

Judging Sheep



Steps to Judging Sheep

1. Evaluate animals from the ground up and from the rump (rear) forward
2. Rank the traits for their importance
3. Evaluate the most important traits first
4. Eliminate any easy placings in the class
5. Place the class based on the volume of the important traits

Ranking of Traits for Market Lambs

1. Degree of muscling
2. Degree of finish
3. Balance and style
4. Frame size
5. Soundness and structural correctness

Ranking of Traits for Breeding Ewes

1. **Style and balance**
2. **Frame size**
3. **Soundness and structural correctness**
4. **Capacity or volume**
5. **Degree of muscling**
6. **Degree of leanness**
7. **Wool**

Evaluating Degree of Muscling

To evaluate degree of muscling, pay close attention to:

1. Thickness through the center of the leg
2. Width between the rear legs when the animal is **on the move**
3. Length of the hindsaddle
4. Width and length of the loin
5. Grooved shape over the rack

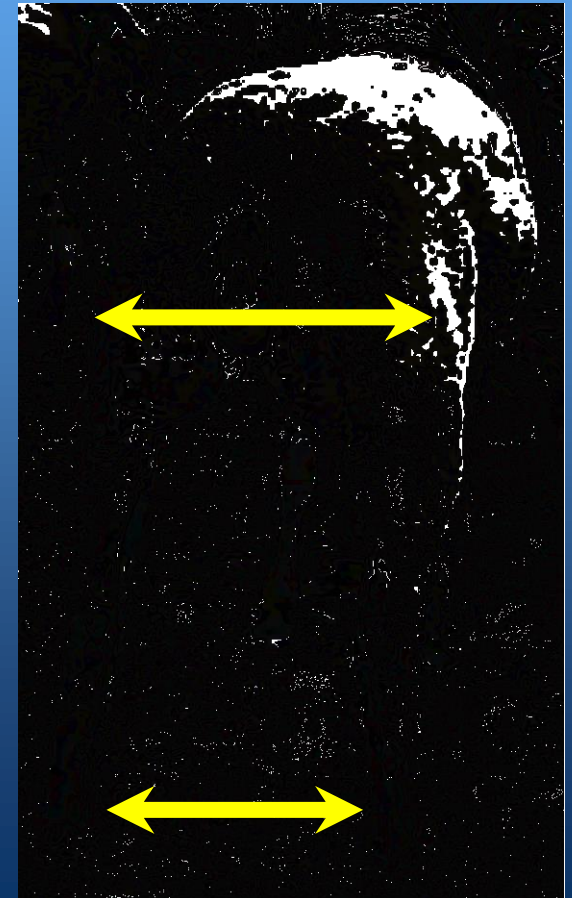
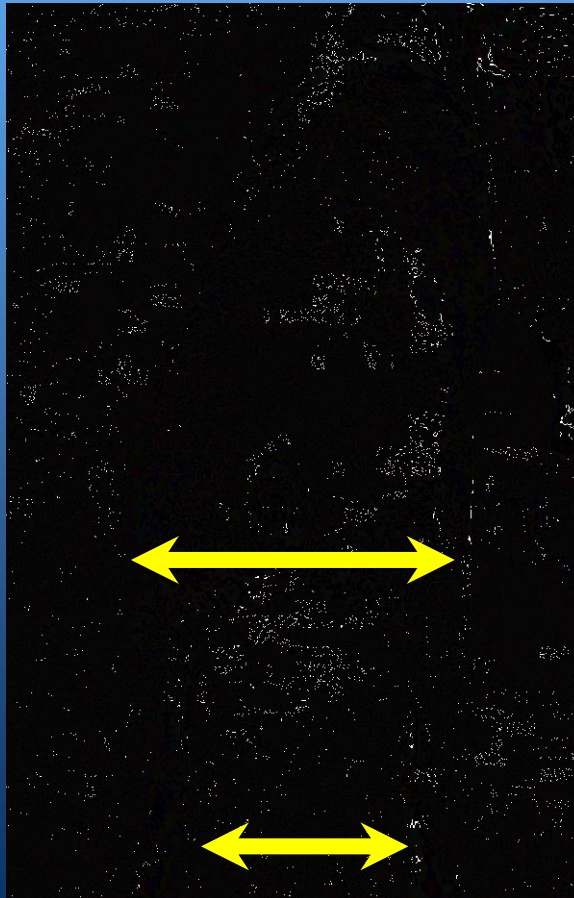
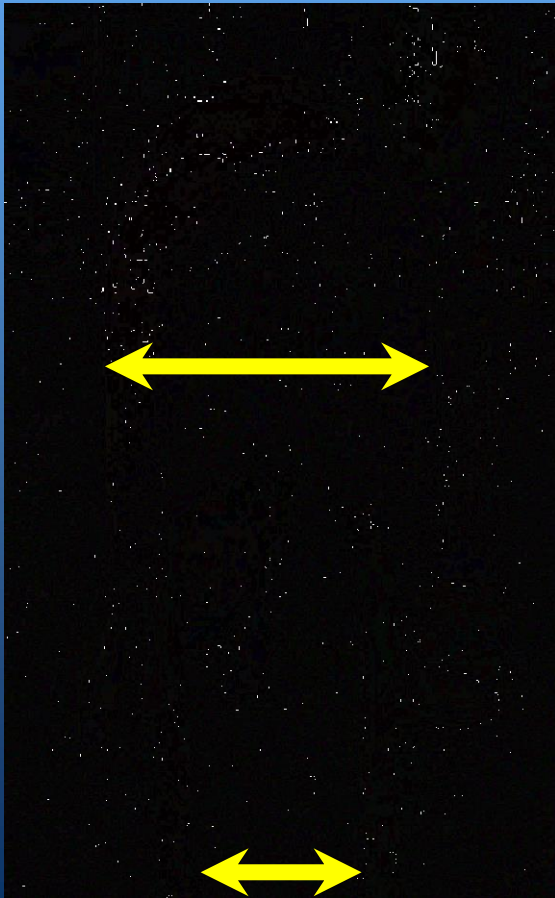
Evaluating Degree of Muscling

- Center Leg and Base Width -

Light muscled
(narrow)

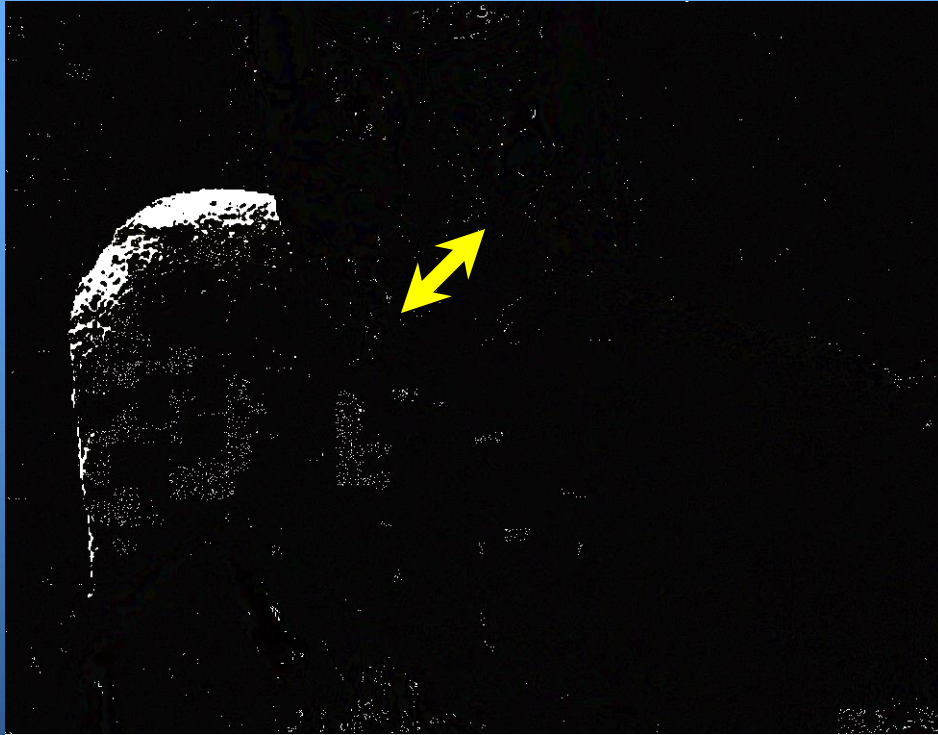
Average muscled
(average width)

