

The Dorset breed has been through a groundbreaking year. Last winter the membership voted in a new breed standard that was going to be implemented through out the year, and enforced at the National Sale and National Shows in Louisville by having official breed standard inspections for disqualifications.

First the board would like to commend and thank the breed standard inspectors that handled this difficult duty for the Dorset breed. They did a great job and handled their task very professionally. The board would also like to thank the breeders that have cooperated with the inspection process. We know it was not easy but the way you handled yourselves was exceptional.

The CDC board did not know exactly what was going to transpire during this first year of the implementation of the new breed standard, as we realized that we were going where no other purebred sheep breed has dared to venture. The board has received very favorable comments during this time from its members as well as recognizing that there are some areas of concern that need to be addressed. If the club had come out with the perfect standard and implementation process from the get go it would have been very surprising to us all.

The CDC Board has held two tele-conference calls this past month. Your board has been addressing these issues and we feel the club needs to learn from the experiences of the past three years and move forward. The following important issues were highlighted:

\*The educational inspections at the regional junior shows definitely were a positive experience for the juniors that need to be built upon. The people performing the educational inspections felt it would be even more beneficial to the junior exhibitors to incorporate all the areas of the breed standard into the educational program, not just disqualifications.

\*Even though the breed standard committee had done their best to list disqualifications that could be measured objectively it was found that there was still an awful lot of subjectivity involved in measuring some of these disqualifications. Another problem found was that color develops in an animal in a shorter period of time than first thought. Animals with no color and are declared eligible, a couple of months later develop a small amount of color that would make them ineligible at another event. Maybe too fine a line was trying to be defined in the disqualifications.

\*The breed standard committee had chosen certain areas to focus on with the color issue in hopes that reduction in these areas would lead to total reduction of color in the whole animal. This was found to be true and these areas should remain the areas of focus in the breed standard.

\*It has been brought forward to the board that there are other traits that indicate outside genetics in the Dorset breed that are not in the disqualifications, and should be. It was originally felt by the committee and board, that these areas were left out of disqualifications because they could not be measured objectively and it would be very difficult to disqualify individuals at the national events based on these measurements.

\*The CDC board found it a very negative and detrimental experience to disqualify junior exhibitors from showing their animals at the national junior show based on the breed standard that was in place, even though they had been made aware of the official inspection process and the majority of the junior exhibitors had been through the educational inspection program at their regional junior shows.

\*After going through two inspection processes it was noted that the quality of Dorsets being presented to the judge in the show ring was excellent but with the problems of the fine line of disqualifications, were we preventing other quality Dorsets from being presented? If this is the case then perhaps our breed standard implementation budget should be spent more on judge education instead of disqualifying inspections, if the breed can count on their judges to evaluate according to the current breed standard in place. It was felt that after this year, judge awareness has been at a high level and we can only but build upon this to ensure judges will continue to be aware of the breed scorecard in the future.

After evaluating these factors the CDC board has adopted and updated the following policies:

1. **Modification of the breed standard.** The scorecard will remain the same with the elimination of a height minimum so not to discriminate against the Horned Dorset. "Serious Defects" will include traits that will be discriminated against in the show/sale ring and the flock selection

process. They include mostly the structural correctness issues. A new category of “Highly Objectionable Traits” will be developed that will be vigorously discriminated in the show/sale ring, and requires a high level of integrity on the part of breeders in selecting individuals displaying any of these traits when selecting animals for registry in the CDC. These are traits that relate to the possible influence of outside genetics in the Dorset breed and traits that affect the basic functionality of a breeding animal. “Disqualifications” will be modified to contain only the objectively measurable negative traits that are not acceptable, and sheep displaying any of these traits will be disqualified from shows and sales by show officials. They are also not eligible for registry in the CDC.

