

# Sheep and Goat Selection

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# Breeding Sheep and Goat Priorities

## 1. Functionality

- Structure
- Body

## 2. Balance/ Eye Appeal

## 3. Optimal Condition/ Fleshing Ability

## 4. Muscle

# Functionality

To be considered a functional breeding piece, animals must be able to stay in adequate shape to breed, able to lamb or kid properly, and raise her offspring



# Structure

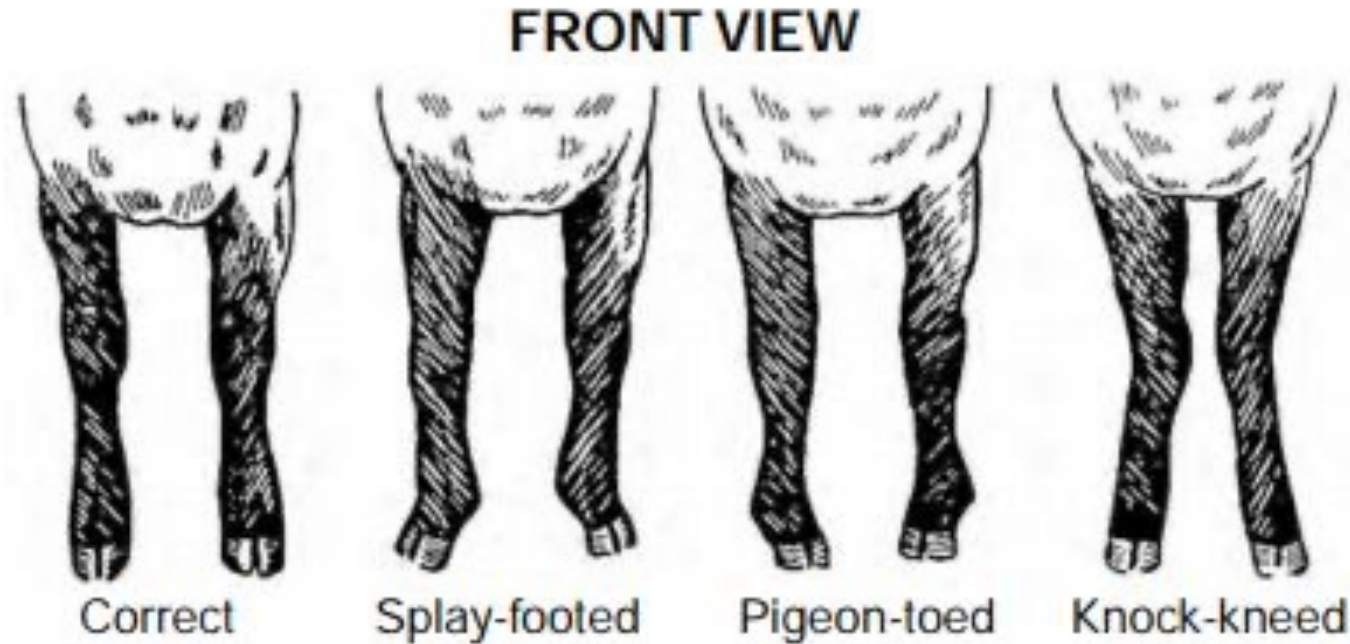
- From the side
  - Proper angle to shoulder and knee (45°)
  - Levelness of topline
  - Adequate set to hock
- From behind
  - Square hocked
- On the move:
  - Natural in movement
  - Upheaded
  - Comfortable in topline
  - Remain level out of hip
  - Flexible on feet and legs



Pitlick Boer Goats



# Front View Structure



Coolibah Persian Sheep



# Rear View Structure

## REAR VIEW



Correct



Bow-legged



Cow-hocked

Coolibah Persian Sheep

# Side View Structure:

## SIDE VIEW FRONT LEGS



Correct



Calf-kneed



Weak pasterns



Buck-kneed

## SIDE VIEW REAR LEGS



Correct



Sickle-hocked



Post-legged

# Structural Differences:

## **Good structured sheep and goats:**

- Natural head carriage
  - “Up-headed”
- Comfortable in spine
- Athletic on feet and legs

