

American Miniature Cheviot Sheep Breeders Association

Breed Standards

General

Appearance-- alert, active, graceful and symmetrical, with a stylish, lively carriage. Sheep can be shown in full fleece and long tail, full fleece and short tail. When showing as a meat animal, sheep may be shown in the usual manner, slick sheared, with long or short tail.

Form-- straight top and underline; moderate depth and width; well proportioned. Legs are apart and well set. Bone is adequate.

Size-- Maximum height at two years old is 23 inches at the top of the shoulder when sheared. Mature ewes 45 lbs-85 lbs; mature rams 55 lbs-100 lbs.

Temperament-- mild mannered. Some individuals may be standoffish but not flighty as a whole.

Reproduction-- Ewes generally bear lambs without assistance; twins are not uncommon; triplets are rare.

Head & Neck

Head-- medium in length, broad, then tapering to the muzzle, with ample width between the eyes; no wool forward of the ears or jaw. Small facial markings are acceptable. Both ewes and rams are polled.

Eyes-- large, clear and alert with dark pigment preferred around the eyes.

Ears-- sharp, erect, and of small to medium length.

Nose-- straight, slightly arched and may more strongly arched or *Roman* in the rams. The nostrils are large and black.

Mouth-- well-formed with an even bite; teeth align properly with the dental pad.

Neck-- is medium length and properly proportioned with the body. Smoothly joins the head to the body at the shoulder.

Forequarters

Shoulders-- compact on top, well covered and smoothly join with the neck and body.

Breast-- clean through the front with adequate capacity fitting well onto the neck and brisket.

Body

Back-- straight, broad, evenly and thickly covered.

Heart girth-- full and deep.

Ribs-- well sprung and covered.

Loins-- wide, deep, well covered, blending well onto a strong rump.

Skin-- tight without excessive rolls or folds.

Hindquarters

Hips-- wide apart, level and smooth.

Rump-- level, wide and well carried out to the dock

Thighs-- full, deep and wide.

Legs-- set well with adequate inner and outer leg muscling. Small leg markings are acceptable. The hooves should be black.

Udder/Scrotum-- well formed, symmetrical and well developed.

Tail-- may be left natural as is done in parts of the U.K., or it may be docked at the end of the inner webbing (wool-less area) on the underside of the tail. The tail, when left undocked, should at least sweep the hocks and be straight. [Note: the American Miniature Cheviot Sheep Breeders Association endorses tail docking in order to prevent flystrike and related diseases.]

Fleece

The wool has a natural crispness and slight luster in its appearance. The fleece is medium to long (3" to 7" in length) in white, black, tan, or dilute. As of 2008, the registry has added the *painted* designation. Painted sheep display two or more colors, clearly defined as spots, swatches, stripes, or streaks on the fleece.

Fleece is dense and even, covering body completely from behind the poll and ears where it often forms a ruff to above the knees and hocks, including the belly. The balance of the body is covered with a fine, shiny short hair; no wool on face or legs. Wool grade: 1/4 – 3/8 blood; 48's to 58's; 25-32 microns.

Points given for showing

- General Appearance 20 pts
- Head & Neck 20 pts
- Forequarters 10 pts
- Body 20 pts
- Hindquarters 20 pts
- Fleece 10 pts

Questionable characteristics, not disqualifying unless present in a high degree

- Scurs on rams
- Overly large ears
- Bare belly
- Wool on face or legs
- Excessive kemp
- Excessive folds on head or neck
- Pink or white hooves
- Nose not totally black
- Split scrotum

Characteristics which must disqualify an otherwise good sheep

- Over 23 inches tall at the shoulder, when sheared.
- Horns on rams or ewes; scurs on ewes.
- Deformed mouth (under or over shot jaw)
- Splayed hooves
- Totally pink nose
- Deformed or missing teats in ewes – must have at least two teats.
- Deformed or missing testes in rams.
- Bad temperament or aggressive behavior from either ewes or rams.
- Black spots on white wool or white spots on black or colored wool (does not apply to sheep registered as “painted” specimens).