



Showing and Judging Guidelines for Angora Goats and Mohair Fleece.

This document is to be used as a basis for Judging Angora Goats and Mohair Fleece and for a training reference for Judges in NSW Australia. The document outlines both the breed standard and policies to be adopted by Mohair Australia Accredited NSW Judges. These are GUIDELINES, NOT RULES and should be read and applied with a degree of common sense, accepting that show dates vary, and late shows will naturally have animals with longer fleeces. The guidelines are statements of ideals and general direction, to be used in the training process and as part of the on-going discussion of quality and the assessment of animals and fleeces. The document is a live document subject to change based on industry discussion.

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1. Introduction.

Showing Angora Goats and mohair fleeces is a significant part of the Australian Angora Industry. Shows present the opportunity to display Angora goats and mohair to the public. The promotional value of shows is seen as an important avenue for the expansion of the mohair industry. It is important to send clear signals to the public. Every effort must be made to inform and involve the public at shows.

A uniform set of breed standards and guidelines for showing and judging are necessary if value is to be obtained from the exercise. In addition, the role of shows in identifying superior livestock and the characteristics sought by both animal buyers and mohair processors are of significance. The national Board of Mohair Australia seeks, in publishing these guidelines, to lift the profile of shows and refine their purpose so that all exhibitions demonstrate the value and aims of breeding Angora goats and of producing mohair.

These guidelines are aimed specifically at Mohair Australia sponsored shows. While Mohair Australia can offer advice to Judges at Agricultural Shows, it has no control over the rules or methods applied.

2. Standards of Excellence (the Breed Standard).

All breeds try to define "quality" and describe the attributes of superior animals within the specific breed. To some extent this definition is achieved by consensus and evolves out of the exercise of animal evaluation by experienced practitioners of stud breeding. On the other hand, the breed standard also evolves in relation to the requirements of the market place. Ideally, the commercial product and its efficient production set the objectives and breed philosophers interpret the way in which this can be achieved at the stud level.

The quality of Angora goats can be described in three areas. Size, Conformation and Fleece Quality. Clearly, fleece quality is the most important, but Size and Conformation are important because they relate to survival, reproduction and well-being of animals under paddock conditions.

Size. Large framed animals are significantly more fertile, robust and have a greater capacity to survive under range conditions. While small animals may produce finer fibre and have greater levels of coverage, size should be considered of major importance.

Conformation. This refers to the physical structure and shape of the animal and can be discussed under headings of Head, Forequarter, Barrel and Hindquarter.

The Head. The head should be strong and neatly formed with the profile straight to slightly convex. The jaw should fit well, not being under or overshot. The ears should be of medium length and pendulous. The horns of the buck must be spaced apart, bending backwards and down, and spreading away from the neck. The horns of the doe should be lighter, well-spaced and curved gently downwards and away from the line of the neck. The head should be covered with good quality mohair. The face and ears should be covered with fine soft fibre and should not be excessively pigmented in the skin. Pigmented fibre on the face and ears is a fault.

Major faults.	Excessive overshot or undershot jaw. Black fibre in spots.
Faults.	Straight, long, harsh hair on poll. Weak, narrow and angular head. Coarse kempy hair on the face and ears. Teeth failing to meet the dental pad squarely. Excessive pigmentation on the face, ears and horns. Folded ears. Muffled face. Curled or poorly shaped horns, especially if close to the neck which would interfere with shearing. Straight and closely spaced horns.

The forequarter and legs. The neck should be of medium depth, broad and fit neatly into the shoulders. The chest should be broad and deep. The withers should be broad and firm. The foreleg should be strong and straight with good bone. The upper leg should be well muscled. The pasterns should be firm and well formed.

Major faults.	Weak pasterns allowing the dewclaw to touch the ground. One or both hooves turned in or out more than 45 degrees.
Faults.	Narrow chest. Hollow behind the shoulders. Loose shoulder blades. Crooked legs. Fine bone. Weak pasterns. Splayed hooves.

The Barrel. The barrel should be long with the back strong and relatively level. The loins should be broad and strong. The barrel should be large and deep with the ribs well sprung.

Faults.	Short back. Back roached or hollow. Lack of depth of body. Narrow and slab-sided body.
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Hind Quarters and legs. The rump should be broad and reasonably level. There should be good space between the pin bones. The thighs should be well fleshed. The hind legs should be strong and the animal standing square. The pasterns should be firm, and the hooves well formed. The tail should be straight, well-formed and covered with good quality mohair. The sexual organs should be complete and well formed. The doe should have two functional teats. Supernumerary teats not to be of a size or shape as to interfere with suckling. The buck must have two testes of approximately equal size. The scrotum should not be excessively split.

