Livestock Judging Guide

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Module 9: Goats

Judging Market Goats
Judging Market Goats

Ideal market goat:
- Weigh varies, no “ideal” weight
- Fat covering important, but harder to detect
  - Goats lay down fat from the inside out
  - This differs from other animals, like lambs
  - Goat should handle trim and uniform
- Correctly finished = 0.08 to 0.12 inches of backfat
Judging Market Goats

Ideal market goat:
- Based wide behind
- Abundance of muscling in hindsaddle
- Heavy muscled leg and loin
- Bulging forearm
- Firm, trim finish is desirable
- Adequate size and scale
- Bigger, longer, heavy-boned
- Structurally sound
Judging Market Goats

- Large framed, well-balanced
- Straight topped
- Slight slope to rump
- Long, square rump
- Muscular, thick, long loin
- Deep bodied
- Trim middle
- Correct set of legs
- Head held erect from top of shoulder
- Trim fronted
- Deep, wide chest
- Long across stifle
- Trim, firm finish
- Bold spring of rib
- Deep, full bulging leg
- Bulging forearm
- Heavy boned
- Legs placed wide apart
Steps to Judging Goats

- Begin from the ground and work up
- Then from rear to front
- Rank based on traits of importance they possess
- Put greatest emphasis on most valuable traits
- Eliminate easy placings
- Rank the remainder on bases of volume of important traits
Judging Market Goats

- Ranking of Traits for Market Goats
  - Degree of muscling
  - Soundness and structural correctness
  - Volume and Capacity
  - Balance and Style
  - Degree of finish (fat cover)
Judging Market Goats

- **Evaluating Degree of Muscling**
  - First - evaluated through center of leg for thickness
    - Inside & outside of leg
    - Evaluate length of muscle, should be deep into lower leg
  - Second – Examine width between rear feet
    - On the move
    - Standing
  - Compare base width to top width
    - Heavy muscled goats – base width = top width
    - Don’t be tricked by additional width due to fat cover
Judging Market Lambs

Evaluating Degree of Muscling

Other areas to evaluate degree of muscling:

- Shape of forearm
  - Better indicator for goats than lambs
  - Bulging forearm = good indication of heavy muscled
- Shape over rack or withers
  - Harder to evaluate when unable to handle goats
  - If able to handle, should feel like a roll of coins
  - Larger coins = more muscle
Judging Market Lambs

Evaluating Degree of Muscling

Other areas to evaluate degree of muscling:

- Length of hindsaddle (loin and leg)
  - From last rib to tailhead
  - Hindsaddle should be as long or longer than foresaddle

- Width & length of loin
  - More difficult to evaluate than with lambs
  - Many contests don’t allow contestants to handle goats
  - Could confuse with bloom
Judging Market Goats

Center Leg and Base Width

- Light muscled (Narrow width)
- Average muscled (Average width)
- Heavy muscled (Wide based)
Judging Market Goats

Shape of forearm

Light muscled forearm

Bulging forearm
Judging Market Goats

Shape over Rack (Withers)

Narrow & steep over the rack

Wide & flat over the rack
Judging Market Goats

- Length of Hindsaddle
  - Contains most valuable cuts
  - Should be greater in length & weight than foresaddle
Judging Market Goats

Evaluating Soundness

- Correct set or angle to feet, legs & joints are extremely important to:
  - Production (growth)
  - Longevity (soundness)
- Legs should be squarely placed under the goat
- Evaluate soundness by observing:
  - Feet and Pasterns
  - Hocks
  - Knees
  - Topline
  - Rump
Judging Market Goats

Feet and Pasterns

- Strong with slight angle
- Provides cushion for joints

Correct

Big feet with even toes, set flat on surface and square with animal’s body

Incorrect

Weak set to pastern
Judging Market Goats

Incorrect Structure

- Splay-footed, toes turned out
- Uneven toes

- Weak pasterns
- Too much set or angle to pasterns
Judging Market Goats

Hocks

Correct structure is critical to:
- Mobility
- Longevity

Should have 20 degree of set or angle
Should be clean, flat & free of swelling
Gives flex & power on the move