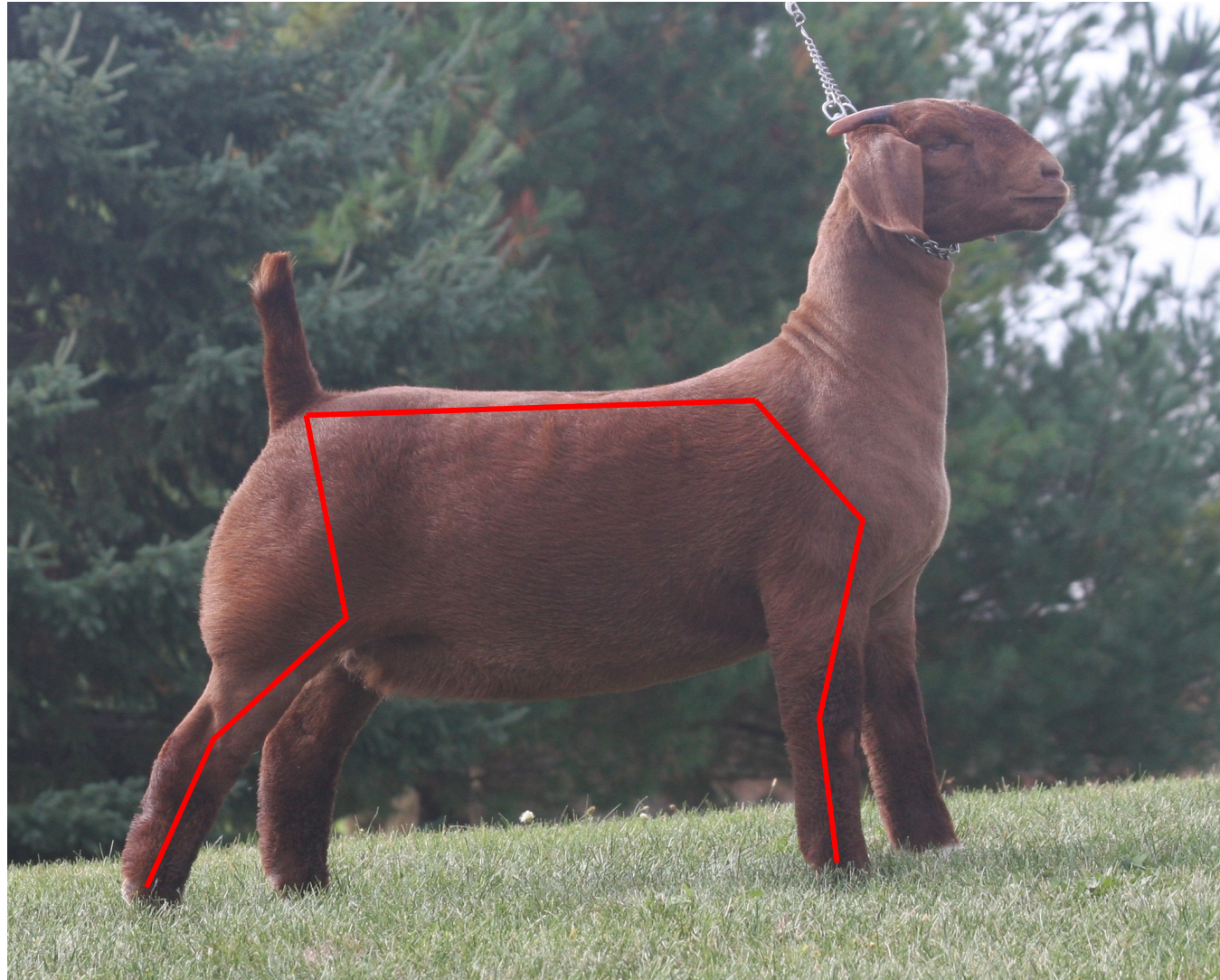
## **Poor structured sheep and goats:**

- Drop heads and their front ends
- Get up in their topline
- Roll or duck their pins
- Bow at their hock





