

Fact Sheet 1 How to critic your wether



The objective of this information is to assist you with the task of selection of your wether for the schools Wether Competition and Production class. It will provide basic background knowledge about the structure and function of an angora goat, so you know what you are looking for when selecting and critiquing your wether. This information is designed as an introduction only

The aim of a profitable goat Industry is:

- to efficiently produce the type and quality of a goat carcass desired by the local and overseas market
- produce quality mohair from the wether increasing growers profitability of mohair and meat production
- analyse Objective measurement (visual) and Subjective Measurement (figures)

To accomplish this as a producer of angora goats, you must have the knowledge about the type and quality of your angora goat herd, and know how to manage their nutrition and growth rate. You also need to monitor early maturity and muscling traits, so you can achieve the desired results of mohair production and meet the standards of the meat quality of your wether.

goat body and the basic terminology to use if asked to critique your wether. You will also become familiar with the breed standard used for angora goats

Resource Mohair Australia Breed Standards

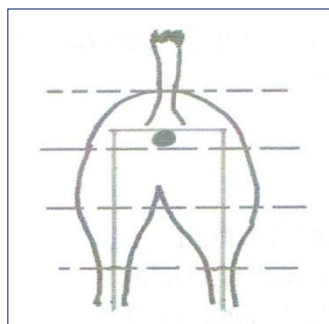
When looking at a shorn wether, the two main things to analyse are muscling and finish

Once you have observed and determined the quality of muscling and finish, analyse the general appearance of the wether for size, frame for age and growth rates

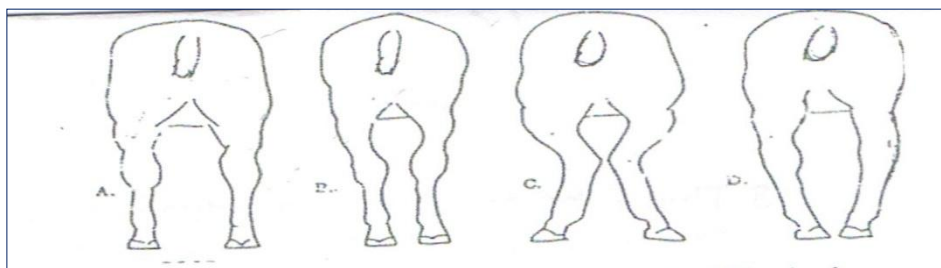
To do this, observe the goat from a distance of up to six meters away. View from three angles, the front, the side, and the rear

Hindquarters

Assess the hindquarters of goats from the rear. Imagine a triangular shape from under the tail down the centre of the legs (Figure 1)



Look for the muscle definition either side of that imaginary line of the hindquarter
Observe the degree of thickness across the rump, loin and back.



(Figure 2)

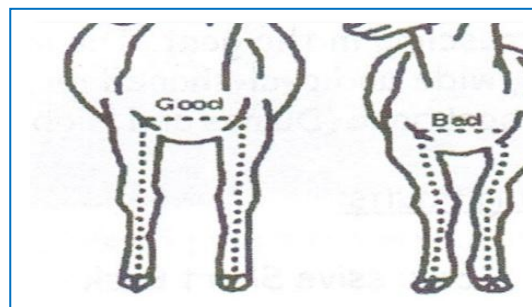
Use figure 2 -to compare the rear leg alignment. Check that the rear legs has standing width and good angle at the hocks A.. Look for any faults with your goats hindquarter similar to B.,C.,or D.,

Do you see any faults like B. C. or D. with your hindquarters. Is A. Ideal?

Forequarters

When you are assess the front view of your goat, check:

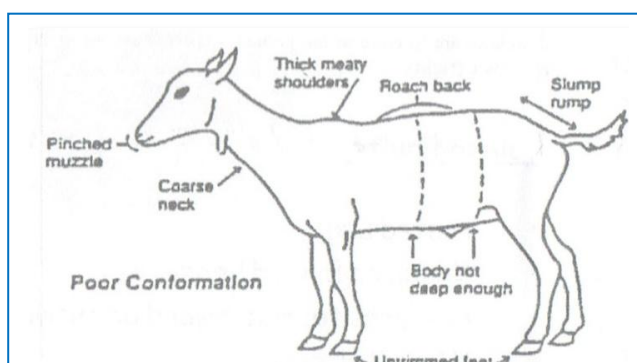
- muscle definition of foreleg
- depth and width of chest
- the head type and shape
- evidence of breed type and character
- whether the forelegs are straight
- slim and clean neck
- shoulders are rounded and wide across the top
- good withers



(Figure 3)

Side View

- correct balance
- size and scale
- a straight top line
- a long body
- deep ribs and barrel depth
- that legs and feet are straight
- bone strength
- proportion of weight in leg lion and rack
- poor confirmation



(Figure 4) Poor Confirmation

Handling the goat

To accurately determine the muscling and finish on a goat you must handle it. As you are learning to understand the meat qualities of a goat it's about the growth and fat score along with the muscling quality's that will give the producer the value adding of a Angora goat.

The way the goat stands will affect how you can analyse it: You should

- make sure the goat is standing squarely on all four legs
- handle gently but firmly
- always keep your fingers together as you feel over the body of the goat ,pressing firmly with the ball of your hand and your fingers flat.
- when locating the **GR site** near the twelfth rib gently press two finger into the rib to feel for the depth of fat covering.
[Resource Fact Sheet 12 Understanding meat values- angora goats](#)
- place a single hand on the spine line to feel for the back bone to determine the amount fat covering of the goat

A goat that has the desired weight will have 0.25 cm-0.65 cm of what is call finish or fat cover. It will feel very smooth over the top of the backline and you will have trouble feeling the backbone. Each rib will not be every easy to feel.

