

Oxford Down Sheep Breeders' Association

STANDARDS FOR JUDGES

Judges who have been nominated by the Oxford Down Sheep Breeders' Association must be aware that, as representatives of the Association, they will be expected at all times to meet judging standards which have been formulated by Council.

The following points outline the standards that are required of Oxford Down judges.

- 1) When invited to judge, please reply - in writing – immediately or at the very earliest opportunity. This enables the organisation to prepare schedules or to seek another judge if you are unavailable. Do not accept the invitation unless you are certain that you will be available (emergencies excepted).
- 2) When two or more invitations are received from events in the same vicinity, during the same showing season, the Association would suggest that the second invitation is declined for that particular year, as the same exhibitors can often be showing at each event.
- 3) Do not enter the sheep lines or engage socially with exhibitors or their representatives prior to or during judging.
- 4) Remember to arrive at the event in plenty of time, and to report to the chief steward immediately upon arrival. Bear in mind the probability of long delays in getting on to the showground because of heavy traffic. Judges who arrive late are a constant source of irritation to show societies and exhibitors. Moreover, a late arrival usually leads to a state of mind which is not conducive to objective judging.
- 5) Be fully aware of the specification of the classes, including special prizes and championship awards, as outlined in the schedule and catalogue. If in doubt, ask the steward.
- 6) Arrive at the ringside well groomed and turned out. This is a courtesy to exhibitors who have spent a long time preparing their stock. A reasonably formal dress code is expected of judges – jeans, shorts, baseball caps, clothing with logos and casual footwear are not considered appropriate. Male judges should wear a tie.
- 7) When in the ring, do not smoke or stand with hands in pockets. Do not engage in conversation with ringside spectators during the judging or between classes. This will help you to keep your train of thought on the matter in hand.
- 8) When judging sheep it is important to inspect each exhibit thoroughly and consistently. Exhibitors expect everyone to be judged on equal merits. The judge must take the task seriously and conduct him/herself appropriately at all times.
- 9) It is particularly important that judges should adhere to the following points when judging Oxfords:
 - a) Every sheep should have its mouth checked for correctness of bite.
 - b) In all classes the sheep should be moved to observe locomotion. Preferably this should be off the halter but if ring arrangement does not allow this the exhibitor should at least be asked to walk the sheep on the halter.
 - c) Every sheep should be carefully handled to assess conformation and structure. The fleece should be handled to assess tightness and inspected for dark fibres. The fleece should also be parted to inspect skin colour.
 - d) Rams should be checked for correctness below.
 - e) The sheep in each class should be pulled into line in the order that you are placing them.
 - f) When awarding the rosettes, start with the 1st prize sheep and work down the line in order. Shake hands with the exhibitor and offer some words of congratulation or encouragement as appropriate.
- 10) During judging, use the steward to marshal the sheep as you require them. This will enable you to concentrate on your task.
- 11) After judging, check that the steward has finished with you. Visit the exhibitors as soon as possible to give them an opportunity to comment and discuss your reasons. Treat complaints – however strongly they may be expressed – with courtesy and patience. You should be able to explain the reasons for your placings for each class, and it is good practice to give positive reasons where applicable.
- 12) It is greatly appreciated by show organisers if you write to them afterwards to thank them for their support and to offer any constructive comments you may have to improve the show. The Association would also appreciate if judges would submit a report to the Secretary after they have judged a show.

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