CKSA Breed Guidebook

- Characteristics ……
- Standards…….
- Procedures……...
- Identification…….
- Registration …….

www.katahdinsheep.com

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1. Katahdin Sheep: The Breed Standard

A. Katahdin Breed Standard

The CKSA Breed Guidebook is published under authority of the CKSA Constitution Section 5.3 which states:

> The Board shall have the authority to adopt and amend the "standard of type" which will be presented to the membership in the form of a CKSA Breed Guidebook. This Breed Guidebook shall be used as a reference by Inspectors during the inspection of Katahdins.
>
> A. The CKSA Breed Guidebook shall:
>
> i) Include a pictorial and written description of the Katahdin breed;
>
> ii) Be compiled by and reviewed from time to time by the Board or designated committee, and/or by both;
>
> iii) Be presented to the General Assembly for approval and/or changes at the annual CKSA General Meeting

B. Characteristics

Katahdins are a strong, hardy, low-maintenance breed of sheep characterized by a unique hair/wool coat that seasonally sheds. Attributes of the Katahdin breed include:

- easy handling
- excellent mothering abilities
- multiple births
- long seasonal breeding
- adaptability to varied climate and environmental conditions
- high degree of parasite resistance

Fed accordingly, Katahdin lamb is a lean, mild-tasting meat with a desirable flavour. Katahdin meat retains this quality whether eaten hot or cold and beyond the stage of lamb.

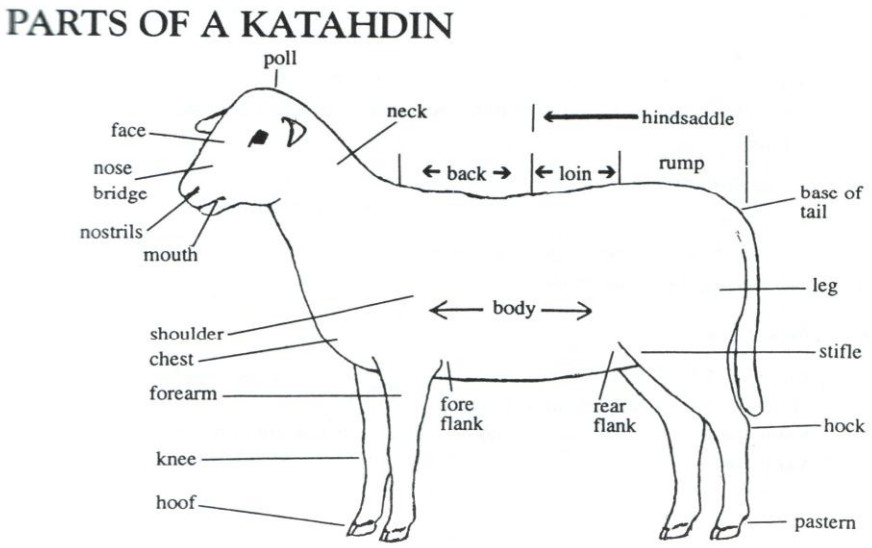
C. Appearance

The general overall appearance is that of a meat sheep. However, there are certain features such as the size, head, and type of coat or colour that may vary due to the breeds used to develop the Katahdin breed.

Rams are distinguished by a mane of varying degrees that can change with the season.

The aim of the Katahdin producer is to efficiently produce a lean, mild-flavoured, well-muscled carcass and to do so with a minimum of maintenance.

2.



3. Assessing Katahdin Breeding Stock

The Katahdin sheep is an excellent maternal breed. It can be used in cross-breeding programs, does well on pasture, in the feedlot, and is very adaptable to conditions across North and South America. The lambs are noted for their fine taste and lean carcass. Good genetics and feeding produce a carcass that has a high return.

A. Overall Appearance

This should be balanced with the head, neck, and legs being proportionate to the body. Straight or Roman noses are found within the breed and the mouth and nostrils should not restrict the eating and breathing capabilities. The teeth and dental pad should meet properly.

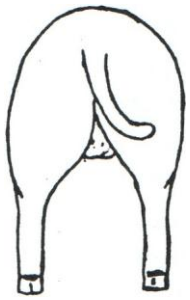
B. Body Area

The Katahdin ewe has the room and capacity to feed herself and her lambs while carrying them for the term. Both sexes should have a strong back with a straight but wide top-line that carries down to a depth that can accommodate the feed required. The chest should be wide and full to accommodate the lungs and heart.