# Structure

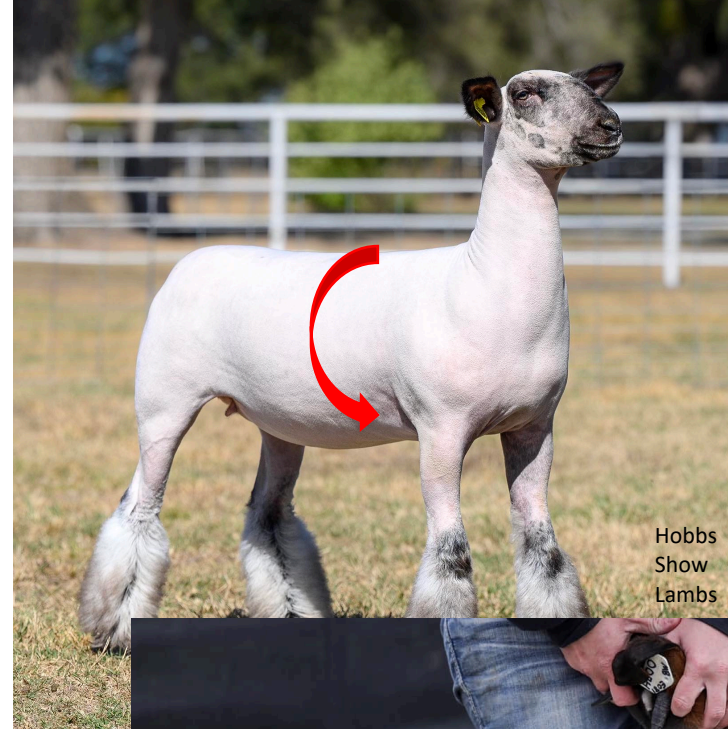


Pitlick Boer Goats



# Body

- Want female's rib shape to be:
  - Round
  - Bold
  - Productive
- Remember: body shape **is the foundation** for animals to lay mass and muscle up high



# Body



Pfeiffer Farms



# Maternal Bodied vs Hard Bodied



Google Photos



# Thoughts on functionality?



# **Skeletal Width/Dimension**

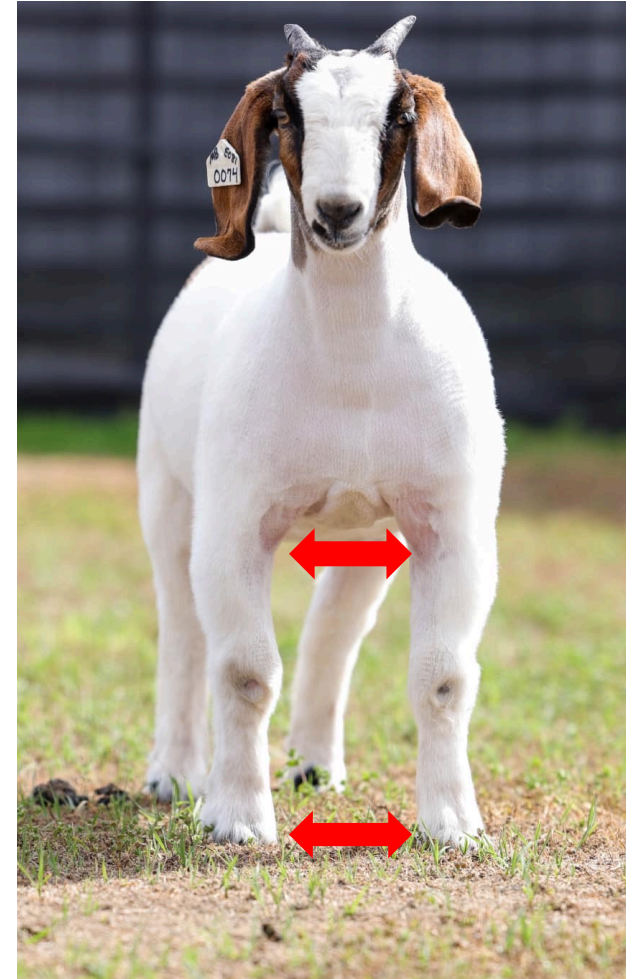


# Evaluating Width and Dimension

- Rear view:
  - Wide upper hip/pinned
  - Wide based from behind
- Front view:
  - Wide chested
  - Forearm shape
  - Stoutness of skull
- Up high
  - Mass down top



Hobbs Show Lambs



Pfeiffer Farms



# Skeletal Width and Dimension Differences



Google Photos





# Balance and Eye Appeal

How proportional and attractive is the animal?



# Balance

- Do all the parts and pieces of that animal blend together?
- Questions to ask yourself
  - Is the ewe long necked, long bodied, and long hipped?
  - Is the doe shorter bodied but she's shorter necked and hipped?
  - Is the female deep chested, tight flanked, short necked, and long bodied?



