

# Handling Market Lambs

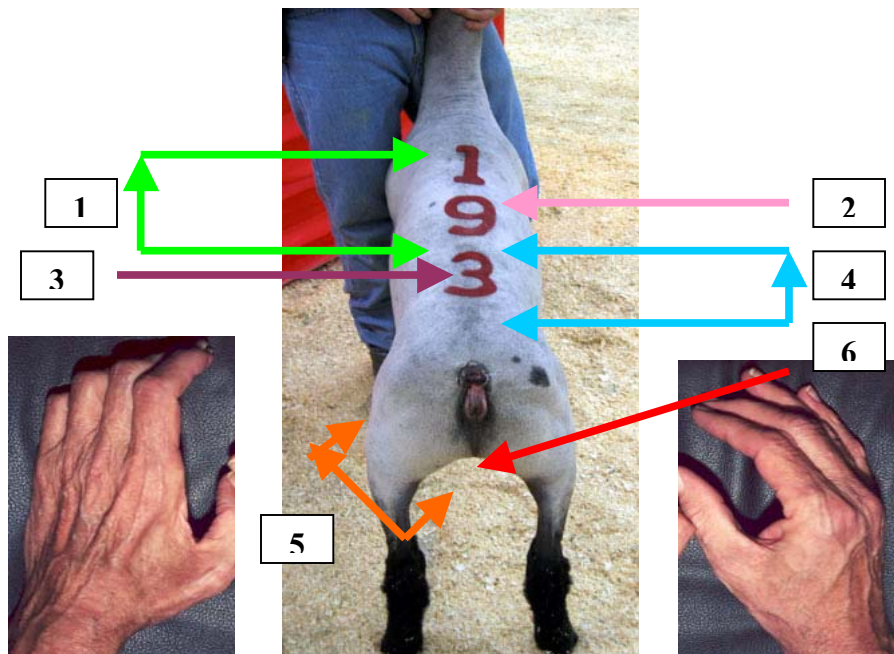
When handling a market lamb it is important to determine the amount of finish and muscle. A good judge can remember how each lamb handled in class and then determine a placing based off of what they felt.

When handling a lamb you want to evaluate for:

- Firmness down the top including the rack, loin, and the leg
- Finish over the back and ribs.
- Finish over the sternum, twist, and flank.
- The amount of muscle in the loin determining how deep, wide, and long the loin is.
- The amount of muscle in the leg determining how long and deep the leg is.

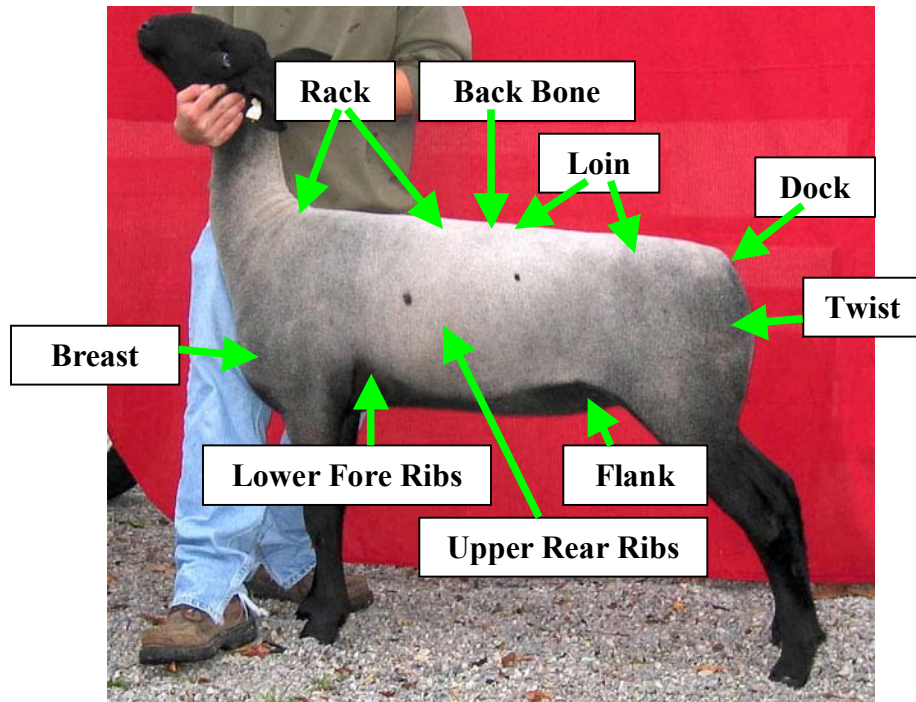
Practice handling the lamb from the top of the shoulders down the rack, to the ribs, down the back bone, to the loin eye, to the leg, and then the twist.

1. Feel the firmness and spread of muscle over the rack. At the same time feel for the amount of finish over the shoulders and rack.
2. Determine the amount of finish over the fore rib, mid rib, and hind rib. Estimating the finish over the lower, center, and upper portions of the rib.
3. Feel and estimate for the amount of finish over the back bone and detect the amount of firmness over the top.
4. Measure the length of the loin eye and then determine the width of the loin eye.
5. Determine the amount of muscle that is present on the leg.
6. Feel the amount of finish located at the twist and rear flank.



When you evaluate for condition it is important to understand the locations on the lamb where fat is deposited.

**Evaluate condition on the body at these locations**



The ideal condition on a market lamb down its back bone and ribs should be 0.10-0.20 inches of fat. Anything thing less than 0.10 inches of fat is not enough condition for market and harvest. Excess condition over 0.20 inches is more than necessary for the acceptable market range and could require more trim during processing of the carcass.

A good indicator for estimating fat on a lamb is to learn from your hand. Place one finger over the other hands knuckles and move it back and forth. As you can feel this is boney and not very smooth. This is approximately less than 0.10 inches of fat. Now place a finger over the back of the other hand and move it back and forth. This is approximately 0.10-0.20 inches of fat. The ideal market lamb finish over its ribs should feel like the back of your hand.