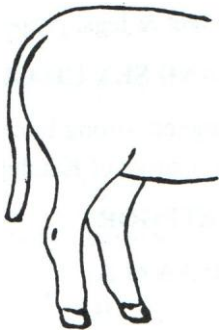
C. Legs, Feet, and Bones

Legs should be straight and of strong bone without any defects. The feet should meet the ground evenly. Both white and black hooves are acceptable. Strong, straight legs and pasterns with adequate bone are essential for breeding Katahdins. The legs should be of ample bone, wide set and squarely placed under the animal. The pasterns should be short and strong with the toes rather close together. The animal should move freely and easily with no evidence of unsoundness.

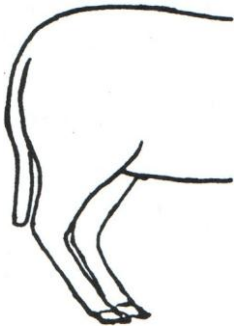
Some of the defects which cause unsoundness in the feet and legs:



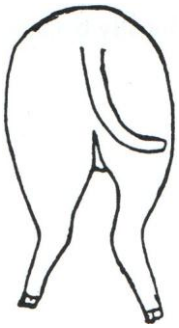
Ideal feet and legs
(rear view)



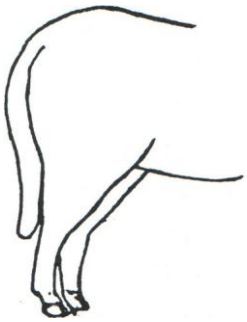
Ideal feet and legs
(side view)



Sickle-hocked
- too much set to the hocks



Cow-hocked
- hocks too close together



Post Legs
- hocks are too straight

Weak pasterns
-too long and/or too weak
to support the body weight

D. Muscling

The prime cuts from sheep are in the loin and hind leg area but the chest, forearm, and stifle should not be ignored. Feel the muscles under the coat. Since there is much variation within the breed, identifying, and evaluating the useable parts of a carcass would assist in the selection of genetics to further the breed. Keeping records, condition scores, and carcass evaluations can further these goals.

E. The Katahdin Ewe

She has a feminine appearance without the coarseness of a ram in the neck area. Her milking capabilities will not be apparent but the two teats should be well placed. Although permitted, horns are not encouraged in a ewe.

F. The Katahdin Ram

He has an impressive mane around his thick neck but seasonal shedding is allowed. There are variations of quantity and type of coat that can affect this mane growth. Rams should be selected for soundness and even temperament. This allows for easy handling. These essential characteristics will be passed on to his lamb crop. To be eligible for CKSA registration a Katahdin ram must be born from an A or AA coat graded dam. Polled rams are preferred but scurs are permissible. Rams with horns cannot be registered.

4. Katahdin Faults, Abnormalities, and Genetic Defects

Section 5.3.B of the CKSA Constitution states:

B. Abnormalities/genetic defects:

i) Male organs: Well-developed. No evidence of any abnormality such as small testicles, or only one, or none at all (cryptorchism).

ii) Female organs: No evidence of any abnormalities such as incomplete reproductive systems and/or pseudo-hermaphrodism.

iii) Abnormalities and defects considered to be inherent and/or of a genetic nature as confirmed by a signed statement from a Canadian-licensed Veterinarian shall disqualify the animal from registration.

A. Minor Faults:

- Scurs
- Sides of body extend beyond “trim” and are more barrel or extended in appearance
- Ewes with a B coat
- Sway back
- Exceptionally large head
- Long thin neck not set well into shoulders
- Short body
- Short or over long legs
- Sickle hocked legs
- Cow hocks
- Front legs base narrow or over wide
- Humped back
- Hooves that point inward or outward
- Bow legs, front or back
- Ewes that weigh less than 140 lbs at maturity (3-4 years)

- Rams that weigh less than 180 lbs at maturity (3-4 years)

B. Major Faults:

- Any combination of two minor faults
- Weak or fallen pasterns
- Docked tails (born after January 1997)
- Shoulders wider than rear quarters
- Ewes that have a C coat
- Horned ewes
- Ewes that weigh less than 120 lbs at maturity (3-4 years)
- Rams that weigh less than 160 lbs at maturity (3-4 years)