Heavy muscled
(wide)



Evaluating Degree of Muscling

- Width and Length of Loin -



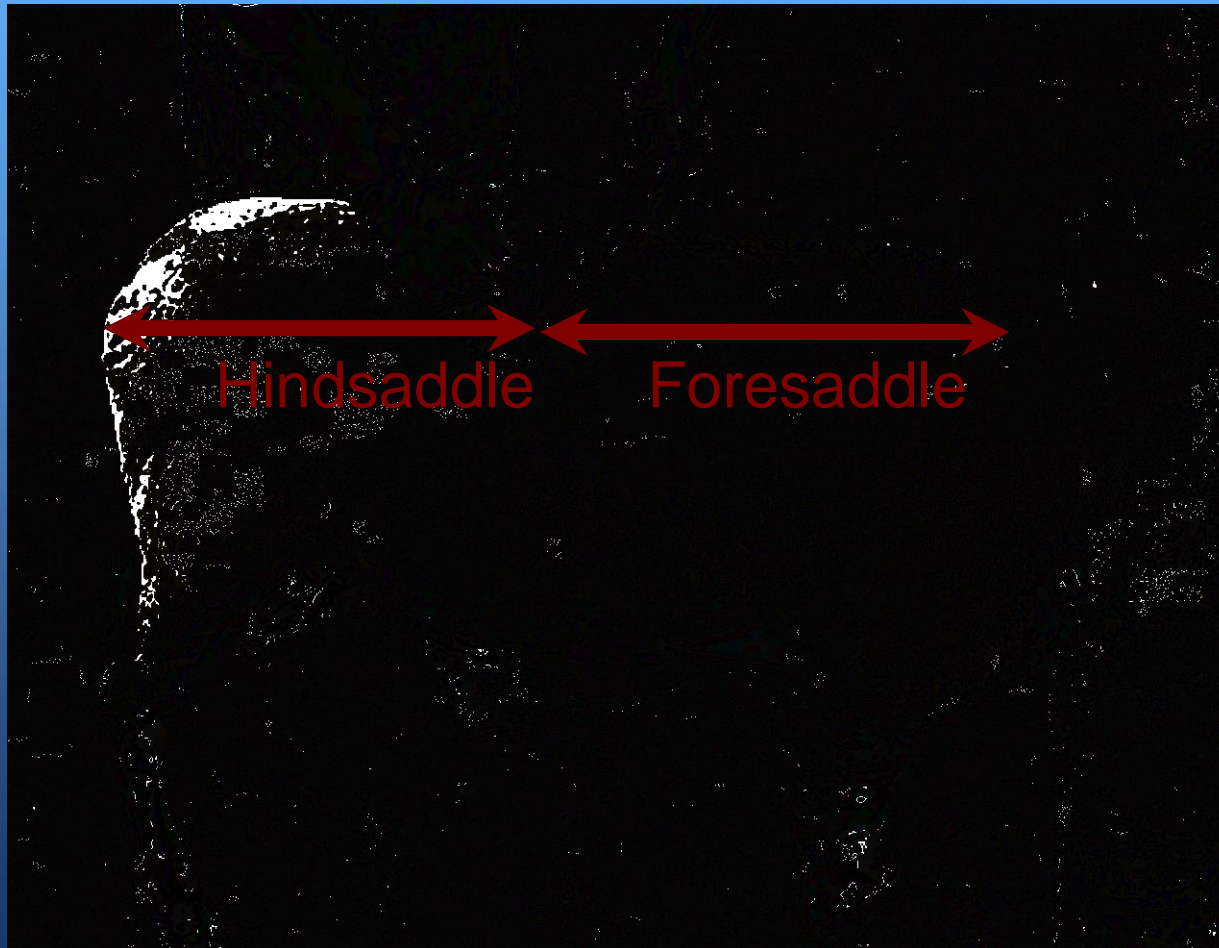
A wide loin is desired in market lambs



A long loin is desired in market lambs

Evaluating Degree of Muscling

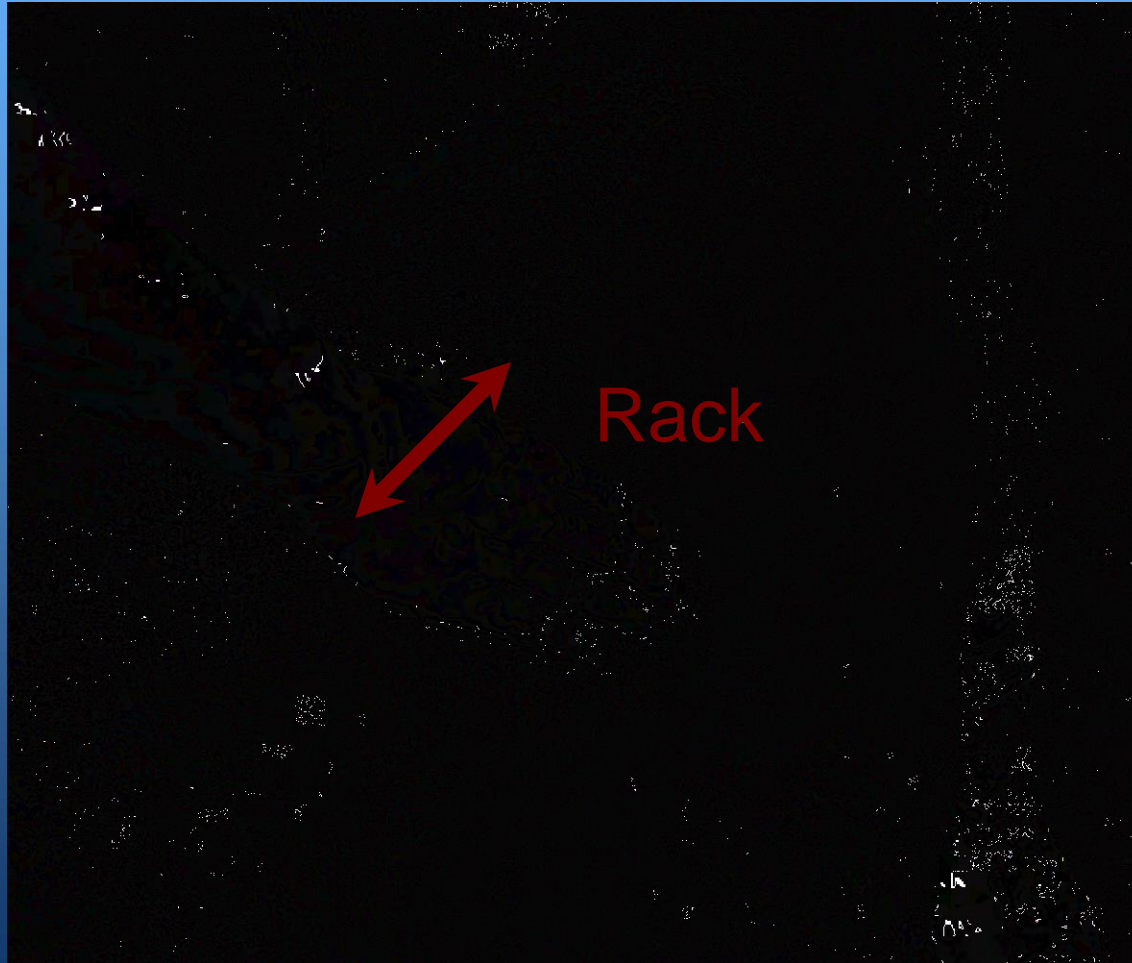
- Length of Hindsaddle -



Greater length of hindsaddle (relative to the foresaddle) is desired in sheep

Evaluating Degree of Muscling

- Shape Over Rack -



Grooved shape over the rack is desired in sheep

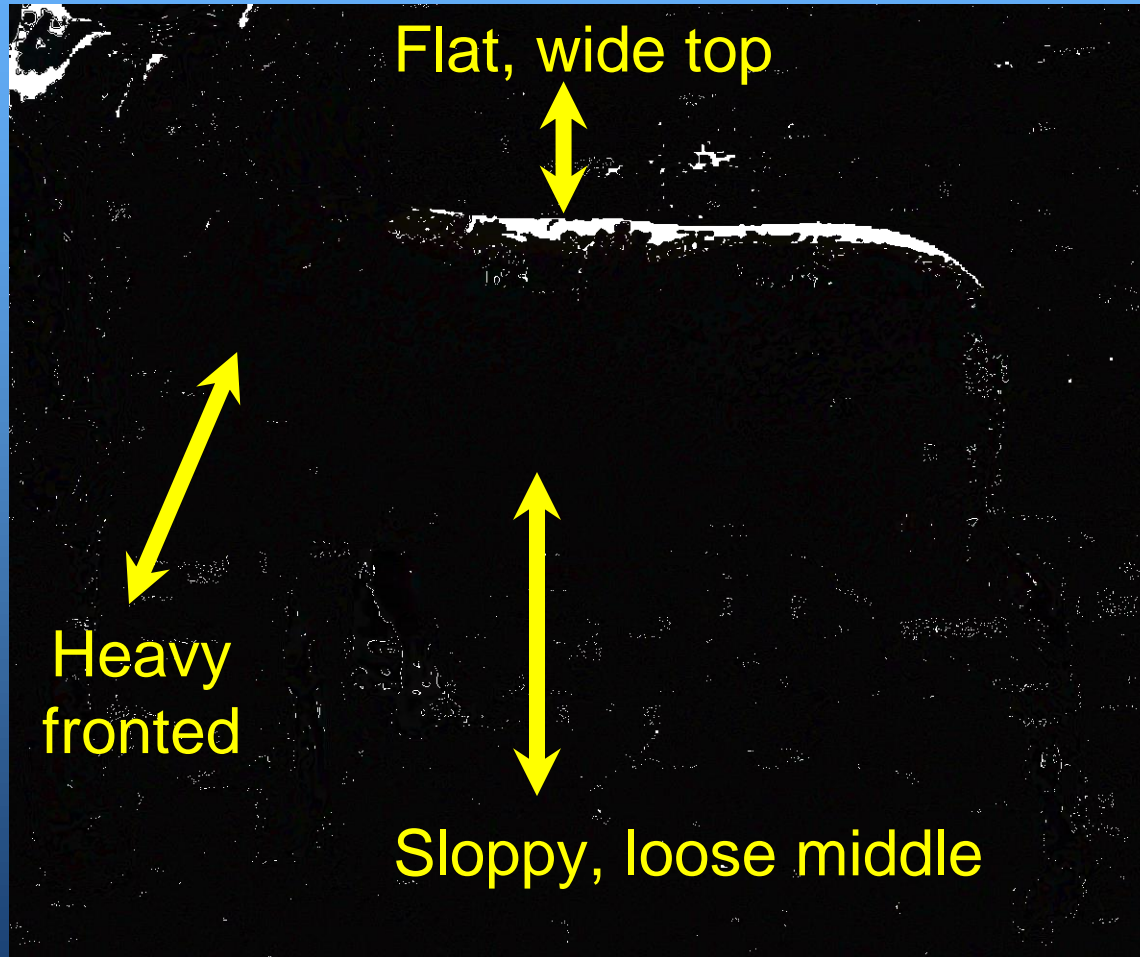
