ⇒ Cleanliness of animal |

Showing the animal in the ring 50 points

- | | |
|---|--|
| ⇒ Ease of handling the animal | ⇒ Convenient and suitable hold on lead strap or reins |
| ⇒ Proper leading of the animal | ⇒ Ease of moving or positioning the animal |
| ⇒ Animal's response to exhibitor's movements | ⇒ Alertness and style of the animal |
| ⇒ Avoids sharp turns, over-crowding and pushing | ⇒ Indication of good knowledge of animal's faults and habits, and compensation for such faults |
| ⇒ Poses the animal properly | |

Ring manners and appearance of show person 20 points

- | | |
|--|---|
| ⇒ Clothes neat, clean, and suitable to occasion | ⇒ Not over-showing |
| ⇒ Full attention to task | ⇒ Poise and alert |
| ⇒ Avoids distractions from outside the ring | ⇒ Good knowledge of animal's pedigree, care, and management program |
| ⇒ Courteous and polite to other exhibitors and the judge | |