Disqualification Faults.	Missing testicles (cryptorchidism). Juvenile testes in mature bucks. Abnormal genitalia on does.
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Faults.	Excessive sloped or "Goose" rump. Narrow hindquarters. Cow hocks. Sickie hocks. Weak pasterns. Splayed hooves. Crooked tail or tail covered with coarse hair. Scrotum split more than one half. Uneven or small testes.
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Mohair Fleece on the animal.

General. The Angora goat should be covered from head to tail (and down the points) with dense, attractive, lustrous, kemp free mohair of even length and quality. It should display a balance of character and style with good solid staples having a soft handle with maximum length for the growth period.

Disqualification faults.	Coloured fibre on the fleece bearing parts of the body. Lice infestation.
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Faults.	Kemp and medullated fibre in the fleece or on the back-line or face. Dull and harsh handling fibre. Short length for the period of growth. Flat locks. Poor density. Excessive grease or dryness. Marked variation in fineness or length over body. Muffled face.
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Coverage. There is little doubt that coverage and quality are related but care is recommended in assuming that coverage on the points (head and legs) is indicative of overall animal quality.

Quality. Good quality mohair is free from medullated fibre and is even in length and fineness over the entire body. Quality mohair has a balance of character (crimp) and style (twist) and has a balance of density and fleece

length, giving good fleece weight. The mohair is bright and lustrous and is uniform as possible over the entire body. Ideally the mohair should fall in ringlets with a reversal in twist along the length to prevent the appearance of "ropiness". The mohair is neither excessively greasy nor dry and harsh and has a luxurious handle.

Quality should be considered in its components.

Fineness. Fineness and evenness of the fleece is extremely important and should be considered with fleece weight as being ideal. Excessive coarseness or strength in the neck is most undesirable.

Style and Character. Style and character give structure to the staple. Style refers to the twist and character, the crimp. The ideal is a well-defined ringleted staple, not too broad, of uniform type over the entire body and with a balance of style and character giving the distinctive ringlet formation of mohair. Excessive twist without a "twist reversal"; and excessive character leading to flat locks, are undesirable.

[Twist reversal is seen in superior quality mohair where the style (or twist) changes direction along the staple. The result of this is that, when pulled end from end, the fibres do not tighten as in a yarn or rope but remain free because the twist in one end cancels the reverse twist at the other end.]

Length. Evenness of length throughout the body is of extreme importance. Faults to be guarded against include short fibre on the hind legs or back, and/or unevenness of length on the body. The ideal is a minimum of 14cm for six months growth.

Density. Density of mohair combined with length determines the weight of the mohair cut. The ideal is a dense fleece with good length and solidity of staple without excessive coarseness, grown on an animal with acceptable size.

3. Johne's Disease Audits and other Animal Health Issues.

Whenever animals are brought together there is the chance of the spread of disease and parasites. Judges and Stewards should be aware of potential problems and take steps to maintain a high standard of animal health. Animal separation and hygiene are the two major rules. Organisers must ensure that the environment of the show facility is as clean as possible and that animals are restricted in their contact with other exhibits.

From time to time particular disease and parasite problems arise and come to the attention of Show Societies or Government agencies. Show organisers are bound to assist authorities and comply with control measures being implemented.

Johne's Disease, Footrot and Lice are three conditions currently at issue. Cattle tick controls and Ovine Brucellosis have also been important in particular areas. Caprine Brucellosis (Malta fever, *Brucella malatenses*) is not found in Australia.

There is a good deal of confusion as to Johne's disease in Angora goats. Very few infections have been recorded and where found, the cattle strain seems to be involved. Segregation and hygiene including separate feeders and water troughs reduces risk. Stewards should contact LLS vets for current regulations.

In particular areas, Footrot declarations may be required from exhibitors. Inspection of feet can exclude patent lesions.

While lice are technically not covered by specific rules, it is generally considered important to inspect animals prior to entry into the exhibition site and reject infested teams of animals.

4. Protocol Relating to Judges and Ring Stewards.

A judge is an ambassador for the Angora / Mohair Industry and must always act in a manner which will bring credit to the industry. The following protocols, while not hard and fast rules, are a guide which will assist judges and show managers in avoiding conflict.

