

TRAINING LAMBS TO SHOW



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INTRODUCTION

- The market lamb project is a good way for youth to develop work ethic, self-discipline, commitment, patience and many other worthwhile skills.
- This is because, though it's a lot of fun, participation requires that youth dedicate time and effort.
- It's a learning experience that the whole family can become involved in.

Let's Get Started

- There are many components to a successful lamb project.
- Today, let's look only at the effort that goes into training lambs for show.

First Step-Gentle Them Down

- Feeding time is an excellent opportunity to begin gentling your animals.
- Pour the feed in the trough and allow the lambs a “comfort zone”.
- Gradually they will lose fear and approach you at feeding time.



The Work Begins

- Halter-breaking will continue the gentling process, especially if an exhibitor has several animals.
- Inexpensive rope halters can be made or purchased.



The Halter-breaking Process

- Lambs should be caught, haltered and tied to the fence.
- **Tied animals should never be left unattended.**
- While the animals are tied, exhibitors can place the feet properly and get them accustomed to setting up.



Leading

- After the animals begin to gentle down, the exhibitor can start teaching them to lead by pulling on the lead rope.
- It is important that you have someone to assist you by patting the animal on his dock whenever it stops.



Leading (without a halter)

- Once the lambs lead with a halter, it is necessary to teach them to lead without a halter (as this is how they will actually show).
- An acceptable way to lead a lamb is with one hand under his chin and the other hand on the back of his head.



Position

- *After you feel comfortable leading the lamb, learn how to position your hands in a way that hold the lamb's ears forward.*
- *This gives the judge the impression that your lamb is long-necked and very stylish.*
- *Lead with your arm extended and with your body 1-2 feet from the lamb.*



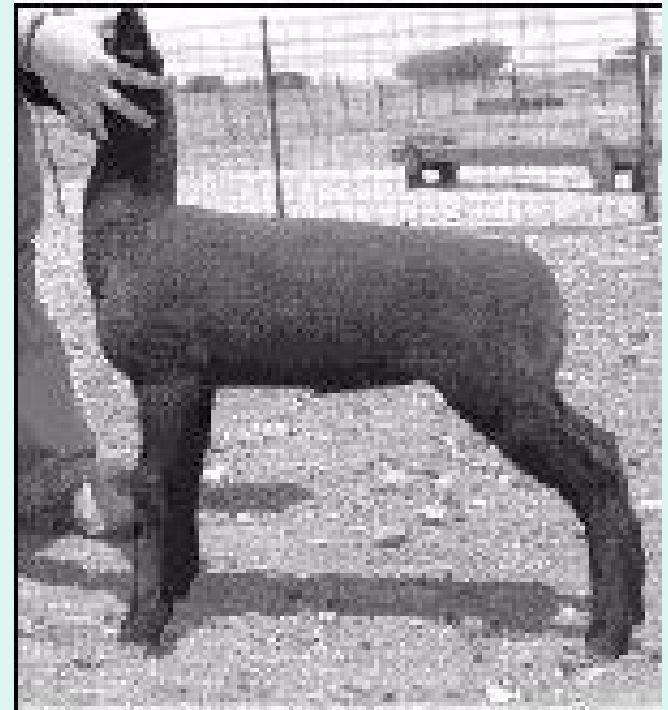
“Setting Up”

- The next step in the training process is for the exhibitor to lead the animal (without a halter) and properly set him up.
- Set the hind legs up first, then place the front legs, keeping the body and neck straight and the head in a high, proud position with ears up and forward.



Bracing

- Last, but not least, is bracing.
- The animal should learn to lead, set and remain set-up while the exhibitor moves around him.
- Then it is ready to be taught to brace or push.
- A lamb must push or “drive” against the exhibitor when the judge is handling him.



Use a Trimming Table Or Other Platform

- Lambs can be taught to push by placing them on a trimming table or other platform with their rear feet near the edge.
- Position the legs and then gently push the animal backward by using the inside, soft part of your thigh.
- Do not overpower the animal or knock him off the platform.



Have Patience

- Though **some catch on faster than others**, eventually the animal learns to lean forward to keep from falling backward.
- Usually, after a few days, lambs will be conditioned to brace once you set them up and push with your thigh.



Avoid Developing Bad Habits

- Once an animal starts bad habits like over-driving or kicking his back legs too far back, it is hard to stop.
- The best way to avoid this is to be careful not to over-practice when teaching it to push.



How should the lamb look:

- The body and neck are straight.
- Head in high, proud position with ears up and forward.
- Front legs in line with the neck.
- Top is level.
- Hind legs are square.



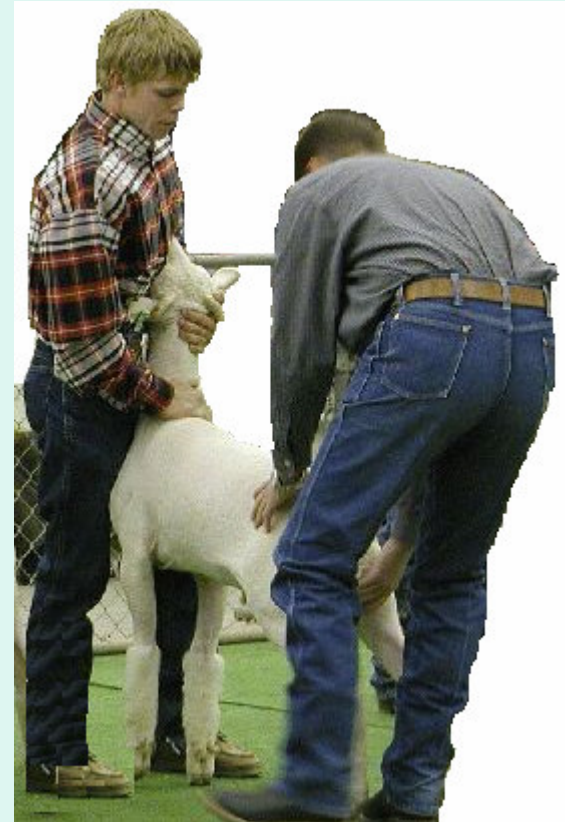
On The Ground

- After the animals learn to brace on the platform, try this on the ground.
- One of the biggest mistakes made is overpowering an animal when bracing in practice or in the show ring.
- A constant, steady pressure is much more desirable because the judge can evaluate the animal easier.



Practice

- After training is complete, practice showing the lamb.
- Set up your lamb while someone handles it, making sure the lamb responds.
- If the lamb responds properly, return it to its pen and do not overwork it.



Training Develops Good Showmanship

- Showmanship is developed through the training process.
- It's like dancing...your lamb responds to your lead.
- **REMEMBER:** Success comes with time and hard work.



GOOD LUCK!!

- For help, contact your County Extension Agent, Project Leader, or a knowledgeable exhibitor.