Evaluating Degree of Finish

1. Lambs should be lean with an ideal backfat thickness of 0.15 to 0.20 inches
2. Degree of muscling, frame size, and stage of maturity influence degree of finish

Watch out for short, light muscled lambs
Fat sheep will be widest over the top

3. Lambs that are lean will be:
Very trim over and behind the shoulder
Extremely clean and neat through underline

Evaluating Degree of Finish



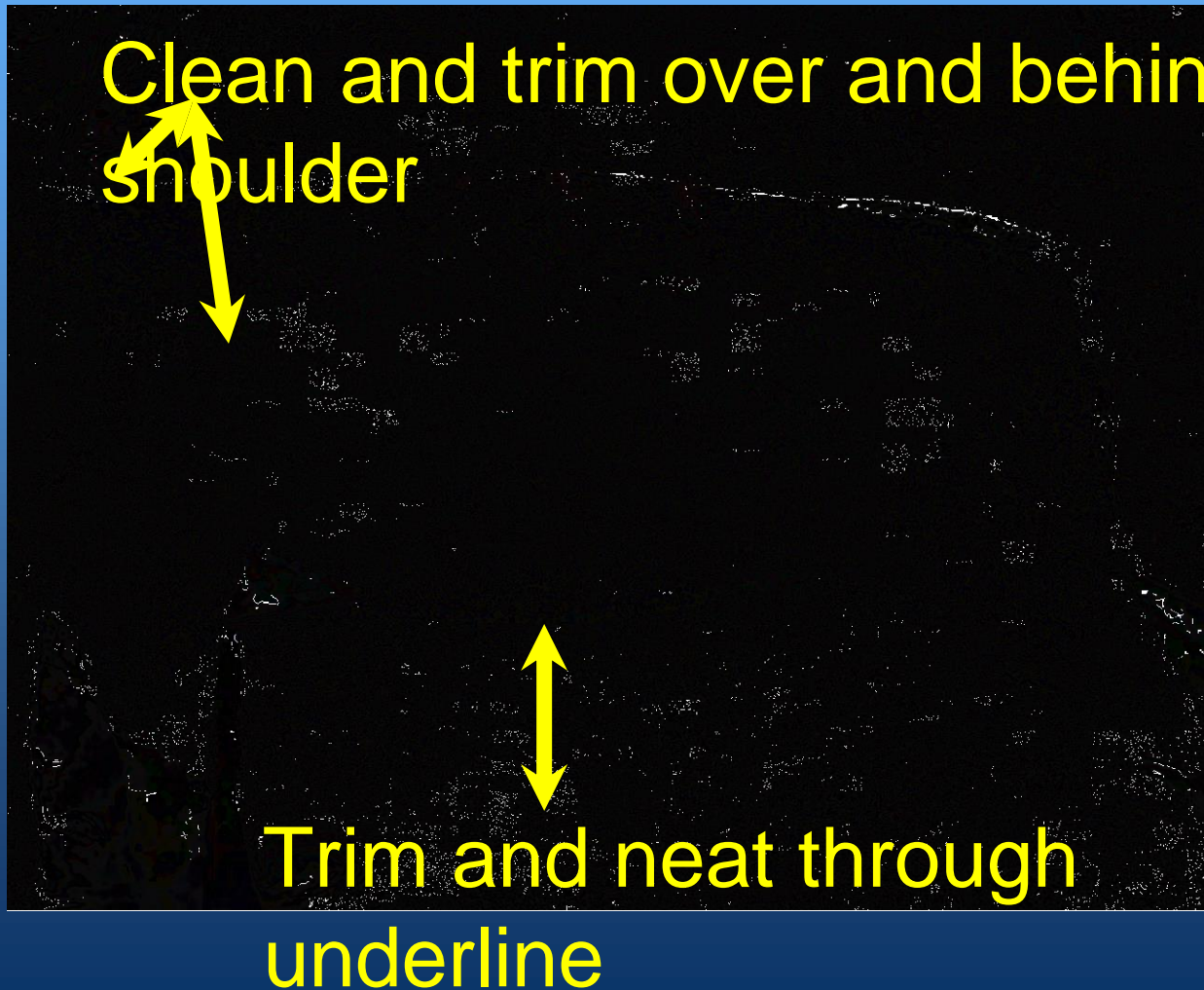
Good rule to follow: Fat sheep go last in the class