It should be noted that many actions which are done with the best of intention can lead to exhibitors questioning the judge's integrity and impartiality. This has, at times, lead to conflict and the questioning of the suitability of the person to judge. Such problems may usually be avoided where the judge is aware of what is expected of a livestock judge. The following rules should be observed.

Judges.

1. A judge shall not be an exhibitor in a section where he is officiating. While a judge may officiate in one section of a show and compete in a separate section, this should be avoided, particularly where other judges are doing likewise.
2. A judge should not adjudicate any class in which a member of the judge's family, or animals owned or partly owned by the judge, is competing.
3. When invited to judge a show, reply immediately. If you are unable to attend the show, advise the show management in sufficient time for a replacement to be invited. The responsibility to appoint a substitute judge always remains with the show management but every assistance in nominating a replacement should be given.
4. The Judge should arrive at the venue at least an hour prior to the advertised commencement time for judging. The judge should report to the steward and examine the judging area for suitability. Sufficient room and light is essential.
5. Appropriate dress is of importance.
6. The judge should not inspect any exhibit and should remain as far as practical from the exhibits prior to the judging.
7. While socialising with exhibitors prior to judging is not recommended, it is common for judges to be offered refreshments with the steward and exhibitors prior to judging. In such cases all exhibitors must be welcome and the Angoras and Fleeces should not be discussed.
8. A judge should not convey animals to a show on behalf of an exhibitor.
9. A judge should not if possible, socialise with or stay with an exhibitor on the night prior to judging.
10. A judge should not discuss the sale, purchase or lease of any Angora at a show where he/she is officiating.
11. Prior to judging a class, the judge will obtain the exact description of the class from the ring steward.
12. A comment on each class is recommended but not essential. The important criteria for comment is to inform, encourage and promote. Comments that do not fit these criteria are rarely appropriate.
13. The judge should make it clear to the audience that the best exhibit has won. As far as possible, comments should be objective rather than subjective. For example, a comment such as "a lovely animal with very pretty fleece" does little to inform the audience of what the judge is looking for. Comments such as "well grown for age" or "excellent length of body" or "desirable balance of style and character" are more informative.
14. The judge should inspect every animal in the class at least once, regardless of whether or not the competition indicates that it is necessary.
15. The judge may place an exhibit in whatever position in the class she/he thinks fit. The judge's decision shall be final.
16. Once the class has been judged it shall not be rejudged and once a ribbon has been placed, it shall not be changed.
17. During the judging, no discussion with individual exhibitors should take place.
18. If after the judging, an exhibitor wishes to seek the judge's opinion the judge should offer his/her opinion courteously and sincerely, preferably in the presence of the ring steward. While it is acceptable to inspect an exhibitor's animals, comments on other exhibitor's animals should not be made.
19. Under no circumstances should a judge become involved in an argument or debate regarding the placing of any exhibit. The judge should politely inform the exhibitor that the placing's reflect his opinion on the day and then not discuss the matter further.
20. A judge may request that an exhibit with lice, coloured fibre or any disqualifying fault be removed from the ring. Such request should be made to the Steward. In some cases, it may be diplomatic to leave an animal in the line-up, unplaced.
21. A judge must comply with the regulations set out in the catalogue for a particular show.

Ring Stewards.

1. A ring steward should have a thorough knowledge of show ring protocol and the guidelines of Mohair Australia Ltd.
2. While it is acceptable for ring stewards to be exhibitors in minor shows, stewards should (preferably) not exhibit in major shows where they are officiating.

3. The ring steward will ensure that each class is assembled promptly. He/she shall advise the judge of the number of entries and the exact description of the class.
4. The ring steward should advise the audience of the description of the class and any withdrawals in order that the schedule of entries can be amended. However, the identity of exhibitors and entries should not be disclosed.
5. The ring steward shall advise the judge as to the number of placing's required, irrespective of the number of ribbons available.
6. The ring steward has the responsibility of checking entries for eligibility.
7. The ring steward must not discuss or appear to discuss the exhibits or exhibitors with the judge. Stewards must not take part in the judging process. When not actively engaged in his/her duties the steward should place herself/himself in such a position as not to interfere with the judging or the view of the spectators.
8. The ring steward has charge of the activities in the ring and should act as a mediator between the judge and the exhibitors.
9. The ring steward has the authority to remove any exhibit or exhibitor from the ring.
10. The ring steward must be courteous and diplomatic in all dealings with exhibitors, judges and the public.
11. When reporting the results of a show the ring steward should provide: -
 - a. The location and date of the show
 - b. The name of the judge
 - c. Identity of the exhibit and the exhibitor for all placing's
 - d. The number in the class.

