

APPENDIX A

SHETLAND FLOCKBOOK SOCIETY

SHETLAND SHEEP Description and scale of points explanatory note

All sections in normal (nonitalic) type constitute the 1927 Breed Standard.

All sections in *italic* type comprise the Explanatory Notes provided as an aid to clarity for Breeders, Inspectors and Judges. These Explanatory Notes were prepared by a subcommittee of the SSS set up with the approval of the 1999 AGM. Part of the subcommittee's remit, recorded in the minutes of the May 2000 Committee Meeting, was to 'look into the possibility of clarifying the 1927 Breed Standard'. The subcommittee produced a series of notes to be read in conjunction with the relevant points in the Breed Standard. These were unanimously accepted and endorsed by the full Committee.

GENERAL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE (Horned or Hornless)

HORNS

Should state that both 'round in section' and angular are acceptable.

REASON

For clarification. The Standard does not indicate a preference and early photographs of Shetland Sheep examined by the Committee show both.

SHOULD ALSO STATE that polled rams and horned females are acceptable.

REASON

For clarification. There are early recorded observations which refer to both, i.e. 'Shetland Sheep' as published in 'The Field' on 10/3/1927 and a very good photograph of a polled ram published in the book 'Farm Livestock of Great Britain' before 1927.

SHOULD ALSO STATE that the horns of a ram should rise in a curve above the head and then spiral round according to age.

REASON

The rise of the horn is an important distinguishing feature of the Shetland Sheep. Described in 'The Field' on 10/3/1927.

HEAD – Good width between ears, tapering rapidly to base of nose, which should be broad and with little taper to muzzle, hollow between cheeks and nose well marked.

Basically clear as written, but the subCommittee highlighted that the reference to 'well marked' referred to the hollow between the 'cheeks and nose' being clearly distinguishable.

FACE – Medium length of face from eyes to muzzle, nose prominent but not roman, small mouth.

Reference to a 'small mouth' means not large lipped, droopy or pouty lipped, with a mouth in proportion to the size and shape of the face, with a proper taper reducing down to a small mouth.

REASON

For clarification. If 'small' mouths were bred for as a Shetland characteristic, it would result in overshoot mouths. Probably originally highlighted to distinguish this feature from other breeds such as the Cheviot or Suffolk

EYES – Full, bright and active look.

Clear as written but should be expanded to say 'ideally slightly bulbous '.

EARS – Fine, medium size, well set back, carried slightly above the horizontal.

Clear as written.

NECK – Full, tapers into a fairly broad chest.

Should state that a Shetland has to have a clearly defined neck.

REASON

See below in conjunction with shoulders.

SHOULDERS – Well set, top level with back.

Needs considerable clarification.

REASON

A sheep must have withers to enable it to move freely. 'Well set' means not too narrow, but set properly between neck and back, showing a promontory (slight hump) thus defining the neck which would otherwise be lost in the back. It also means that the shoulder blades should slope from the front towards the back, not straight up.

CHEST – Medium width and deep.

'Medium' means medium in proportion to the size and conformation of the sheep.

BACK – Level, with as much width as possible.

Clear as written, but could be annotated that 'level' means parallel with the ground, and that the width of the pin bones determines the width of the sheep.

RIBS – Well sprung and well ribbed up.

Should be clarified by changing to 'well sprung from back around side' with a simple illustration of the right and wrong shape.

REASON

As written is saying the same thing twice, and not with much clarity.

RUMP – Good width, with well turned rounded hips.

Clear as written.

TAIL – 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.

Clear as written, but 'thereby' should be replaced by 'thereabouts', and the description expanded by stating that the tip of the tail should be covered with hair, not wool, and should preferably be flat, not round or plump. A good tail seems to fit tight into the fleece on the rump as compared with the fat long tail of many breeds.

LEGS OF MUTTON – Light, but very fine in quality.

This term has nothing to do with the legs from the hock down, but is clear in the context of the quality of the 'leg of lamb' in modern terms. As far as the lower legs are concerned, in general terms they should be light boned and free from wool below the hock in the adult sheep. Viewed from behind, the rear legs should be perpendicular from the hock to the pastern, and should be wider apart than the fore legs. The pastern should have a medium slope, and show no signs of weakness. Feet should be well shaped and small in proportion to the size of the sheep. Reference to early photographs illustrate this latter point clearly.

SKIN – Varies according to color of wool. In white no blue or black coloring.

Clear as written.

WOOL – 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, Maorit (from reddish to fawn), Greys (including Sheila). Other known colours: Mirkface (brownish spots on face), Catmogit (black underparts from muzzle to tail and legs), Burrit (light underparts); also Blaegit, Fleckit and Sholmit.

Should be clarified and expanded as follows: 'Longish probably means 3" to 5" in full fleece, certainly no Shetland should have a staple of 7 ". 'The Field' 10/3/1927.

'Well closed': of medium density.

'Wool on forehead and poll, likewise wool on cheeks' to be clarified as 'not in excess', Reference to early photographs illustrates this clearly.

There should be no frill. 'The Field' 10/3/1927.

'Wavy' means what we now term as crimp. The Universal Dictionary defines crimp as 'the natural curliness of wool fibres'.

A good description could read as follows: Wool Extra fine and soft above all else. Crimped, of medium density and (length) 3 to 5 inches in full fleece. Breeches having coarser/longer wool but not extending into thighs. Wool, not in excess, present on poll and cheeks.

We should also note that the colours listed in the Standard are not exhaustive.

CARRIAGE – Alert and nimble with a smart active gait.

Clear as written.