Evaluating Degree of Finish



Lamb is very trim
with base width is at
least as wide as
width of top

Evaluating Degree of Finish



Evaluating Balance and Style

Balance deals with having equal portions of width, depth, and length, with special emphasis on length:

- Sheep should be wide and deep at the rear and tight and trim through the front-end (Christmas tree shape)
- Volume of weight in leg and loin

Style deals with correctness of structure and straightness of design:

- A straight top line is desired
- A neat, smooth shoulder that blends smoothly into the neck and ribs is desired

Evaluating Balance and Style

Broken topped

Heavy fronted

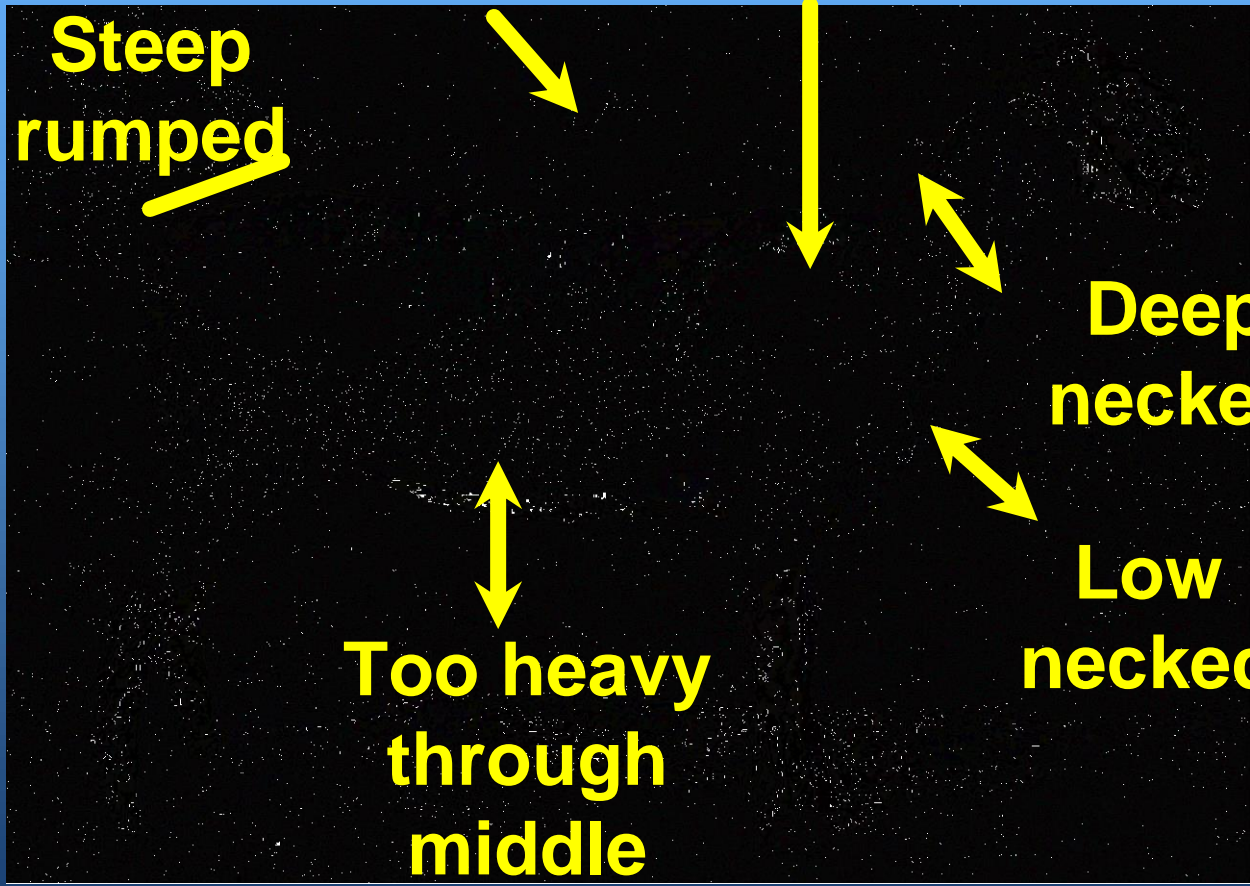
Steep rumped

Deep necked

Low necked

Too heavy through middle

Nasty Sheep Alert !!
(no balance)



Evaluating Balance and Style



Wrong angle:

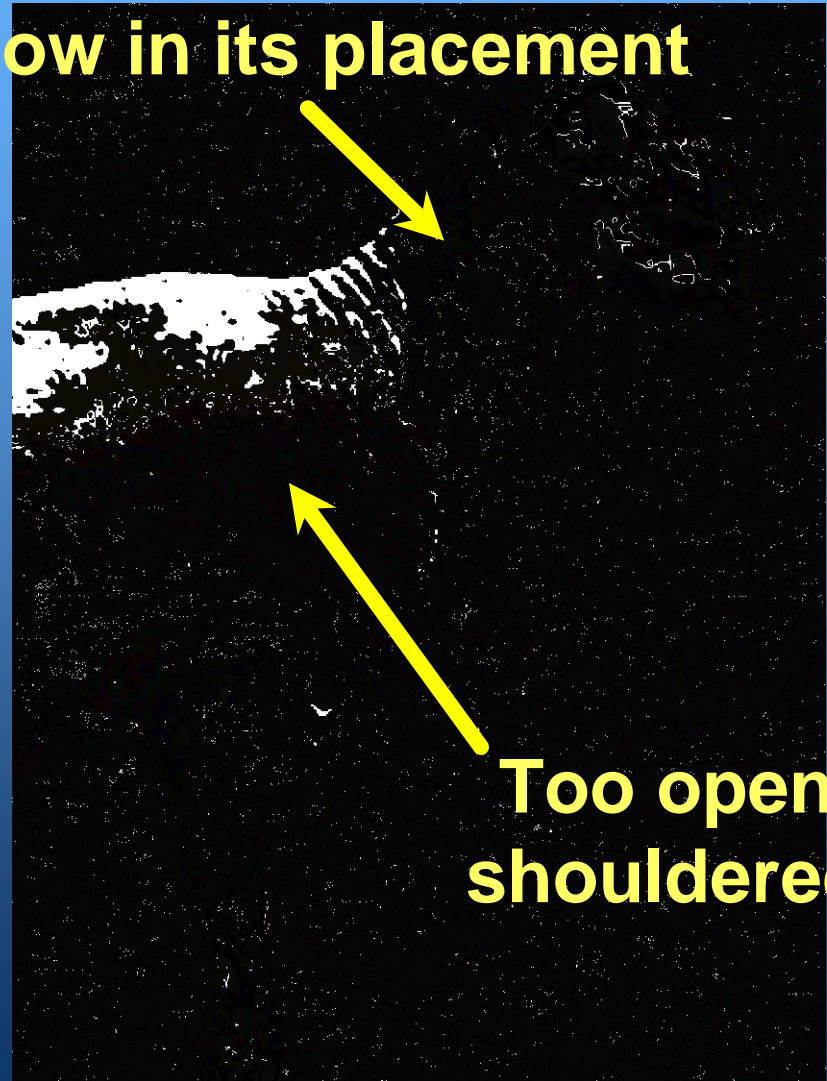
heavier in the front
half than in the rear
half