5. Eligibility of Animals and Fleeces for Exhibition.

The following eligibility rules are considered necessary for the proper conduct of shows.

1. To be exhibited in an animal class at a Mohair Australia Ltd sponsored show an Angora must be recorded with Mohair Australia Ltd. The owner of the exhibit should be a member of Mohair Australia. The Stewards may require a Herd Book Certificate, a statement from the Mohair Australia Registrar, or a pedigree generated from the on-line Herd Book as proof of recording.
2. To be eligible to be exhibited in a commercial class an Angora must not be recorded with Mohair Australia.
3. A stud Angora shall be entered in an age group according to its year of birth or, in the case of kids, its age on the day of judging (if other age requirements are specified).
4. Commercial classes shall be divided into classes according to year of birth. (While teeth can provide a rough guide to age, considerable confusion can be created using teeth which can place animals of widely varying age together.)
5. Wethers must show no entire male characteristics (heavy horns or rut stain).
6. All stud animals should be entire and conform to the breed standard.
7. Where possible show organisers should set shearing dates for show animals and endeavour to check that exhibitors comply with shearing dates. While some exceptions may be made at show late in a season, Stewards should encourage the practice of showing animals in commercial mohair lengths.
8. Fleeces of significantly longer than 16cm should not be accepted for judging by the Stewards.
9. An Angora correctly entered in a class is eligible for any ribbon or award applicable to that class, at the judge's discretion.
10. Where a Championship is awarded all first-place getters in the section of the catalogue eligible for that Championship shall compete.
11. Where a Reserve Championship is awarded, the second-place getter to the Champion shall compete against the other eligible first place getters.
12. Where a Kid or Junior Champion is awarded, the classes eligible for this Championship shall not compete for the Senior Championship.
13. Where a Supreme or Grand Championship is awarded, all stud Championship winners (including the champion Kid or Junior) shall compete. There is no reserve supreme champion.

6. Preparation and Presentation of Animals and Fleeces.

It should be noted that preparation of animals and fleeces for shows varies enormously, making it difficult for judges to properly compare them. If in a judge's opinion, he/she is unable to fully assess an exhibit because of its preparation he/she may consider placing the exhibit lower in the line-up, or not placing it in the class.

Fleeced animals and shorn fleeces should be the result of six to seven months growth and, in the case of fleeces, be from one animal and one growth period. Fleeces should exhibit some gross structure and staples should not be separated and remixed.

Exhibitors are to be encouraged to crutch, wigged and ring the pizzle (as appropriate) of animals up the three months before a show and exhibit them in a condition so that they can see clearly without the forelock being tied up. Does should not exhibit heavy staining or wet un-crutched fibre and bucks/wethers should be free of wet stained fibre in the pizzle area. Judges should not discriminate against animals which have been wigged or crutched.

Exhibitors should present their animals for show in forward store to fat condition and in such a way as to bring credit to the breed.

Exhibitors are encouraged to take mid side samples and no animal should be penalised for showing an animal from which a sample has been taken.

7. Judging Procedure. (The following is offered as a guide to judging technique.)

The judge has two important functions to fulfil. Firstly, to give an honest opinion regarding the relative merit of the exhibits; and secondly, to present and promote the breed and its characteristics to the public.

All judges should be familiar with the show process. Experience as an exhibitor and preferably also as a steward should be a prerequisite to any judging appointment. Periodic attendance of judging schools is also recommended since there is continual change in opinions about quality and the finer points of breed standard.

It should be recognised that all experienced judges adopt their own unique style and technique and the following is intended as a general guide only. The important consideration is to be consistent and follow a routine procedure. This will ensure that major faults are not overlooked, and embarrassing mistakes are not made.

Overview of judging a class.

1. Determine the exact description of the class.
2. Obtain an overall impression and establish a command of the field.
3. Assess each animal in the line for conformity to the class description, conformation/condition and general fleece characteristics. This usually requires 2 passes.
4. Move the best five or six to the head of the line-up.
5. Check the rest for oversights.
6. Make a close examination of the best animals and make a provisional placement.
7. Make a final placement and award the ribbons.
8. Make an appropriate comment.