Google Photos



# Good or Poor Balanced?



Google Photos



# Eye Appeal

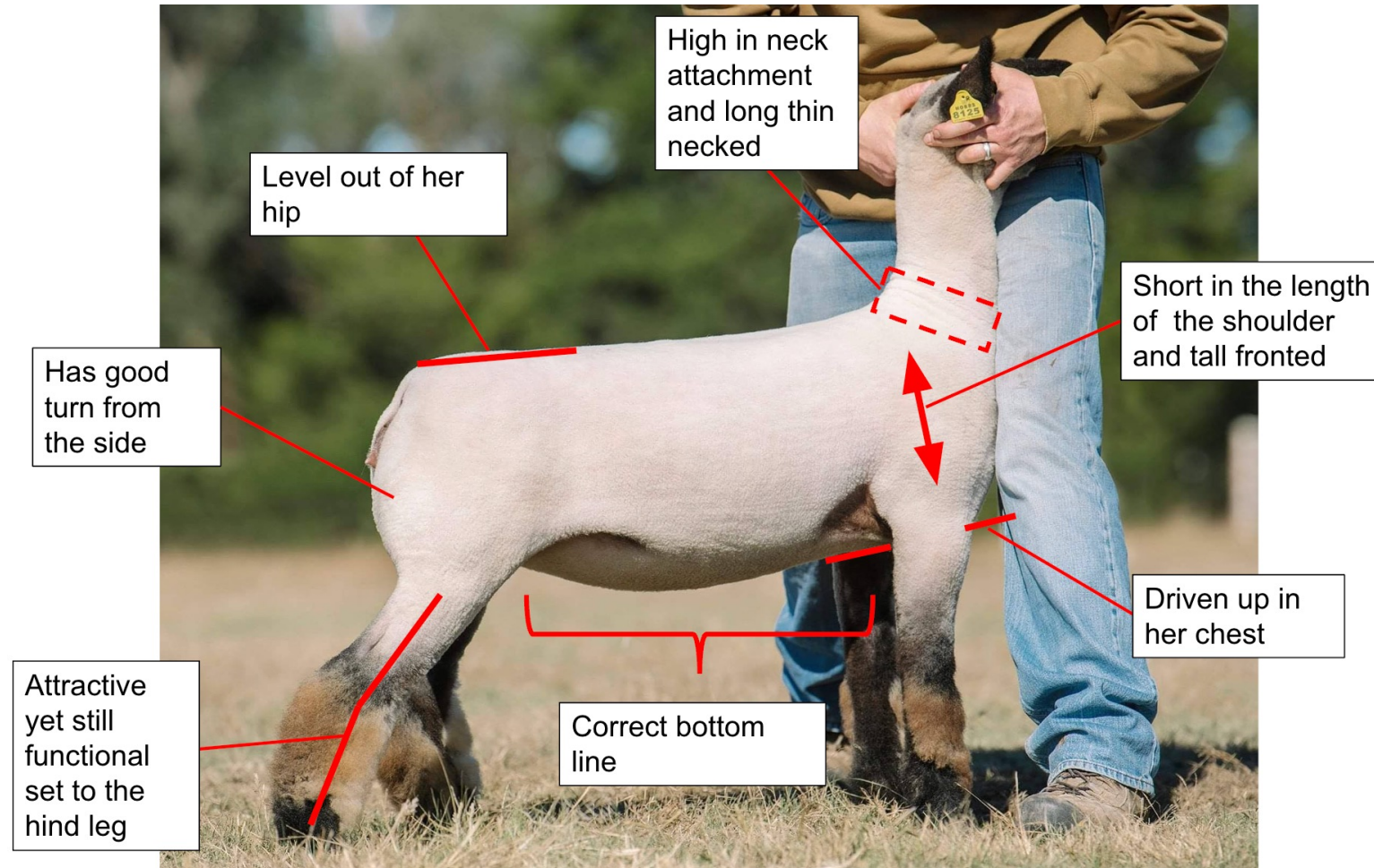
- Attractively made
- Factors:
  - Up headed
  - Level Lines
  - Shallow chested
  - Smooth Shouldered
  - Tall Shouldered
  - Level hiped
  - Soft flank
  - Appropriate posture to hind leg