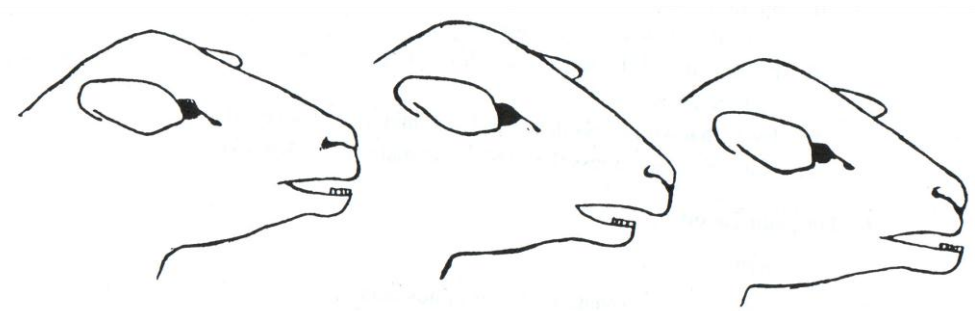
C. Disqualification of the Ram:

- Any combination of four minor faults
- Any combination of two major faults
- A dam that has a B or C category coat
- Small testicles or only one testicle or scrotum that is double lobed or improperly formed
- Horned
- Docked tail (born after January 1st. 1997)
- Complete absence of mane in any season
- Jaw deformity such as parrot mouth, over or under shot jaw and teeth that do not align with the top dental pad
- Has B or C category coat
- Fails to comply with bylaws 5.3 in Katahdin Breed Standard or bylaw 5.8 service ram qualifications, or any other part of the CKSA Constitution or CKSA Breed Guidebook
- Absent or incomplete identification
- Not born of Canadian Katahdin Sheep Association registered parents
- (For a KHSI transfer or import, see section 6 and 7of the bylaws.)

D. Disqualification of the Ewe:

- Any combination of five minor faults
- Any combination of three major faults
- Jaw deformity such as parrot mouth, over or under shot jaw and teeth that do not align with the top dental pad
- Docked tail (born after January 1st. 1997)
- Abnormal udder or teats that would hinder a lamb nursing or prevent milk supply
- Fails to comply with bylaws 5.3 in Katahdin Breed Standard or any other part of the CKSA Constitution or CKSA Breed Guidebook
- Absent or incomplete identification
- Not born of Canadian Katahdin Sheep Association Registered parents
- (For a KHSI transfer or import, see section 6 and 7 of the bylaws.)

E. Examples of deformities:
Mouth must have the ability to function correctly.



Normal mouth	Undershot jaw	Overshot jaw
True, even bite	"parrot mouth"	Lower jaw too long
	Upper jaw too long	

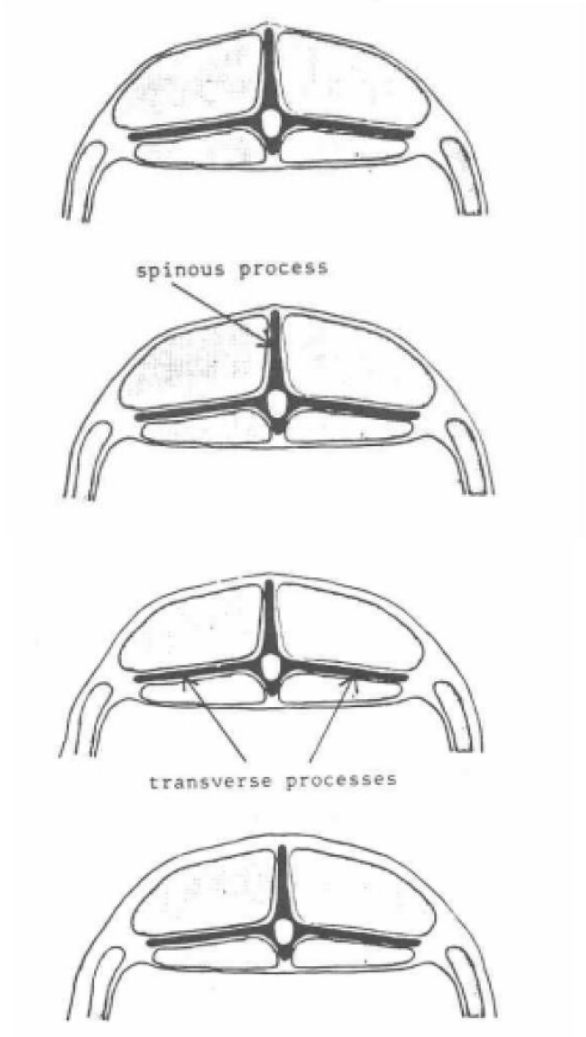
5. Condition Scoring of Katahdins

Sheep producers will spend most of their production costs on feed. Excess fat costs you money but a level of fat is necessary to insulate and provide an energy store for periods of greater need. This degree of fat cover is called "condition" and is difficult to assess visually. You can feel the level of fat and assess breeding or market condition.