Animal Judging.

The basis of judging is animal assessment; followed by ranking on that assessment.

There are two approaches.

- Scoring animals or picking animals which pass a set of criteria; and,
- Picking animals which most closely conform to your ideal as defined by the breed standard.

The former is more appropriate to early classes at a show where animals in the line-up all belong to a closely defined group. It is difficult to keep track of scores and no system is capable of “correctly” weighting all characters to provide a single measure. It is more likely that you will place animals by selecting those which pass a number of increasingly detailed tests. In very large classes a judge may make notes identifying animals by their entry number.

The latter approach is more useful in championships where animals are of different age and/or sex.

Initial assessment of each animal in a line-up may be divided into two passes.

- A.
 - 1. Check each animal for size for age.
 - 2. Examine mouth and head.
 - 3. Examine face, neck and front legs for coverage, fineness and structure.
 - 4. Examine backline for kemp and body condition.
 - 5. Examine tail, sex and reproductive organs.
 - 6. Note any shedding under the jaw and around the head.

- B.
 - 1. Examine shoulder, mid-side and breech for clarity of staple structure, fineness, solidity and kempiness.
 - 2. Examine back, legs and crutch for coverage, structure and kemp.
 - 3. Assess overall fineness for age and size of animal.
 - 4. Assess uniformity of length, fineness and lock type.

Decision Making. Sometimes outstanding animals offer themselves. These may be outstanding animals in an otherwise mediocre group. Generally, they are superior and deserve recognition. Take care to examine all animals in the line, then make the appropriate award. Don't say too much about such animals early in the show.

More often there will be no clearly outstanding animals in the line. In any event you will have to rank your top 4 to 6 animals, some of which may have a number of minor faults.

You should not reject animals for minor faults. Nor should you look for one character alone since you may not find it, or it might be associated with some other undesirable characters. In particular, you should not choose a small, fine boned and highly covered animal with a fine fleece since these characters may well be the result of poor growth or some retarding factor. Favouring such animals may leave you with a group of "weedy runts" in the championship.

If you choose animals on a collection of single desirable characteristics you may also end up with a strange group in the championship.

Priority should be for sound animals, good general fleece characteristics, then fancy points.

Having chosen your top 4-6 animals, stand back and look at each animal from a distance. Ask yourself if you would buy each one. How closely do they conform to your ideal and the breed standard? Then look at each carefully.

Close examination of :-

- C.
 - 1. Evenness in length and fineness.
 - 2. Balance of character and style.
 - 3. Overall fineness.
 - 4. Density or solidity or fleece weight.
 - 5. Lack of kemp.
 - 6. Uniformity of staple from shoulder to breech.

You may wish to see animals walk. This can be organised but takes time and should only be done for older buck classes or for particular animals which will not stand well for the exhibitor. The final decision should be made on:-

- D. 1. Sound body.
- 2. Lack of kemp.
- 3. Superior mohair.
- 4. Heavy cutting fleece relative to micron and size.
- 5. Freedom from minor faults.

Move the animals into your desired order and have the ribbons placed on the animals.

Be quick, thorough and decisive. **Don't award any places until you are sure.**

Don't try to give every exhibitor a ribbon and stick to your preferred type. It is something of a trap to award places to varying types. It may leave you with a difficult decision in championships.

Not awarding ribbons. As a rule, you should award the blue ribbon because it goes to the best animal in the line-up. If an exhibitor is prepared to make the effort to bring an animal and it is the best on the day, it deserves first place. Similarly, for place ribbons. Failing to give a blue (or any ribbon) is a controversial decision and requires considerable tact and explanation. Taking such action is ill-advised.

Championships.

Here you are asked to compare animals from different classes. The question is - How well does each animal fit its category?

After awarding the Champion ribbon, the animal second in the class from which the Champion came is eligible for the Reserve Champion ribbon. Wait till it is produced. The second may be better for its type than the other firsts and therefore gets the Reserve Champion ribbon.

Kids and even 12-24 month animals may be separated for a Junior Champion and Reserve. If not, the kids will be in the Champion line-up. It is not usual to award kids a championship over older animals. However, competition may not be strong, or the kid may be outstanding. There is a tendency to allow fineness of younger animals to dominate championship awards. Don't fall into the trap.

Supreme or Grand Champion requires a decision between Champion Buck and Doe (and possibly the Junior Champion). How well do they match your ideal? Which one would you purchase?

Group Classes.