Hobbs Show Lambs



# Eye Appeal



Hobbs Show Lambs



# Eye Appeal



Pitlick Boer Goats



# Market Sheep and Goat Priorities

## 1. Carcass Value/Composition

- Muscle
- Trimness
- Handling Quality

## 2. Practicality (Body and Structure)

## 3. Balance and Eye Appeal

# Carcass Value

Balance between muscle, trimness, and handling quality





# Evaluating Muscle

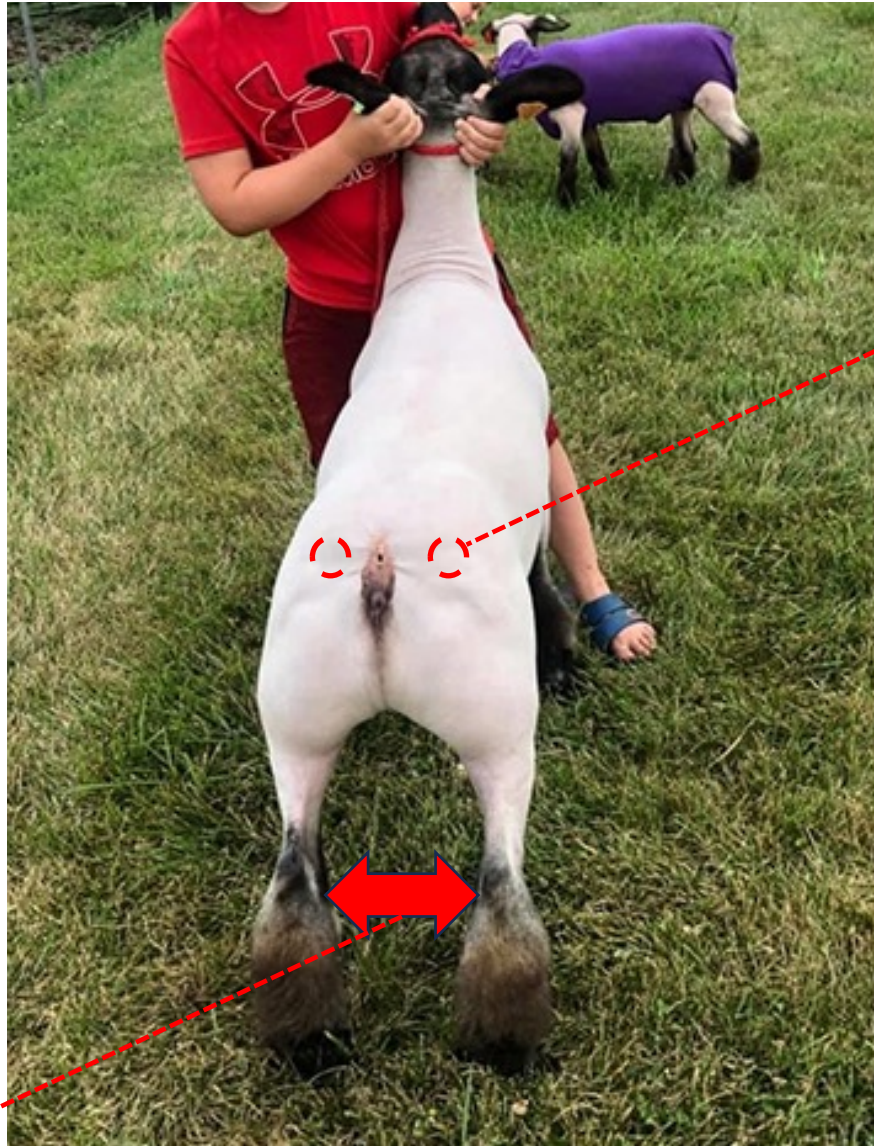
- First view: From behind the rack or stanchion (rear view)
  - Study
    - Base width
    - Hip
      - Pin width
      - Muscle in lower leg
- Second view: From the front (front view)
  - Study
    - Chest width
    - Forearm shape
- Third View: Up high
  - Study
    - Width down top