A goat that is too thin will have less than 0.25 cm of finish. The back bone will be very prominent and easy to feel. Each rib will be defined and there will be a hollow between each rib space.

Body conditioning scoring

Body condition scoring (**BCS**) is a basic skill that all producers must have to be able to effectively assess body condition of their goats. It allows them to carefully plan the feeding program and to evaluate if it is providing the desired weight gain or loss condition of meat productivity and mohair condition. They can also determine if the animals in the herd are ready for breeding/kidding or for show or are for the meat market

[Refer to the Body Score \(BS\) 1-5 Fact Sheet 12 Understanding meat values –angora goats](#)

Determining the muscle on your wether

When you are handling your wether to determine the amount of muscle, give the most to the attention to the loin, rump and leg. These are the most valuable primal cuts of the meat carcass of a goat.

Stand behind the wether. They should be structurally correct, wide and well muscled but not overly fat

An indication of muscling includes:

- thickness and firmness through the leg .Place you hands around the top part of the hind leg to feel the muscle firmness and size.
- natural thickness over the top. Check the length of the width and depth of the loin by placing your hand and finger around the loin area to the soft part to the stomach look for a thick deep, firm well muscled loin
- the length width and depth of the rump
- thickness in the forequarter. place you hands over the shoulder blade and slide to the front of the chest

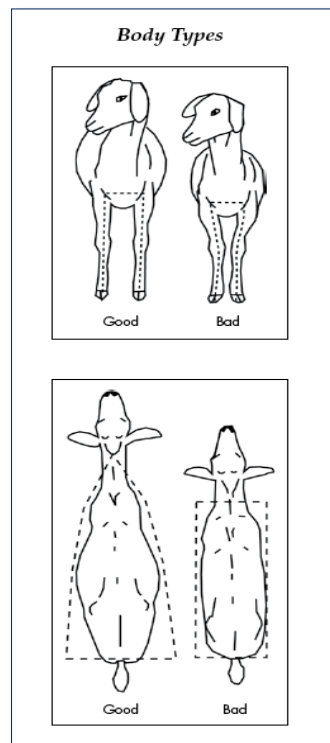
Think of your wether as a profitable package of meat ready for the market
Consumers want to buy high quality, lean and tender goat meat.

General Appearance:

- The characteristics that your wether should have in order to be ready for the wether class include:
- a liveweight 40-50kgs
- correct size -not necessarily tall, but adequate frame and body capacity showing depth and good spring of rib
- a long straight. Back with the greatest length from last rib to the base of the rump
- a long wide, deep and muscular loin eye muscle area
- a long level and broad Rump
- legs that are straight and well placed under the corners of the body .
rear legs filled with muscle –deep ,wide and thick muscle extends down to the hocks

Your ideal goat will be correctly finished and heavily muscled, with sound confirmation, balance and quality.

Conformation: refers the general shape and structure of the goat .The ideal goat is wedge shape as you look from above .Viewing from the rear the ideal goat widens through the stifle (knee joint) area



(Figure 5)

Balance: refers to the proportion of the body part to one another, and how well they blend together. The ideal goat should be smooth and well balanced with the greatest proportion of weight is in the primal cuts of the leg, loin, and rack

Finish on the goat

Finish is the amount of external fat the goat is carrying. It is essential that the goat has enough fat cover to be healthy, and it makes the goat look good after shearing.

Too much fat means higher trimming for consumer cuts, which costs the buyer money to remove it. A fat score of 5+ the carcass means losses of more than 50% of the hot carcass weight (HCW), which is measured on the processing line.

Fat cover on the goat is estimated by looking at the:

- finish over the backbone
- fat around the rib
- fill in the flank
- fill behind the shoulders
- fat in the twist and the brisket.

These areas give an indication of finish quality. A hard, bare touch indicates a lack of finish. A soft, mellow touch indicates too much finish. On an ideal goat, you should be able to feel the outline of a backbone, the ribs and pin bones. Practice and experience will help you to tell the difference between fat and muscle.

Dressing percentage

Dressing percentage refers to the carcass yield from a live animal. It depends on a number of factors such as genetics, age, sex, feeding program and fleece growth.

The dressing percentage will be higher if the goat is heavily muscled and has a fat score of three. The dressing percentage will be lower if the goat is over-fat and has less muscle quality.

Refer: Fact sheet 12 Understanding meat values-angora goats

Performance Information:

Subjective Measurements that contribute to performance, if available, include:

- birth weight
- number of goats born single, twins and triplets
- weaning date and weight
- DNA genetic traits
- fleece weights
- mohair testing – microns
- kemp levels
- mohair length
- feed plan.

Wethers that mature early as buck kids have an advantage over those that have a slower growth rate from birth to weaning. The date the wether was castrated will indicate the level of male hormones to enhance growth rates as well.

A management program of health and feeding plans also play a role in the drivers for profitability of the meat product, which add value to your goat farming enterprise.

Resource:

Meat and Livestock of Australia

<https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Genetics-and-breeding/breeding-objectives-and-selection/>

Primal meat cuts of a goat chart: https://www.australianbutchersguild.com.au/siteassets/trade-tools/documents/mla_cutschart_poster_goat_a1_f-print.pdf

Reference: Figures 1-5 Getting started in the Meat Goat Business by Angela McKenzie-Jakes

L Carter Sept (2020)