As a rule, you should never have to judge animals twice in different line-ups. However, group classes often contain new animals as well as those from the single classes.

If you are consistent you should not get into trouble and in any event, groups have an additional requirement of uniformity which may overrule other considerations. In a group of three, two seconds and a first could win over two firsts and a second. Don't try and remember which animals were placed earlier in the show. Just judge the animals as a group on uniformity and quality.

Large Groups. Groups of 6 to 20 should generally be judged on uniformity and trueness to type. Fine distinctions should be made on size, fineness, kempiness and fleece structure examined on individuals chosen from each group. Be sure to open and examine at least one fleece from each team.

Sire's Progeny. This supposedly indicates the superior sire by examining about three progeny of a single sire. Despite the fact that superiority of all three animals may come from their dams' or by simply selecting superior animals from a large number of a sire's progeny, uniformity and general superiority are the criteria for judging.

Dam and Progeny. These classes involve general superiority of both animals though some feel that the progeny should exhibit superiority over the dam. This requires the assessment of age and sex differences in the progeny. The task is not easy.

Fleece Judging.

This job requires a different set of skills. Fleece showing is also subject to much interpretation. Organisers and Judges should ask themselves exactly what is the objective of the show.

- Are you testing fleece preparation skills?
- Are you assessing mohair quality?
- Are you judging the animals which produced the fleece?

Class description and the criteria to be used vary somewhat depending on the question asked. In particular, the use of the terms, "fine kid", "kid", "young goat" and "adult or fine hair" (mohair classed lines) should be separated from animal age references in the class description.

If the classes are defined in terms of Fine Kid, Kid, Strong Kid, Young Goat, Fine Fine Hair, Fine Hair or Hair fleece types it does not matter what age the animal was when shorn and fineness is of limited importance so long as the fleece falls into that description. Fleeces can be reclassified if they don't fit the description but be careful putting fleeces back into finer classes.

If the classes are Kid, Doe and Buck, fineness is important, but a serious question arises as to what constitutes a real buck fleece, since a "kidy" fleece from an effeminate buck would likely win even if the animal were infertile. There is an argument for choosing bold and heavy fleeces in a buck class.

A balance between fleece weight and fineness is important in fleece judging and staple length gives a guide to the growing period of the fleece.

There is an obvious danger of composite fleeces being entered. This is particularly so if staples have been separated and remixed for the show. This practice should not be condoned, and such fleeces should not be placed. Only the exhibitor would really know, and it is virtually impossible to prove so unfortunately there is little which can be done and certainly an accusation would create problems. Perhaps fleece should exhibit some "gross" structure.

Fixed weight classes of "matchings" present a different situation. Clearly it is fleece preparation and management skill which are being tested (as much as the genetics of the flock). However, again, staple separation and remixing should not be encouraged.

An observation from South African shows is that fleeces can be very heavily skirted (or picked over). Small fleeces of exquisite evenness and quality present the judge with a difficulty.

General considerations. Fleeces should be well skirted with no stains, short edges or cotts present. There should be no vegetable matter present in the fleeces.

It is generally, though not universally, accepted that fleeces should be of commercial length (13 to 16cm) and unwashed. Washing animals prior to shearing may produce a cleaner fleece but destroys the natural grease content. It is a fine line between presentation and manipulation. It is also difficult to separate dipping and washing, and fleeces from those of housed or show animals.

Competition is not for the whitest fleece but for the best fleece.

Clean fleece weight is an important factor in individual fleece classes, but care is needed in interpretation in "matching" classes. Perhaps such classes should not use clean fibre content as a judging criterion. Grease content or scoured yield itself might be used as a criterion with maximum points for intermediate grease content.

Freedom from kemp and long medullated fibre is a major factor in all mohair quality assessment.

Staple definition and a balance of character and style (crimp and twist) is important as is a freedom from crossed fibres and cotting. Density or solidity should be rewarded, as should a blocky staple with a curled tip and a similar width, top to bottom.

Fineness has been discussed earlier and is of greater importance in separating fleeces in “animal” classes as opposed to “type” classes. Remember, while fineness is usually a desired textile characteristic, mohair is a broad textile fibre often used for special effects which can only be produced from coarser types. Fine is not necessarily better and heavy fleeces can sometimes return more dollars than finer, lighter fleeces. The champion question is difficult. Highest value? Highest value per kg? Finest? Best structure? Most even? Prettiest, Best “quality” (even if overlong)?