Google Images



# Rear View



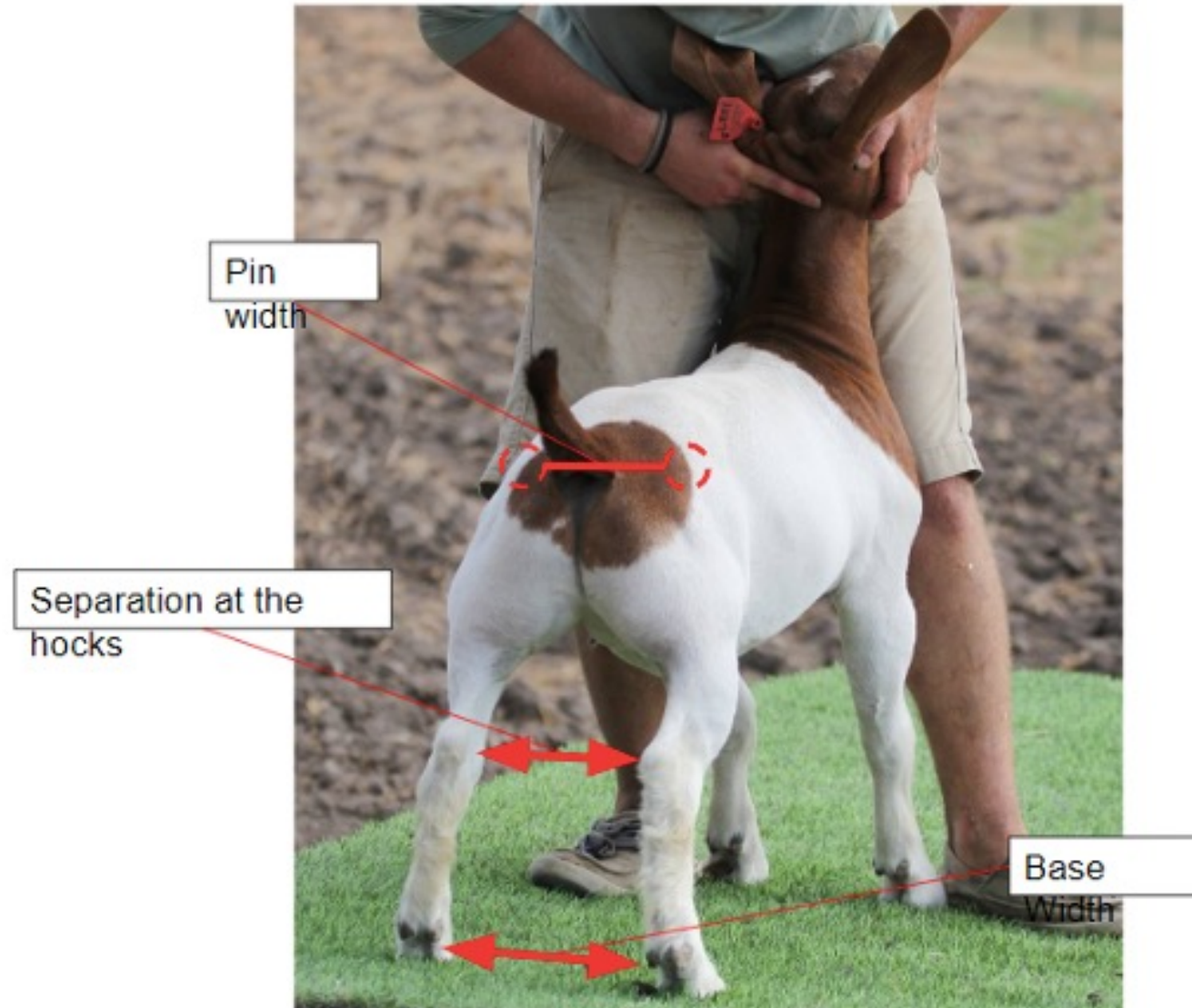
Hip/Pin width

Base width

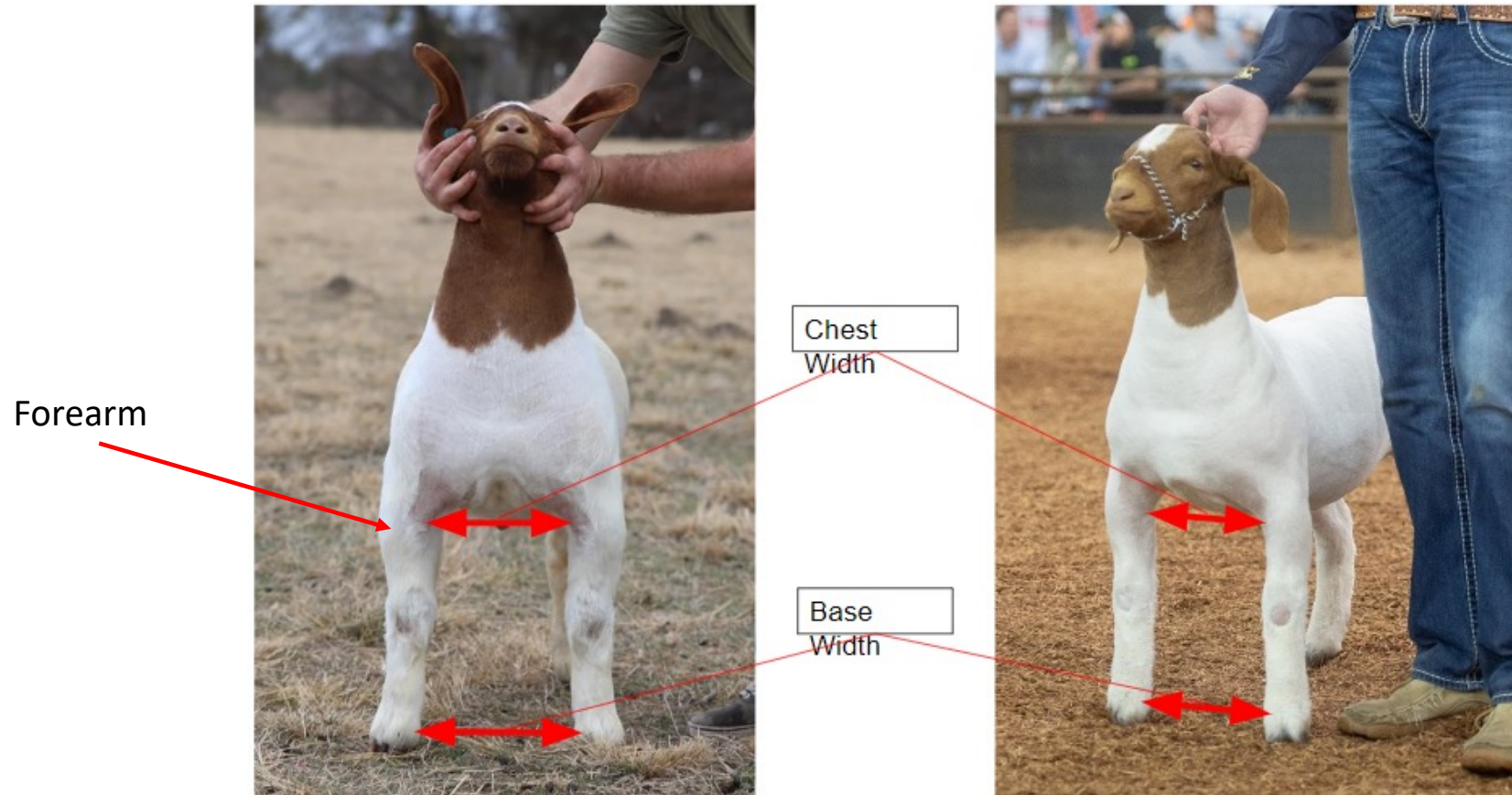
Google Images



# Rear View



# Front View



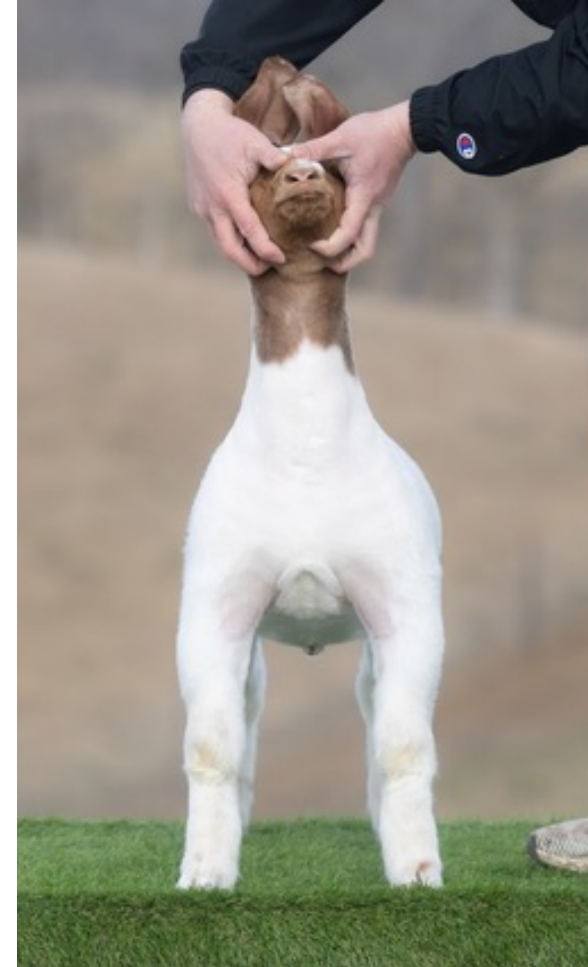
# Muscle Evaluation



Google Images



# Muscle Evaluation



# Trimness

- Fat Indicators
  - Chest/Breast Plate
  - Fore-rib
  - Final ribs
  - Over topline
  - Around dock
  - Twist
- **Behind shoulder** is the best places to evaluate



Google images



# Evaluating Trimness

## Trim Animal Top View:

- Indention
  - Behind shoulder
- “Coke-Bottle Shape”



## Over-Finished Animal Top View:

- Smooth Appearance
- Soft handling
- “Canoe Shaped”



