

SOUTHDOWN SHEEP
Description and Breed Characteristics

A good Southdown should first and foremost be a sound and correct sheep, its teeth should meet the top pad evenly, being neither over nor under shot. It should be up on its pasterns, move correctly and displaying the appropriate characteristics for its sex, with rams having two even sized testicles of good size and females having sound udders and teats. In all circumstances, sheep being shown or presented at sales should comply with legislation with regard to tail length.

Furthermore, a good Southdown should display the following characteristics:

Characteristic	Description	Points
General character and appearance	Catches the eye with its alertness and balanced appearance	10
Head Head Face Eyes Ears	Wide, level between the ears with no sign of horn. Not too long from eyes to nose, particularly rams. Hair of an even mouse colour. Nostrils dark, not pink. Eyes large and bright and clear of wool. Ears of medium size, but appropriate to size of the animal and covered with short wool.	12
Topline and front end Topline Neck Shoulders Chest Back Ribs	The topline should be level from the base of the neck to the top of the rump, with no dips or rises. Neck wide at the base and well set on the shoulder. Shoulders neither too wide nor too narrow and top level with the back. Deep over the heart, but not too wide. Long, wide and level, evenly fleshed and firm to handle, with a good depth and width of loin. Ribs well sprung.	30
Rear end Rump Tail Gigots	Rump square, broad and not pointed Broad and well set up and level with the chine. Wide, deep and well filled.	18
Legs and locomotion Legs and feet Locomotion	A leg at each corner, straight and well up on the pasterns. Horn of hoof black. Moving cleanly with neither hooky nor straight back legs and placing each foot squarely and in a clean forward motion.	20
Wool and Skin Wool	Wool fine and tight, covering the whole body down to the hocks and knees.	10
Total		100

A Southdown should also be a “Good Sheep”. Please refer to the Southdown Sheep Society Technical Guidance on what makes a “Good Sheep”.

The following are reasons why judges should not award prizes to otherwise good sheep;

- Horns or evidence of their presence
- Structural unsoundness, including twisted or poorly set feet and/or legs
- Over or undershot jaw
- Uneven or small testicles
- Non-functioning udder
- Tail length does not comply with DEFRA legislation

In addition, judges may not award prizes to otherwise good sheep for the following reasons;

- Openness of fleece
- Sheep are in an inappropriate condition for the time of year/stage of production