

# NASSA Judges Packet



*Approved June 19, 2012  
Updated January 26, 2019*

## Shetland Sheep Standard

Description and Scale of Points Score – 100

Reproduced from the Shetland Flock Book Society By-Laws & Regulations

Objects & Standard of the Society 1927

Adopted by NASSA 03/2000

|   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
| <b>General Character and Appearance</b> | Horned or Hornless   | 9          |
| <b>Head</b>                             | Good width between ears, tapering rapidly to base of nose, which should be broad and with little taper to the muzzle, hollow between cheeks and nose well marked   | 9          |
| <b>Face</b>                             | Medium length of face from eyes to muzzle, nose prominent but not Roman, small mouth   | 5          |
| <b>Eyes</b>                             | Full, bright, and active look  | 3          |
| <b>Ears</b>                             | Fine, medium size, set well back, carried slightly above the horizontal  | 4          |
| <b>Neck</b>                             | Full, tapers into a fairly broad chest   | 4          |
| <b>Shoulders</b>                        | Well set, top level with back  | 6          |
| <b>Chest</b>                            | Medium width and deep  | 5          |
| <b>Back</b>                             | Level, with as much width as possible  | 9          |
| <b>Ribs</b>                             | Well sprung and well ribbed up   | 4          |
| <b>Rump</b>                             | Good width, with well turned rounded hips  | 5          |
| <b>Tail</b>                             | Fluke tail. Wool at root forming the broad rounded part, and tapering suddenly to barely covered fine point. This is a strong character, and any crossing is easily made out by it. Length varies according to the size of sheep, rarely exceeds six inches, or thereby  | 9          |
| <b>Legs of Mutton</b>                   | Light, but very fine in quality  | 4          |
| <b>Skin</b>                             | Varies according to colour of wool. In white no blue or black colouring  | 2          |
| <b>Wool</b>                             | Extra fine and soft texture, longish, wavy, and well closed. Wool on forehead and poll tapering into neck, likewise wool on cheeks. Colours: white, black or brown, moorit (from reddish to fawn). Greys (including Sheila). Other known colours - Mirkface (brownish spots on face); Catmoget (dark under parts from muzzle to tail and legs), Burrit (light underparts); also Blaegit, Fleckit, and Sholmit. | 20         |
| <b>Carriage</b>                         | Alert and nimble, with a smart active gait   | 2          |
|   |  | <b>100</b> |

### Disqualifications

- (a) Long heavy tail, broad to point
- (b) Bad wool, coarse and open
- (c) Very coarse wool on breeches
- (d) Deformities of jaws
- (e) Undersized animals
- (f) Defective coloured or badly shaped animals as sires
- (g) White hairs in moorit and black, and dark hairs in white wool

### *NASSA Disclaimer:*

\* *Note:* The 1927 Shetland Flock Book Society standard was developed for the original inspection of sheep for registration by the Society. The standard includes seven specific faults that were considered serious enough to disqualify sheep from registrations. While these disqualifications are still part of the Standard, NASSA does not have an inspection system and does not disqualify purebred Shetland sheep from registration. However, NASSA recommends that breeders take into consideration these disqualification faults when evaluating Shetland sheep for breeding purposes and for registration. Note also that the Shetland Flock Book Society no longer exists having been succeeded by the Shetland Flock Book Trust.

## Shetland Sheep Breed Characteristics

Breed characteristics of the Shetland sheep are obvious in the following: head, face, eyes, ears, and tail. These characteristics total almost 40% of the breed standard in points so special attention should be paid to the head and facial features, coupled with the tail, as they set the breed apart from other sheep breeds.

### Horns/polled

Shetland rams are commonly horned but polled rams are acceptable. The horns on a ram rise in a curve above the head and then spiral around. Most ewes are polled but some have horns that are much lighter in weight and dainty in appearance. Horns should not be curved so they end up fatally injuring a ram by going into his neck or head, nor should they be curving too close to the jaw.

### Head

The head and the face, excepting the overall conformation, are worth more points in the breed standard than even the wool. The head of the Shetland should immediately capture your attention with its bright expression. The ideal head has a sculpted look, with a hollow between the cheeks and nose. The wedge shape, straight profile, small mouth, bright eyes, and well set ears denote good breed character for the head. The Shetland head should taper from a broad poll down to a small, but strong mouth. Wool on the poll and cheeks is desirable, unless it extends down onto the nose and around the eyes. A clean head with no wool is also common and not discriminated against for breeding stock.



### Tail

The Shetland tail is extremely distinct in the sheep world and indicative of a purebred sheep. It is fluke shaped, small, held flat against the body, and comprised of 2/3 wool, on the top, and 1/3 hair, on the tip. The length is between 3–6", and varies according to the size of the sheep. The Shetland falls into the Northern European Short-Tailed breeds of sheep and the number of tail vertebra equals 13 whereas a long tailed sheep has 20 or more.