2. **Educational inspection programs will continue at all the regional CDC sponsored junior shows.** These inspection programs are the responsibility of the CDC director to organize in their region, and of the CDC board to organize at the All-American and National Junior Show in Louisville. These educational programs will be expanded to incorporate all areas of the standard of excellence. With the new modifications made to the breed standard disqualification category, to include only the negative objectively measurable traits that have always been a part of the breed standard, the disqualifying of animals will still occur at the National Junior Show in Louisville.
3. **There will still be disqualifying inspections at the CDC National Sale and National Show.** Again sheep will only be disqualified if they have a disqualifying trait as defined in the newly modified breed standard. During inspection emphasis will be placed on education of the new breed standard to breeders and judges of Dorset sheep. The board has already implemented a recommended judges list process that includes a judge being nominated, receiving a breed standard to read and a response letter to be signed stating that he/she has read the standard of excellence and will evaluate Dorset sheep according to the standard to the best of their ability. The CDC will publish and promote this judges list to sale and fair managements. The Dorset breed standard and cover letter will continue to be sent to Dorset judges of major sales and shows. The ideal picture development will be completed this winter and be made available to all breeders, judges and future judges of the Dorset breed. Another educational program that has been adopted is to in-cooperate future judges into the educational inspections so they will become more familiar with the Dorset breed standard.
4. The CDC board stands by all decisions made at the official breed standard inspections in 2001 as the CDC was acting upon the current breed standard and policies of implementation as adopted in December 2000 and March 2001.
5. The CDC board will annually re-evaluate the breed standard implementation process and make adjustments as needed.

It is very important to the board that the breeders understand that we are not backing down on the importance of eliminating the influence of outside genetics in the Dorset breed that can be very detrimental to the positive production traits that the Dorset breed is known for. We realize it is the reinforcement of these production traits that will ensure the Dorset breed’s place in the future of the U.S. sheep industry. It was felt that some adjustments needed to be made in the breed standard implementation process after the experiences of the past year. With its changes the board feels the positive has been accentuated and the negatives eliminated. The board is now looking to the breeders of Dorset sheep to adhere to the new breed standard when selecting and breeding Dorset sheep for any venue whether it be commercial seed stock production, commercial production of the finished lamb product, show ring competitions, youth club lamb or breeding sheep projects.

The CDC board wishes to thank all of those breeders that have been involved with this evolution of re-defining the Dorset breed type through the adoption and implementation of the newly revised breed standard, especially the breed standard committee and its Chairman Gene Sanford, who has exhibited a high level of integrity and dedication through these past three years. Thank you also goes to the Dorset breeders who participated in the breed type conferences

and/or wrote letters to the CDC with their thoughts and suggestions. We have been down a long road the past three years and thanks to your perseverance and patience the board feels it can now move forward and make the Dorset breed better than ever.

## DORSET STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

(A Guide For Selection and Judging)

“The Breed For All Seasons...The Breed For All Reasons”

### Overview

Dorsets are adaptable to all types of sheep enterprises, from the large, full-time commercial producer to the small, part-time purebred farm flock operation. The Dorset breed was originally developed as an extremely versatile sheep that thrived and excelled in a variety of environments, under various nutritional and management regimens. The versatility of the breed is most readily apparent in their ability to serve both maternal and terminal aspects of sheep production.

The maternal superiority of the Dorset breed is readily accepted by both commercial and purebred producers due to the breed's out-of-season lambing (fall and spring), prolificacy (approaching 200% lamb crop), mothering instinct and milking ability (heavier lamb weights at weaning).

The terminal attributes of the Dorset breed are comparable to other purebred breeds due to their rapid and efficient rate of growth in extensive (pasture-based feeding) and intensive (feedlot and dry-lot feeding) programs, and carcass characteristics that excel in both yield and quality grade with a high percentage of rack, loin and leg.

### General Appearance

Dorsets are medium sized sheep that have good body length and exceptional muscle. A variety of frame sizes and mature body weights are acceptable within the breed due to the various nutritional and management regimens in which the breed is expected to excel. Dorset ewes should weigh between 150-225 pounds and should not exceed 34 inches tall at the shoulder. Dorset rams should weigh between 225-325 pounds and should not exceed 37 inches tall at the shoulder. The Dorset is an ewe breed with fall lambing characteristics, femininity, prolificacy and great mothering ability.