Evaluating Balance and Style

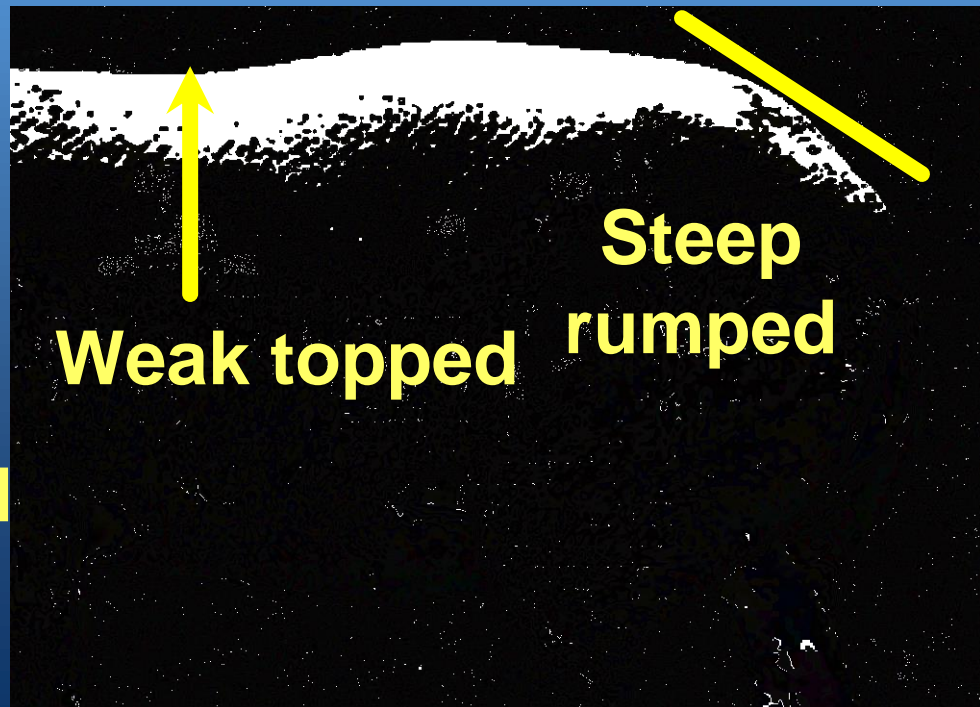


Evaluating Balance and Style

Neck too deep and low in its placement



Too open shouldered

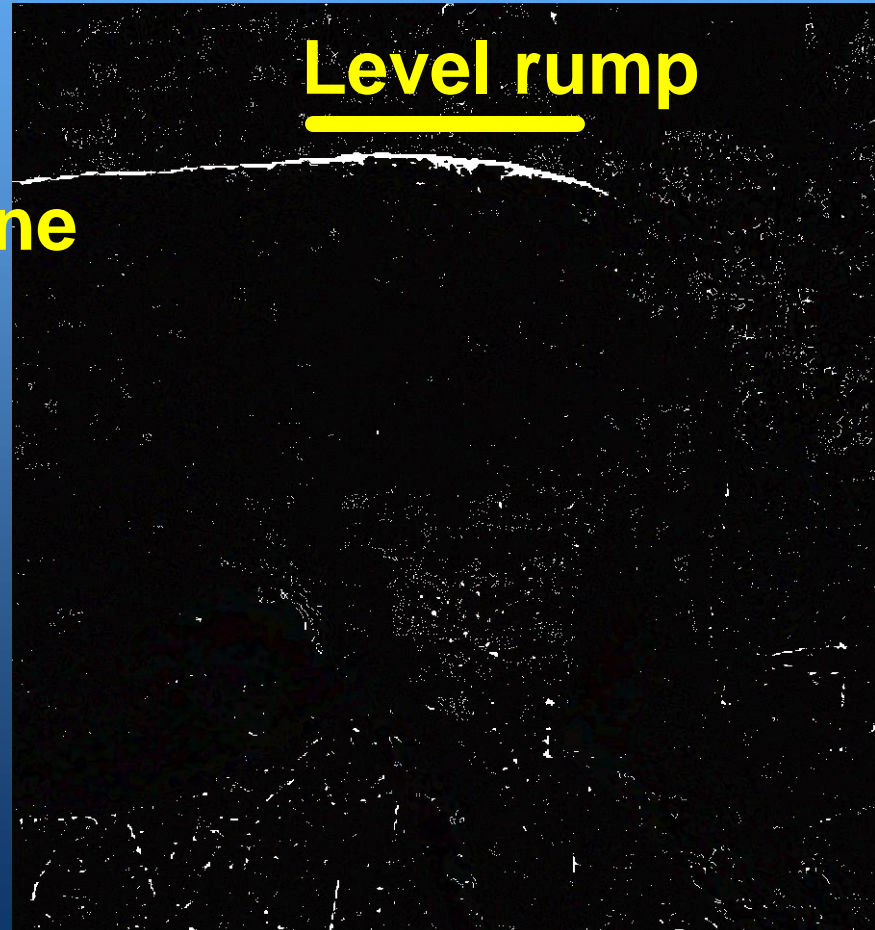
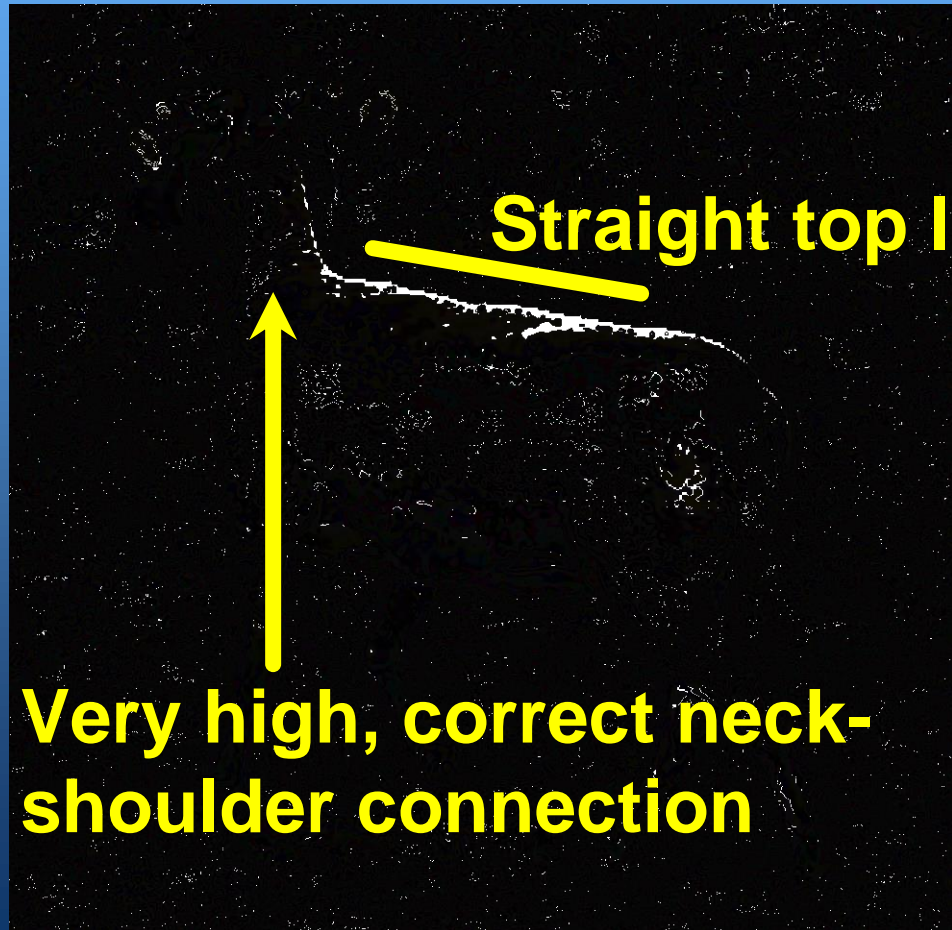


Weak topped rumped

Steep

Evaluating Balance and Style

Good style points



Evaluating Balance and Style

**Smooth at point
of shoulder**

Good Style Points!