The vertebrae of the spine in the loin area have two projections which can be felt. The transverse process on each side can be felt by pushing the fingertips into the animal's side and around the bottom of the loin.

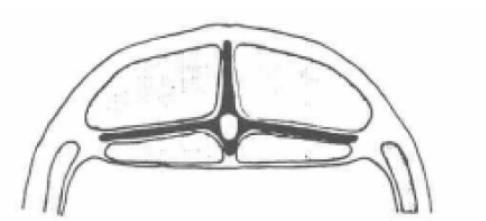
It is the ease with which these projections can be felt that indicates the condition scoring.

CONDITION SCORING GUIDE



SCORE	CONDITION
1	emaciated-little fat cover can be felt and the processes of the spine are prominent.
2	poor to fair – processes are readily felt but are covered with a slight amount of fat.
3	fair to good – the processes can still be felt but not prominently.
4	good to fat – processes can just barely be felt.

A condition score of 3-4 is considered optimum. With a large flock you might consider separating lower scoring ewes for extra feeding. However, high scoring ewes should not be allowed to lose condition in late gestation as this could lead to pregnancy toxemia**.**



5	over fat – top of spine is smooth – difficult to grasp end of loin processes cannot be felt.

Condition scoring is a subjective process. What is a “4” by one may well be a “3” by another. Practice it whenever you are handling your sheep and get a feel for your flock. The term is most often used to assess each ewe’s condition prior to putting them with the ram. Condition influences the birth of single or multiple lambs.

6. Coat Types and Grading of Katahdin Sheep

Section 5.3.C Coat of the CKSA Constitution states:

C. Coat:

i) AA Type: Naturally free of visible woolly fibers at all times. Seasonally sheds completely.

ii) A Type: Some evidence of woolly fibers. Seasonally sheds completely.

iii) B Type: Coat is predominantly free of woolly fibers. Some patches do not shed of which the total area does not exceed 1/4 of the upper half of the body, or an area approximately 4" wide along the top of the back.

iv) C Type: Woolly fibers covering more than 1/4 of the upper half of the body which do not seasonally shed.

The shedding coat of the Katahdin is a major part of being a low-maintenance breed. While a Katahdin can be registered at any time after birth, their offspring cannot be registered until the dam and sire have had their coats graded. The coat grading is done by a qualified inspector any time after the Katahdin is six months old; however, the time period each year is between May 1st and October 31st for A, B, & C classifications. An A coat can be upgraded to an AA coat during the months of December, January and February. Katahdins graded B or C, may be upgraded in following years.

Katahdin sheep producers who have been a member of the CKSA for at least two (2) years are eligible to take the "Inspection of Katahdins" workshop. An "Inspector Certificate" will be issued upon successful completion and is valid for five (5) years.

The benefits of becoming a Katahdin Inspector are:

- you have the ability to coat grade your sheep;
- you will meet other producers and share ideas;
- you will meet your provincial CKSA Director; and
- you will become more knowledgeable in the raising of Katahdins.

The shedding coat of the *Katahdin* does not require shearing and is preferably completely free of permanent woolly fibers. The coat can be any colour, colour combination, or colour pattern.

There is variation within the breed on the mixture of hair and wool carried. It also seems that when a Katahdin is taken to hotter climates it grows a lesser coat. Perhaps we could forecast the winter by the coats grown that year?

7. Katahdin Identification Methods and Procedures

Section 5.12 IDENTIFICATION of the CKSA Constitution states:

A. All Katahdins will be identified by two of the following five methods.

i) Tattoo: size of 3/8" or 1/2":
a) Inside left ear: the sheep identification number and year letter; and
b) Inside right ear: the herd identifier so placed as not to conflict with a plastic tag, if used.

ii) Metal ear tag (bottom of left ear with sheep number and year letter on one side and herd identifier on other) using a size #2 or #3

iii) Plastic sheep ear tag right ear (with number on outside herd identifier on inside)

iv) Plastic sheep ear tag left ear (with number on outside herd identifier on inside)

v) Canadian Sheep Identification Program official identification numbered tag. In the event of a lost tag, the tag must be replaced within 21 days with another CSIP tag. The registration certificate must be returned to CLRC for a re-issued up to date registration certificate.