### Score Card

#### **Head- 25 points**

The head should be neat and well covered with wool on the crown and under the jaw. Face should be smooth and open with a moderately broad muzzle of medium length. They should have large nostrils and pink nose and mouth lining. **Mouth or nose showing any colors other than pink or black constitutes a highly objectionable trait.** Eyes should be bright and prominent. Ears should be small to medium in length and size. Ears should be covered with white hair and a small amount of white wool is acceptable. Pure Horned ewes' horns should be small, but sturdy that are based in front of the ears and curve forward and downward close to the jaw. Pure Horned rams' horns should be heavy, based in front of the ears with a spiral curve downward and forward. In no case should the horns touch the face or jaws. Scurs in polled sheep should not be a point of discrimination. The tear ducts should not be large or very pronounced, and should have white hair covering them. Dark pigmentation on the rims of the eyelids and small freckles inside the ear are acceptable. The woolled and haired portions of the head should be free from any brown, liver, or reddish colored spots. **Such spots in these areas are highly objectionable traits.** A black spot on the nose or mouth is

acceptable (not exceeding the size of an eraser head on a standard sized pencil). However, solid pink noses and lips are preferred. In addition a black spot on an ear is acceptable.

### **Neck-Shoulder-Chest 10 points**

A Dorset's neck should be moderate in length, trim and well set with head erect and alert. Rams should show masculinity with a good crest. **The neck should be free of wrinkles and or dewlaps.** Any dewlaps, wrinkles, and or skin folds should be heavily discriminated against and are considered highly objectionable traits. **(A Dewlap is a pendulous fold of skin under the throat of an animal.)** Shoulders should be smooth, oblique, and well laid into the ribs. The chest should be deep ribbed, well sprung, and with width to the chest floor.

### **Back-Loin-Rump-Leg 30 points**

The back should be strong, straight, level and it should carry out to the dock with the tail head fairly high set. The loin should be long, wide, and deep. The rump should be long, wide, level and very **well muscled**. The leg should be thick through the center extending well into the stifle area and carrying low towards the hock. Emphasis should be placed on total body length in relationship to height at the shoulder. Dorsets should be as long or longer than they are tall. The loin, rump, and leg are three important parts of the sheep. Dorsets must excel in these areas having at least 50% of their length in their hindsaddle

### **Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 points**

Legs should be well set under the corners. They should be straight, strong, and of **ample bone**. The forearm area as well as the rear leg should show good expression of muscling. The upper leg should be well woolled and covered with white hair below the woolled area. The leg below the hocks and knees should be covered with white, dense hair and may have a moderate amount of wool with the majority of this wool being on the front of the legs. There should be no shading off to dark color on the legs or dark colored spots on the legs. These are considered highly objectionable traits. The feet should point straight ahead and not turn out at an angle. Sheep should have short, strong pasterns. All these skeletal parts should move with strength and correctness when the animal is on the move. **A Dorset with a completely black hoof is disqualification.** A Dorset with pearl colored hooves with some black striping is acceptable but hooves with excessive striping is highly undesirable.

### **Fleece-Skin 8 points**

The fleece should be medium fiber, 26 to 32 microns which relates to ¼ to 3/8 blood, and without tendency to mat together. The fleece should not shade off into hair or dark fiber. The fleece should be **white** and the hair covering on other portions of the animal should be short, white, of medium texture, and free of dark colored spots. Dark colored spots in the wool are a disqualification. The skin should be free of any large wrinkles and loose folds. Skin should be pink in color, soft and attractive.

### **Frame 7 points**

Dorsets are **medium size** sheep that have good length of body and exceptional muscle. Dorset yearling ewes should weigh between 150-225 pounds and should not exceed 34 inches tall at the shoulder. Dorset yearling rams should weigh between 225-325 pounds and should not exceed 37

inches tall at the shoulder. The majority of the ewes and rams body length should be from the 13<sup>th</sup> rib back. Emphasis should be placed on length from the 13<sup>th</sup> rib back rather than the height of the sheep.