Evaluating Soundness and Structural Correctness

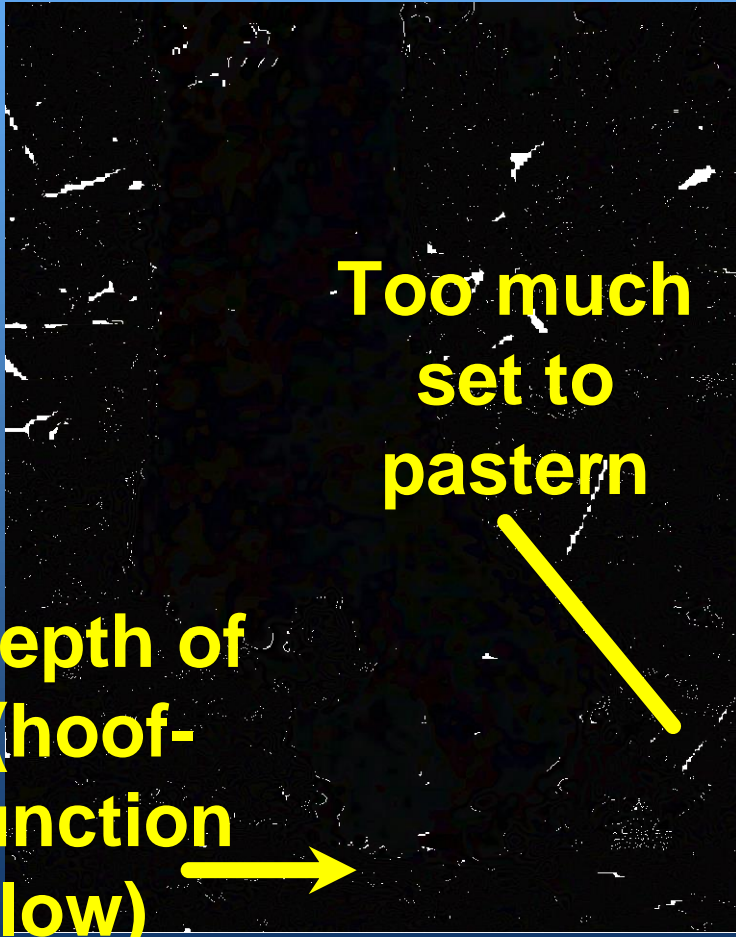
When evaluating soundness and structural correctness, pay close attention to:

1. Feet and pasterns
2. Hocks
3. Knees
4. Rumps
5. Shoulders

Evaluating Soundness

- Feet and Pasterns -

Not good



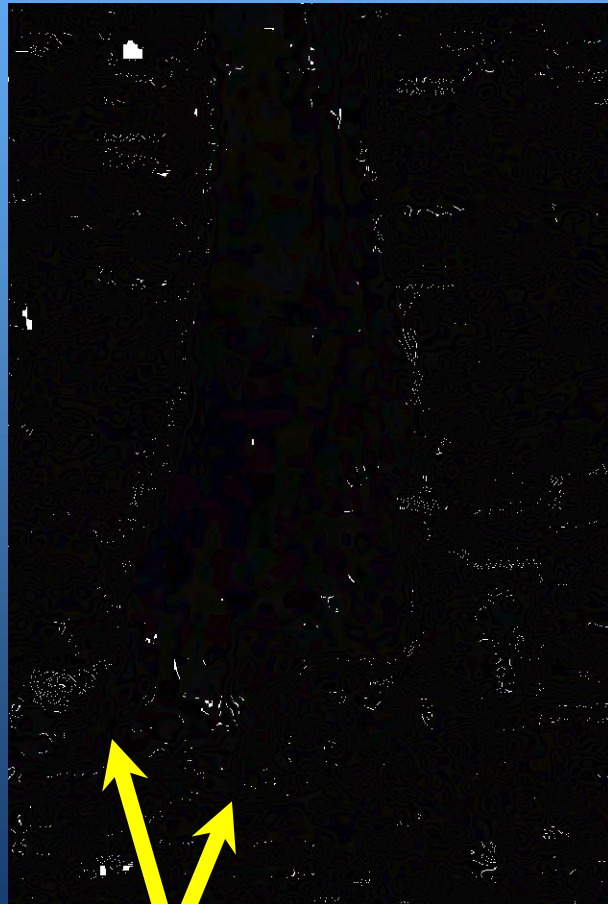
Cripple Alert !



Evaluating Soundness

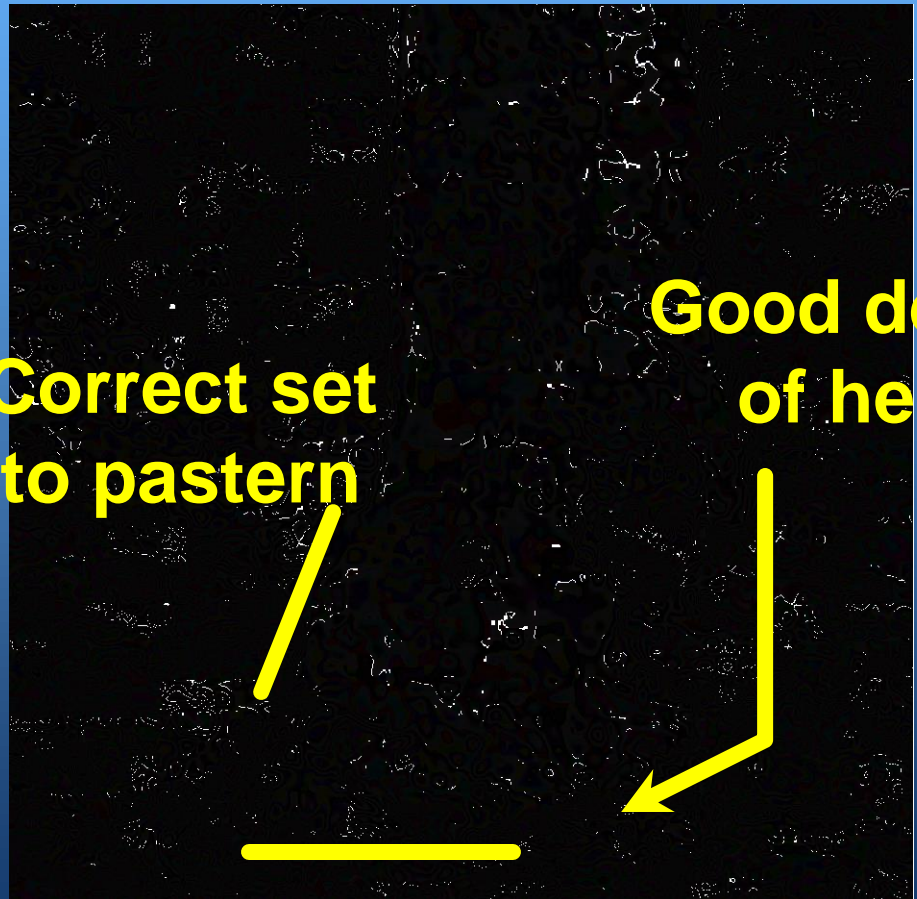
- Feet and Pasterns -

Nice!