## Size

It is the intent of NASSA to strongly emphasize the correct size of Shetland sheep. Shetlands are a small breed with a fine bone structure, very unlike most sheep breeds. It is highly important that a judge be aware of NASSA's intent to keep this breed within the average stated parameters and not drift into a larger breed that is indistinguishable from other breeds, such as the Icelandic or allow for undersized animals to become acceptable. Because of different climatic and feeding conditions in North America, the following size guidelines should be observed: For adult ewes, the range of 60–115 lbs is acceptable. For adult rams, the weight range would be from 80–150 lbs.



## Wool

*Breed Standard:* Extra fine and soft texture, longish, wavy, and well closed. Wool on forehead and poll tapering into neck, likewise wool on cheeks. Colours: white, black or brown, moorit (from reddish to fawn). Greys (including Sheila). Other known colours –Mirkface (brownish spots on face); Catmogit (dark under parts from muzzle to tail and legs), Burrit (light underparts); also Blaegit, Fleckit, and Sholmit.

Disqualification (penalized):

- (b) Bad wool, coarse and open,
- (c) Very coarse wool on breeches,
- (f) Defective coloured or badly shaped animals as sires,
- (g) White hairs in moorit and black, and dark hairs in white wool

Shetland wool has been used for centuries by knitters, both in handspun and millspun yarn, and so it should be, above all else, fine and of a soft texture. An overly coarse fleece is a serious fault. Shetlands can either have a uniform fleece or a fleece that is a somewhat non-uniform as in it being wavier/crimpier in the front half and slightly less wavy/crimpy in the rear. Neither type should be discriminated against. Britch (breeches) that extends to the thigh area should be heavily penalized and a very coarse britch (breeches) disqualified. It should also be noted that as a primitive breed many Shetland sheep leave their fleece in the spring. They have a break where the wool stops growing and consequently the fleece comes off (roos) easily.

Shetland wool was originally known for several types of knitted garments such as very fine lace ring shawls and veils, underclothing, fine hosiery, everyday shawls, sweaters, and hard wearing socks. out of the britch (breeches),

Shetland wool comes in one of the widest ranges of colors of any breed. We should also note that the colours listed in the Standard are not exhaustive. Besides white, other colors include light grey, grey, emsket (dusky bluish-grey), shaela (dark steely-grey resembling black frost), musket (pale grayish-brown), fawn, mioget (pale to dark yellow or rose gold), moorit (shades between fawn and dark reddish-brown), dark brown, and pure black. There are these 11 main colors as well as 30 markings, many still bearing their Shetland dialect names.

Shetland fleece can exhibit a variety of stylistic differences. At one end of the range the fleece will closely resemble a single coat with the inner and outer coats being of nearly the same fineness and length. At the other end of the spectrum it will have a distinct difference in length and fineness between the inner and outer coats. This is more definitive of the true dual coat. Both of these types and the range between them are acceptable Shetland fleeces. What must exist in all Shetland fleece regardless of style are density, luster and some degree of wave/crimp. Softness is the hallmark of the Shetland fleece and absolutely must be present to be considered an acceptable Shetland fleece.

Many examples of the diversity of Shetland fleece are shown in the following pictures. Most show fleeces in mid-summer to mid-winter length. Fleece lengths range from 2.5" to 6+", with the average around 4". Density is easily seen as well. All are soft and fine and show wave or crimp. Note various colors and various wave or crimp patterns displayed in the fleeces below.



### **NASSA Policy on Fitting and Trimming**

Shetland Sheep must be shown in full fleece and nothing may be done to alter the lock structure of the fleece. Shetland Sheep may NOT be fitted, blocked, combed, carded, brushed or trimmed. Dung tags may be removed and bellies may be sheared if permitted by the show. Any sheep shown fitted, blocked, combed, carded, brushed or trimmed will be automatically disqualified.

### **NASSA Judges Certification Requirements**

Established Sheep/Livestock Judges:

1. Recommended to NASSA Judges Committee or contact NASSA Judges Committee expressing interest in becoming a NASSA Certified Shetland Sheep judge.
2. Read and keep on file the NASSA Judge's Certification Packet with information regarding the Shetland Sheep, Breed Standard, etc.
3. Submit a Certification form to the NASSA Judges Committee for review (covers training, experience, etc). After positive review, name is placed on the NASSA Certified Judges List.

### **Individuals New To Sheep/Livestock Judging and Interested In NASSA Certification:**

1. Attend a NASSA Judges Training Seminar or Virtual Training Seminar at a regional event.
2. Have prior training or pursue sheep/livestock judging training outside of NASSA: University, Agricultural Extension, 4H, FFA, mentoring with established judges, etc.
3. Read and keep on file the NASSA Judge's Certification Packet.
4. Submit a letter of recommendation from a sheep/livestock judge, educator, member of the sheep industry, etc to the NASSA Judged Committee for review.
5. Submit a Certification form to the NASSA Judges Committee for review (covers training, experience, etc). After positive review, name is placed on the NASSA Certified Judges List.

## NASSA Judges Certification Information Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I want to become a NASSA certified Shetland sheep judge

Yes, I want to teach educational seminars for breeders or future Shetland judges.

No, I am not interested in the NASSA Shetland sheep judge certification program. Please remove my name from your mailing list.

Brief description of livestock judge's training and education \_\_\_\_\_

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Brief description of livestock judging experience \_\_\_\_\_

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