B. A sheep's identification will be a combination of letters and numbers assigned to each sheep by the producer in compliance with these bylaws. The letters and numbers will be the same on both methods of identification used and must include:

i) Herd Identifier:
- a two - or three- or four-letter identifier assigned to the producer by the Registry;

ii) Number:
- any one to five digit number assigned to the animal by the producer.

iii) Year Letter:
- The Canadian Livestock Records Corporation has designated a letter for each year. This letter is placed after the animal's number, ex. X = 2010, Y = 2011, etc. Letters I, O, Q, and V are not designated as year letters.

C. Example of a sheep's identification:

	WXY	**123**	**Z (2012)**
	herd identifier	sheep ID #	Year letter

Note: When using plastic ear tags;
- the sheep's ID number and year letter will be visible on the back side of the right ear
- the herd identifier letters will be visible on the inside of the right (same) ear

D. Herd Identifiers:

i) Application for a Canadian herd identifier must be made to the Registry.

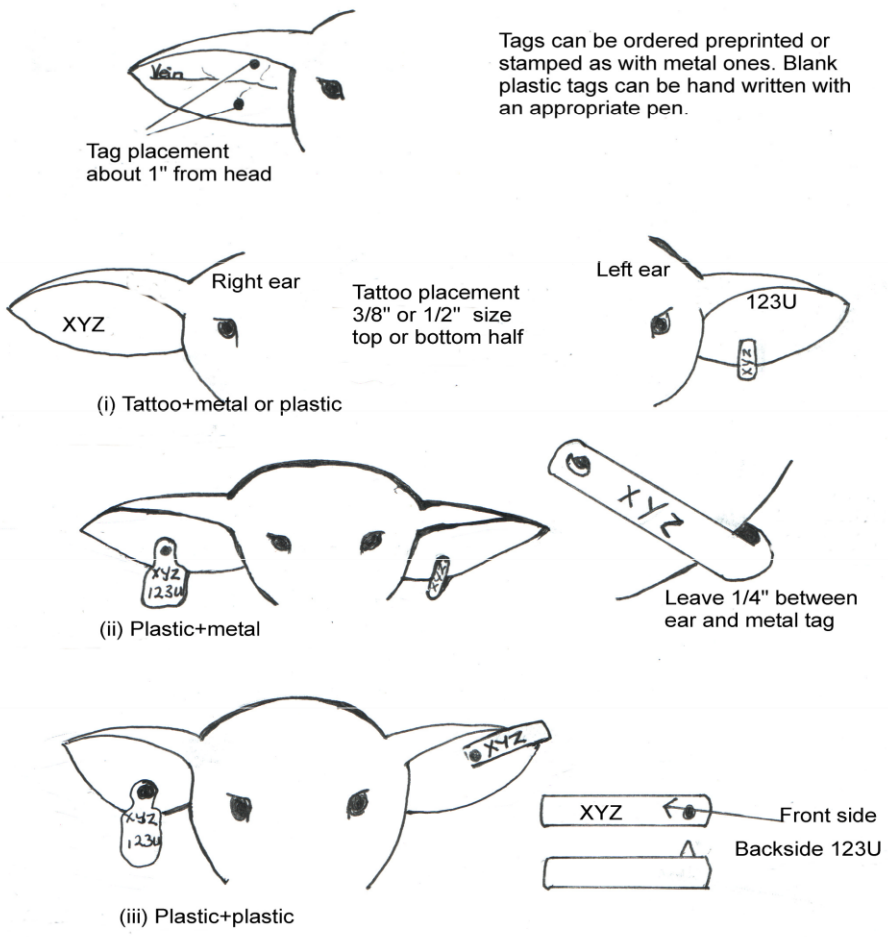
Note: The Registry will assign each registered animal a number (as indicated on the Registration Certificate) that can be used for performance recording purposes (R.O.P.).

All Katahdin sheep in Canada are required to have an ID tag specific to the farm on which it was born. This tag must be installed before the sheep leaves the farm for any reason. This is a Government of Canada tag and is not the same as the Canadian Livestock Records Corporation Registration ID tag. You must meet the requirements of your province so it is essential that you become aware of these - through provincial sheep associations is one way.

E. Tagging Methods:

The ear has a major vein through the centre that must be avoided. Place the tags about one inch from the head.

Note: Year letter for 2013 is A



8. Registration of Katahdin Sheep

A Katahdin lamb can be temporarily registered any time after birth. This registration becomes permanent after the lamb has been coat graded. However, a lamb cannot be registered until its dam and sire has been coat graded and permanently registered.

Sections 5.14 ELIGIBILITY FOR PERMANENT REGISTRATION, 5.15 QUALIFICATION FOR REGISTRY, and 5.16 PROCEDURE TO REGISTER of the CKSA Constitution list the detailed information needed to register your sheep