Big, even toes

Nice feet and pastern



Correct set to pastern

Good depth of heel

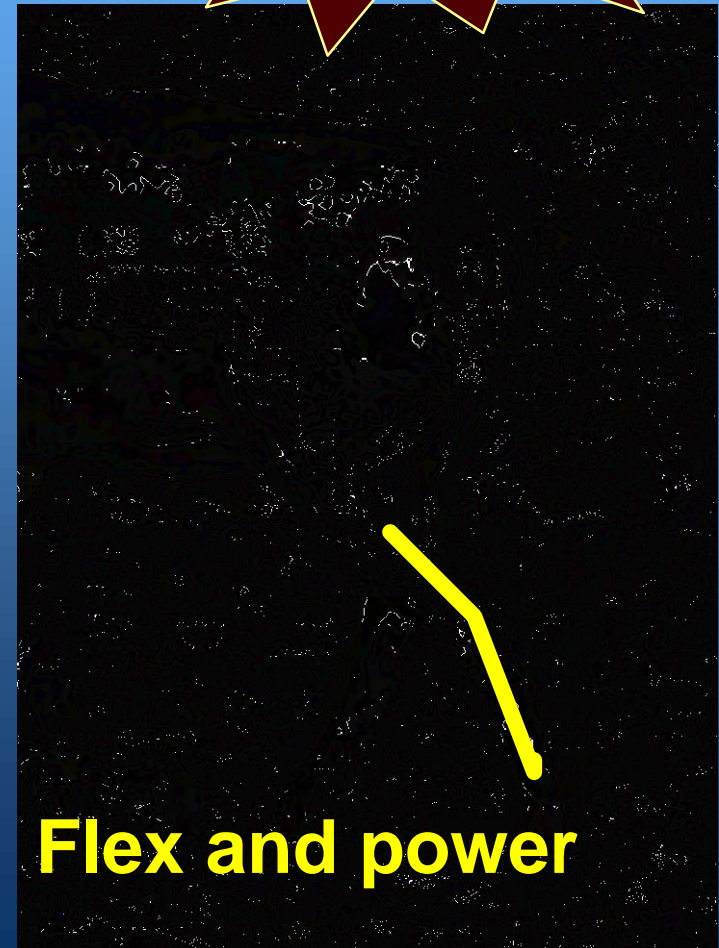
Foot sits flat and even on ground

Evaluating Soundness

- Hocks -

Too much set to hocks

Correct hocks

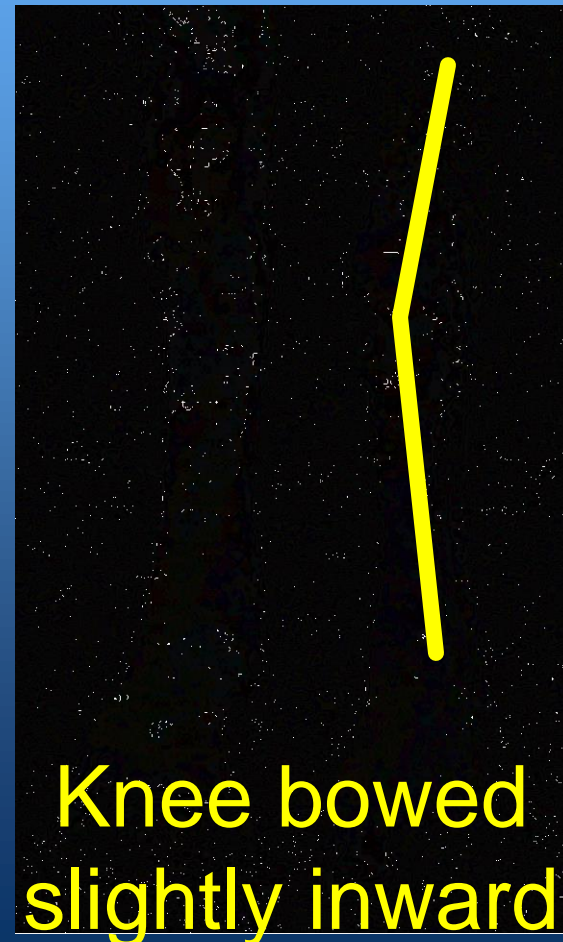
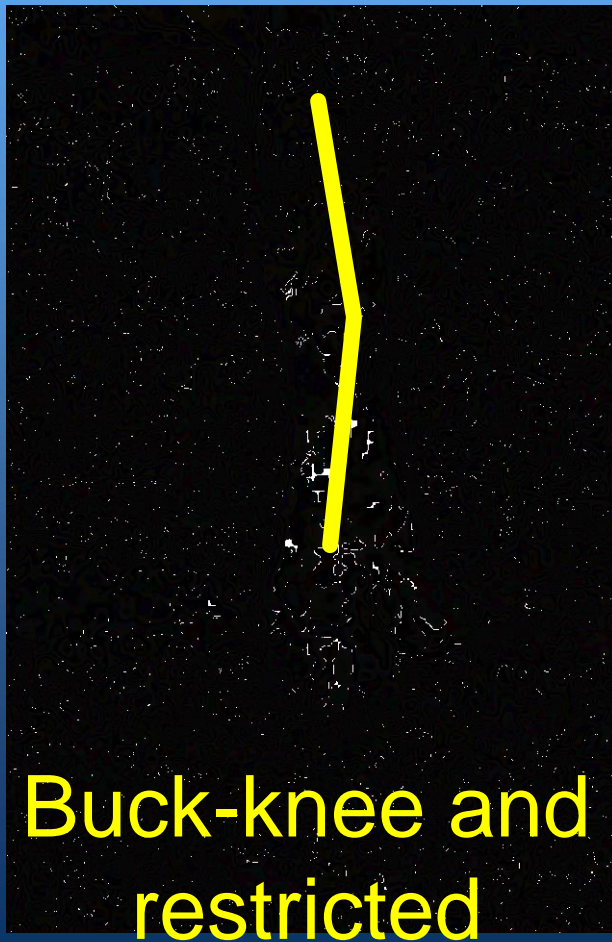