## **Serious Defects**

The following defects are very undesirable. They should be discriminated against in shows and sales, and in the flock selection process. *(After each defect the section(s) of the scorecard in which that defect is found and the total points assigned to that section are listed.)*

1. Inverted eyelids *(Head 25 pts)*
2. Abnormally large tear ducts *(Head 25 pts)*
3. Absence of hair covering in typical areas *(Head 25 pts and Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts)*
4. Lack of muscling *(Back-Loin-Rump-Leg 30 pts)*
5. Weak pasterns *(Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts)*
6. Post legged *(Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts)*
7. Sickie hocked *(Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts)*
8. Cow hocked *(Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts)*
9. Splayed footed (Badly turned out front feet) *(Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts)*

## **Highly Objectionable Traits**

The following traits are highly objectionable as traits #1 thru #8 relate to the possible influence of outside genetics in the Dorset breed, and traits #9 thru #10 affect the basic functionality of the breeding animal. These traits will be vigorously discriminated against in shows and sales. In addition, the CDC Board of Directors strongly encourages you to display a high level of integrity when selecting animals in your flock for registry in the Continental Dorset Club displaying any of these traits. *(After each trait the section(s) of the scorecard in which that trait is found and the total points assigned to that section are listed.)*

1. Large ears and/or droopy ears *(Head 25 pts)*
  - A. Ears should be small to medium in length and in total size.
  - B. Ears should be at least 5 degrees above horizontal when alert.
  - C. Ears should relate to the size of the animal.
2. Fine textured silky hair covering *(Head 25 pts and Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts)*
3. Dewlaps, excessive loose skin or large wrinkles and folds. (Dewlap is a pendulous fold of skin under the throat.) *(Neck-Shoulder-Chest 10 pts)*
4. Hooves with excessive black striping *(Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts)*

5. Any color other than pink on the nose or mouth (*Head 25 pts*)  
Exception:
  - A. A black spot not exceeding the size of an eraser head on a standard sized pencil is acceptable.
6. Any dark colored spots in the haired portion of sheep (*Head 25 pts and Feet-Legs-Pasterns 20 pts*)  
Exception:
  - A: A black spot on an ear is acceptable.
7. Height – Yearling ewes over 34 inches tall at the shoulder. Yearling rams over 37 inches tall at the shoulder. (*Frame 7 pts*)
8. Pure horned ewes with horns that curve backward, grow in a backward curve, or the tips of the horns grow inward and close to the neck. (*Head 25 pts*)
9. Incisor teeth slightly missing dental pads
10. Abnormal testes:
  - A. Scrotal circumferences less than 30 centimeters for one year and under and 32 centimeters for yearlings and older. (Reference: S.I.D. Sheep Production Handbook, pg. 936)
  - B. Testicles unequal in size.

## **Disqualifications**

Any animal having any of the following characteristics will be disqualified from shows and sales, and are ineligible for registry in the Continental Dorset Club.

1. Sheep with a completely black hoof. (A hoof is defined as both toes. Area to be examined is the outside wall that is visibly exposed, not between the toes.)
2. A completely black or dark colored lining of the mouth or nose.
3. Dark colored spots in the wool.
4. Solid black fleece animals, badger, or Hereford fleece (black body with white head or legs, and belly)
5. Holstein fleece pattern (black with white spots)
6. Spilt scrotum exceeding more than ½ inch in split length
7. Obvious parrot mouth (overbite) or monkey jaw (underbite)
8. Cryptorchidism (rams lacking two or one testicles)
9. Pure Horned sheep that have been dehorned.

10. Any signs of surgical alterations or any mechanical alterations (other than tail docking, and horn and/or scur care to protect the health of the animal or for management purposes) and/or use of substances to camouflage coloration as described in #1 thru #5 under disqualifications and #4 thru #6 under highly objectionable traits.\*

\*Violators will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Continental Dorset Club Constitution and Bylaws.