Measurements. In some cases, fleeces may have been measured. Care is needed to ensure that the sampling was satisfactory. In general, you should believe the test results. It is not uncommon for extensively prepared fleeces to look much finer than they test. Some fleeces may have surprisingly low yields, and this might be evidence of manipulation (addition of conditioners). You may find a surprisingly wide variation in measured fineness.

In general look for finer fleeces with heavier fleece weights. Style, of even fibre length, and clear lock structure should be favoured and might be indicated by a low CV figure. Low CV in itself should not be considered an important factor unless the fleece is relatively fine and has a superior style. Ie. Two fleeces with the same diameter might be separated using the lower CV as an indicator of quality.

Judging technique for fleeces.

Three methods may be used. Subjective, Score card and Value. Each has its good and bad points.

The “subjective” approach may be supported by fleece testing but involves the following steps.

1. Determine the exact class description.
2. Weigh all the fleeces, (or have them weighed, and assess relative to fineness).
3. Check that fleeces conform to description.
4. Check skirting and content of stains, cotts and short locks.
5. Check length and content of short staples.
6. Discard kempy and hairy fleeces (if skilled, use a black velvet board to examine fibre diagram and kempiness).
7. Choose soft handling, well defined, even and well-nourished fleeces.
8. Choose heaviest (relative to fineness) and densest fleeces with intermediate yield.

Using score cards.

There are a number of different score cards used in judging. Most require you to assign a score for each characteristic. The total score should give not only indicate the placing in classes but also the champion fleeces. Provided you score the fleece weight component relative to an expected weight for the class, it can work quite well but it takes time and concentration. Have the steward call the characteristic and the maximum score. Give a score averaging about 70% of the maximum and spread them from 50% to 90%. Rarely if ever give a maximum score. Once you have all the fleeces scored check the totals and then decide if you are happy with the result. You may have to adjust the scores to satisfy your overall impression.

The judging card is set out below.

Attribute	Maximum Points
Clean Fibre Content (weight of fibre)	20
Fineness & Handle	20
Trueness to Type (Uniformity of Fleece Attributes)	15
Character & Style	15
Lustre (Degree of Brightness)	10
Freedom from Medullation	10
Length (Uniformity)	10
TOTAL	100

Clean Fibre Content. This characteristic is extremely important and relates to the amount of fibre which can be converted into yarn. While Grease content and Vegetable matter are impurities, the amount of stain and dirt must also be considered. It should be noted that while grease content can be estimated with some accuracy when fleeces originate from one flock, estimates on show fleeces are subject to considerable error. A measured yield is considered necessary if clean weight is to be used as a basis of scoring. Points might be deducted for stains and vegetable matter present in the fleece.

It should also be noted that grease content of up to 15% is desirable and that both very light conditioned and heavy conditioned fleeces should be given lower scores.

Fineness and Handle. This will reflect degrees of actual fineness of the fibre displayed, expressed in microns. Fineness will be judged according to the parameters set by the Industry (eg. For Fine Kid, Kid, Strong Kid, Young Goat, Fine Fine Hair, Fine Hair, and Hair) and/or Show Rules and Conditions for Classes. If testing has been carried out, these values should be used to assess fineness in relation to the class description.

Handle must be soft in relationship to the micron of the fibre exhibited. The amount of and type of grease, dust content, rainfall and storage method will have a bearing on handle.

Trueness to type. Each of the attributes is scored using a set of criteria which are discussed in this section. It should be noted that "Trueness to type" uses criteria which are individually scored in other attributes. This may seem to be a duplication, but it should be noted that issues of combined excellence and uniformity of criteria are involved. This might be interpreted as a subjective component of general appeal. The table on the next page summarises "Trueness to type".

Character and Style. Relates to the wave (crimp) and coiling (twist) and the balance between these characteristics. This description also involves the clarity or definition of the individual staples within the fleece.

Lustre. Lustre is a special feature that sets mohair apart from other wool like fibres. Top quality mohair should have a natural lustre (at least at the staple base), giving a good light reflection: dull fibre can only be described as poor-quality mohair. Degrees of lustre are Excellent, Very Good, Good, Average and Poor.

Freedom from Medullation. The fleece should be free from medullated fibre. Short medullated fibre (KEMP) and/or long medullated fibres (sometimes referred to as GARE), are considered serious faults and such fleeces should be downgraded. While high levels of medullated fibre may impart a dull appearance, medullated mohair is very difficult to see with the naked eye.