Flex and power

Evaluating Soundness

- Knees -

Knees that need improvement



Evaluating Soundness

- Knees -

Good Knees

**Straight and
strong knee**

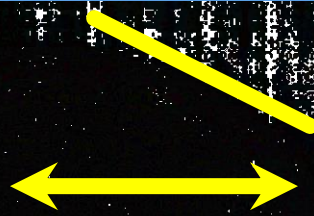
**Proper knee
flex for
movement**



Evaluating Soundness

- Rump -

Rumps that need improvement



Short and
steep rumped



Long but
steep rumped



Level but
short rumped

Evaluating Soundness

- Rump -



Very long
rumped



Level rump
design

Evaluating Soundness

- Shoulders -



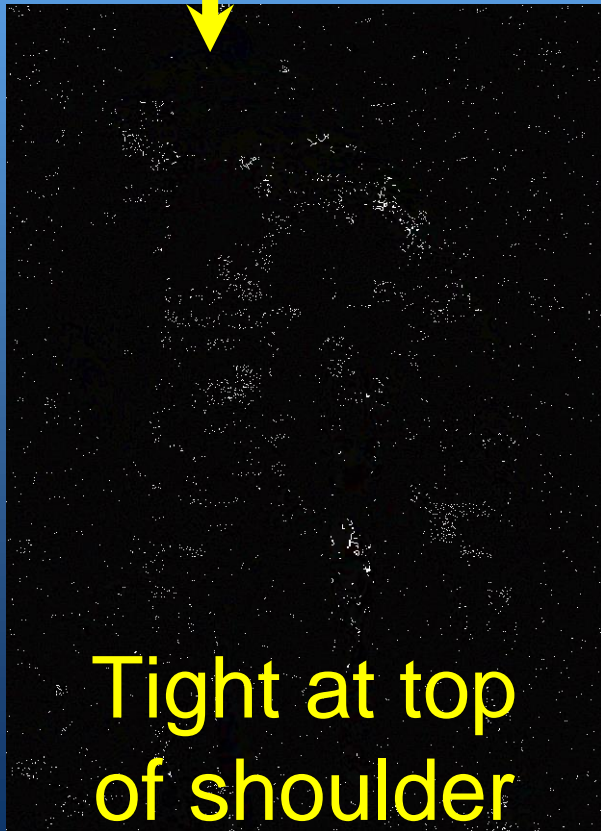
Poor shoulder
structure

Open
shouldered

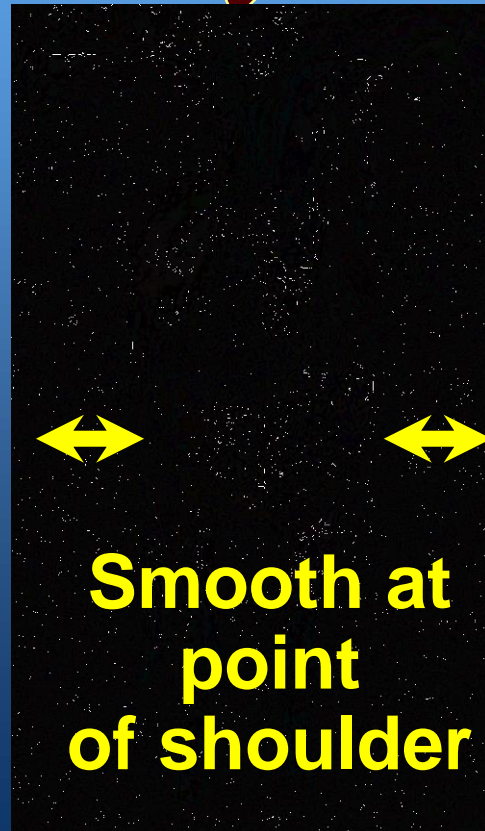
Coarse
shouldered

Evaluating Soundness

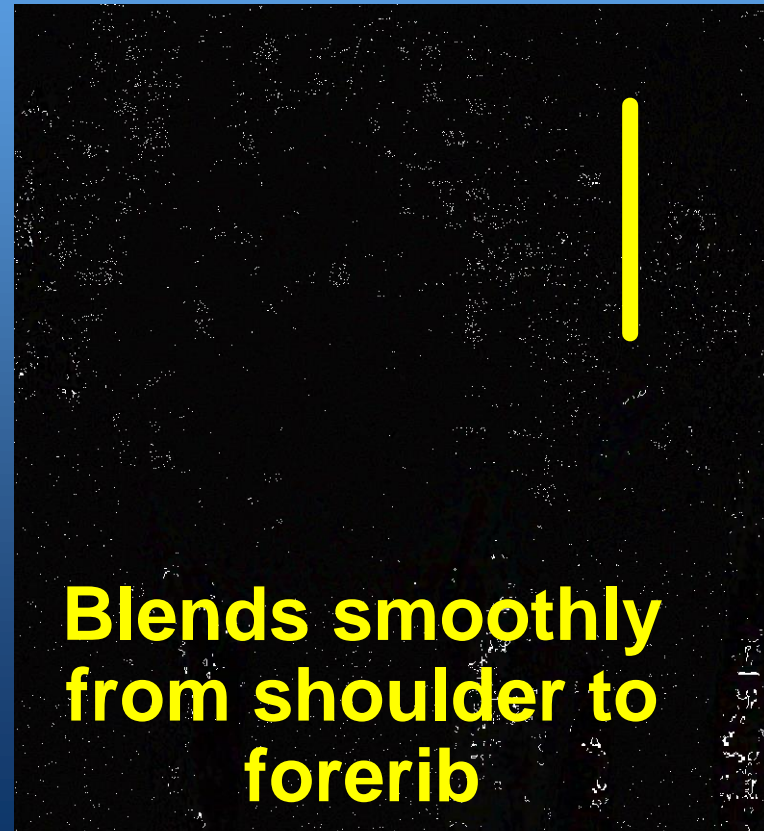
- Shoulders -



**Tight at top
of shoulder**



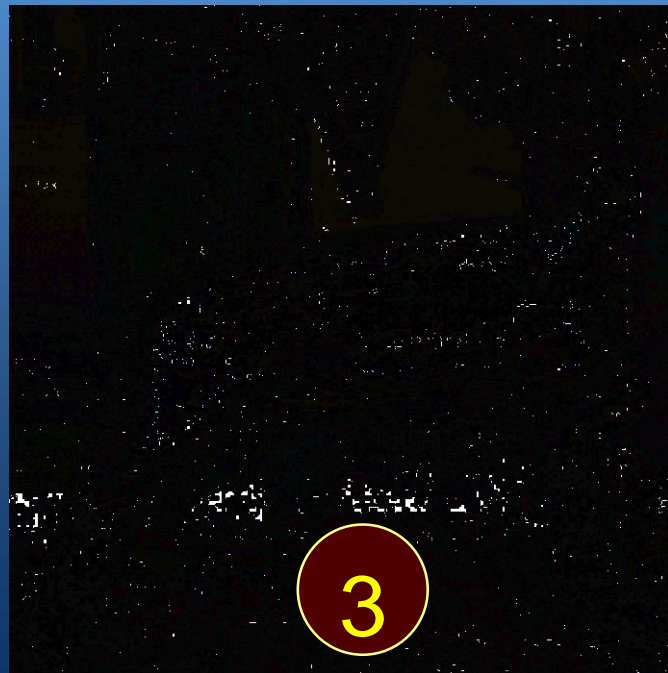
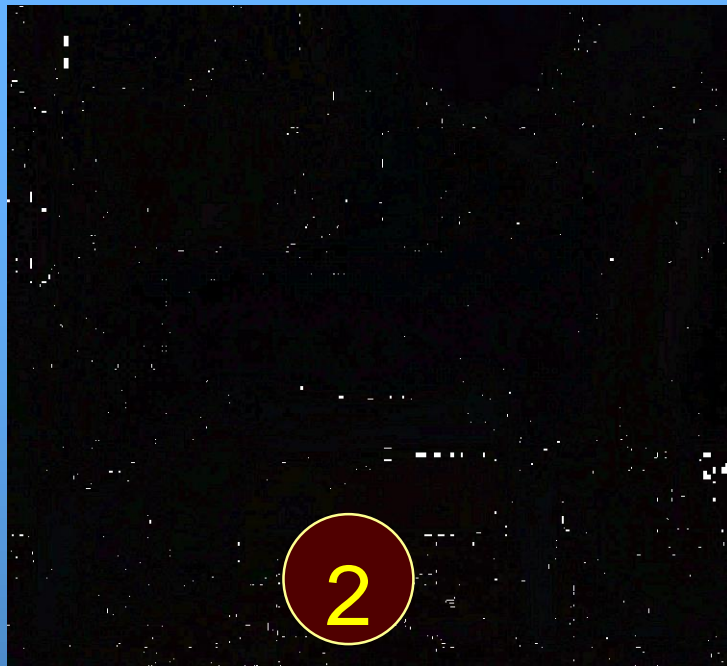
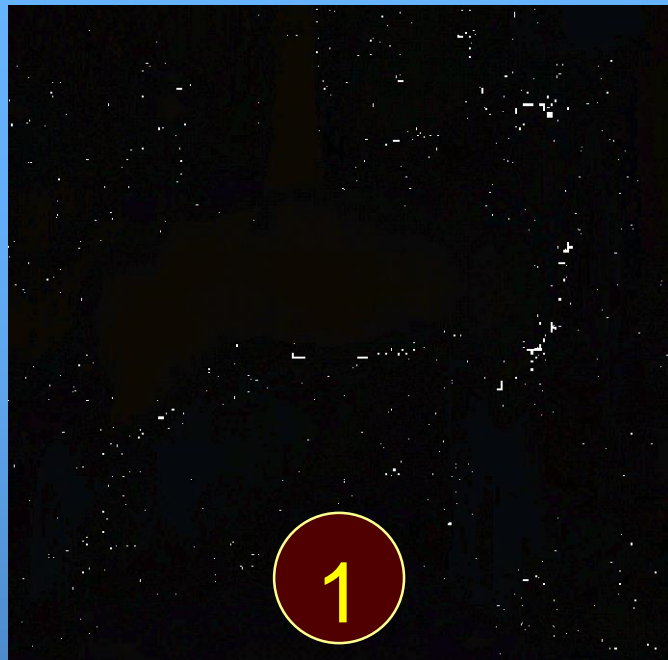
**Smooth at
point
of shoulder**



**Blends smoothly
from shoulder to
forerib**

Example Market

Lamb Class I



Official Placing

1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Cuts:

2 - 3 - 6