Good measure of correctness:
- Ability to get rear leg beyond the tailhead when walking

Correct set to hocks
Judging Market Goats

Sickle-hocked

Too much set to the hocks
Judging Market Goats

Knees should be:
- Square with the body when viewed from the front
- Slightly set back when viewed from the side

Correct

Knee straight or slightly set back
Judging Market Goats

Knee “bucked over”, lacks cushion & will restrict movement

Knock-kneed

Knees bowed slightly inward, when viewed from front
Judging Market Goats

Topline
- Should be nearly level
- Slightly higher at the apex of shoulder, than at hooks

Level topped

Weak topped
Judging Market Goats

Rump
- Long, with slight slope from hooks to pins
- High tail set
- Square appearance

Short, steep rump

Long, level rump
Judging Market Goats

Evaluating Volume & Capacity

Three-dimensional relationship between:

- Width of body
- Depth of body
- Length of body
Judging Market Goats

Evaluating Volume & Capacity

Body width
- Wide through chest floor
- Bold spring of ribs
- Open rib shape
- Wide, expressive rack & loin
- At the rear, widest from stifle to stifle
- Wide base
Judging Market Goats

Flat-ribbed. Narrow based

Open-ribbed. Wide based
Judging Market Goats

Evaluating Volume & Capacity

- Body depth
  - Deep-ribbed
  - Deep heart girth
  - Deep rear flank
  - Level underline from chest to flank
  - Nearly level topped
Judging Market Goats

- Shallow bodied
- Deep bodied
Judging Market Goats

Evaluating Volume & Capacity

- Body Length
  - Longer bodied preferred
  - Hindsaddle should be as long, if not longer than foresaddle
  - More hindsaddle = higher placing
Judging Market Goats

Short bodied

Long bodied
Judging Market Goats

Evaluating Balance

- Body parts blend together
- Body length, width & depth are proportional
- Length of body & length of neck proportional to width & depth of animal
- Again, as much or more mass in rear half than front
Judging Market Goats

Balanced Doe

Wide based

Long, deep bodied
Judging Market Goats

Evaluating Style

Style deals with:
- Correctness of structure
- Straightness of design

Goats should have:
- Nearly straight top line
- Neat shoulder that blends smoothly into neck and ribs
- Long, clean neck sitting high on shoulder
- Clean breast

Excellent Style
Judging Market Goats

Evaluating Degree of Finish

- Should be lean with 0.08 to 0.12 inches of backfat thickness
- Goats store fat internally before putting it on externally
- Goats do not marble (intramuscular fat)
- Degree of finish is influenced by:
  - Amount of muscling
  - Frame size
  - Stage of maturity
- Fat goats should be discounted heavily
Judging Market Goats

Ideal Finish

Very trim, with base width & clean fronted

Ideal Finish

Very clean and trim over & behind the shoulder, extremely trim & neat through underline
Test Your Skills

Place this class of market goats.
Official Placing

Official Placing: 1 – 3 – 4 – 2
Cuts: 3 – 2 – 4
I started the class with the combination goat of the class. The Number 1 doe was the heaviest muscled, strongest topped goat that stood on the heaviest bone.

In the initial pair of 1 over 3, Number 1 was more expressive in its muscle shape and dimension from end to end, exhibiting more mass on the inside and outside of the leg, more width down the top and more bulge to the forearm. Number 3 did show more volume with a bolder spring of rib. But, 1 was straighter down its topline and had a more correct set to the hocks when viewed from the rear.

In the intermediate pair, the lighter-colored Number 3 placed over 4 in a fairly close placing. Number 3 showed more overall dimension and capacity, being deeper in the heart girth and flank, as well as being wider through the center of the leg. The Number 4 wether; however, was more structurally correct in his rear legs and had more length in his neck and smoother in his shoulder. But, 3 was leveler from hooks to pins with a higher tail set.

In the final pair, Number 4 exhibited more muscle shape in the leg and forearm. Four was squarer in the rump and thicker over the rack. Recognizing Number 3 was a more stylish goat, it still placed fourth because it was the lightest muscled, shallow made individual in the class.