Length. This term refers to the uniformity and absolute length of staples in the exhibited fleece. Ideally the average staple length should be between 13 and 16cm in length with little variation. Staples should not vary more than 1 or 2cm in length. Narrow staples with a uniform width and a blunt tip (indicate uniform fibre length) and should score highly.

An average staple length greater than 16cm or less than 13 cm should gain lower scores as should exhibits which contain staples of greatly varying length and/or exhibiting a pointed tip or broad base.

The Value Method.

Using measurement and fleece weight along with assessment of style and length can be used to type fleeces and calculate commercial value. This is essentially the method used in Appraisal classes.

Brokers can provide a price matrix for fleece values and so multiplying the fleece weight by the value-for-type gives a method of judging commercial value of the fleece.

While some care is needed with this system (since the values at a particular time may not reflect long term goals of the breeding industry) the method does provide an excellent link with reality and demonstrates real value to the public.

Appraisal Class Judging.

If value of product is the criteria for appraisal class judging, it follows that the winning group should be the one which has the highest total value of fleece and meat. Issues of uniformity between animals are not important. While some consideration might be given to the fact that animals produce many fleeces but only one carcass, a method of including this fact into the judging method is hard to determine. Value on the day – fleece plus carcass would seem the obvious way to judge this class.

It is suggested that the animals be shorn, the fleece weighed and valued, and that the animal be weighed to determine the carcass weight. Dressing percentages vary a little with lean animals dressing at 42% and very fat animals at 50% of body weight. A dressed weight value per Kg should be applied to obtain the carcass value.

Some confusion is seen at events. It is important that the results are immediately displayed so the public can see the value of the animals in terms of their product. The procedure should be thought through before the competition begins.

Led wether and school wether teams.

Remember that these classes are leaning exercises. Try to be helpful and don't expect too much. Individual exhibitors should have a basic knowledge of their animal and be able to demonstrate control over their charge. Some animals are more difficult than others. Ask exhibitors to lead animals and form up on a line. You may ask handlers about their animal, its age, its breeding, how long you have been involved, what do you feed the animal, when was it shorn etc.

8. Training and Appointment of Judges.

The system developed by the NSW Division is suggested as the model for National Judge training. This system provides for Associate Judges to be nominated by Regions following the attendance at a Judges Training school. Nominations to Associate Judge level must be supported by a Regional meeting and passed to the Division for ratification. Associate Judges must undertake, at their expense and initiative, 6 jobs as an associate to a full Judge over a minimum of two years. The Judge must complete a short questionnaire relating to the competence of the Associate Judge. Once the 6 associate judging jobs have been completed, an Associate may be nominated by the Region as a full Judge and ratified by the Division.

Judges and Associates must be members of Mohair Australia though in some cases Junior membership is satisfactory.

The lists of Judges are reviewed annually.

It is suggested that National Judges be nominated by each Division from the Judges list for that Division and be ratified by the National Board.

It should be noted that in some states, it is difficult to find sufficient shows to allow for associate judges to gain experience. Some variation of rules might be expected.

It is further recommended that National Judges sign an agreement with Mohair Australia to apply the principals set out in this document and that the National Judges list be reviewed each year by the Board.

International Judges should be invited through the National Office of Mohair Australia and should be aware of the general principals outlined in this document.

Review of guidelines and Judging standards should be carried out every few years by a committee nominated by the Board. This committee should include some National Judges and some members of the National Board.

9. Classes.

Animal classes should generally follow age groups defined by the year of birth of the animal. An exception may be made for kid classes in autumn shows where classed may be split on actual birth date providing for animals under and over 5 months of age. Four age groups in Spring and 5 in Autumn appear logical.

Fleece classes need to be reviewed by organisers so that the definition is clearly made. In general fleece classes should be defined in terms of the age group of animals from which they come.

Fixed weight classes should be defined in terms of the fibre type and if possible tested to ensure that the mohair matches the description.

Appraisal classes should have fixed shearing dates and specify the sex of the animals to be shorn. Heavy horned, late castrated animals should not be included in wether sections of these events.

Handler classes. Little emphasis has been given to handler classes, but it should be noted that exhibition by Junior members is an excellent way to involve young people. Training animals to lead and behave well in the ring provides added incentive for people to take part in industry events.

Likewise, **Junior Judging and Fleece Technology classes** offer avenues for involvement and training of young people and should be encouraged.

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