Google Images





# Handling Quality

- Touch and tone of each market lamb or goats
- Factors:
  - Muscle expression and definition
  - Optimal degree of cover
  - Fresh in handle
- When handling, evaluators should be confirming what your eye see from the outside
  - Trimmer made vs. heavier finished
  - Wider topped vs. narrower topped
  - Square shape vs round shape



Google Images





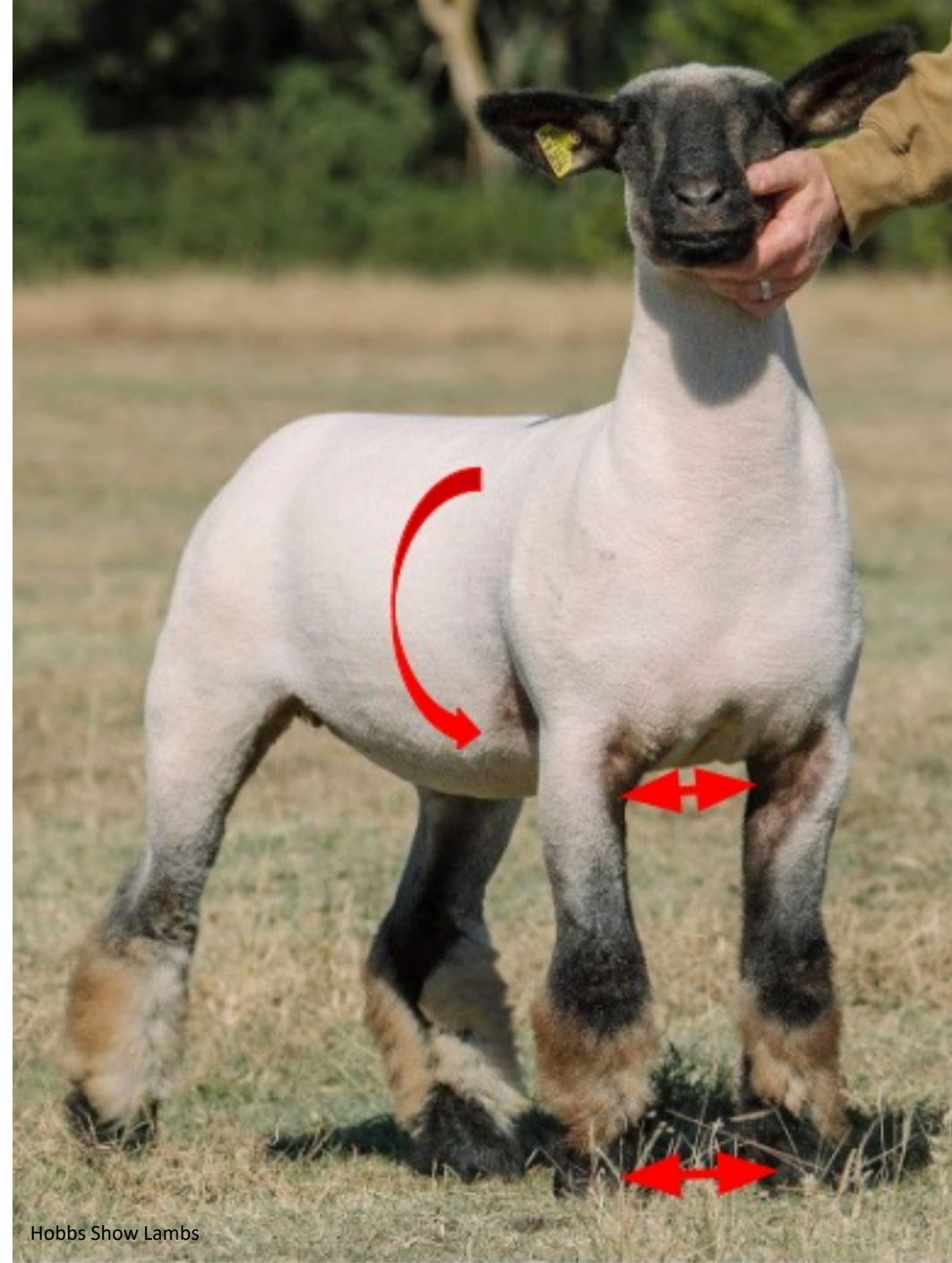
# Practicality

Blend of body and structure



# Evaluating Body

- Rib shape is **the foundation** for animals to lay muscle down their top
- Market sheep and goats body shape:
  - Bold and Round



# Body



Study how wide they are at the topside of their blades and how expansive they are in their rib design



Hummel Livestock

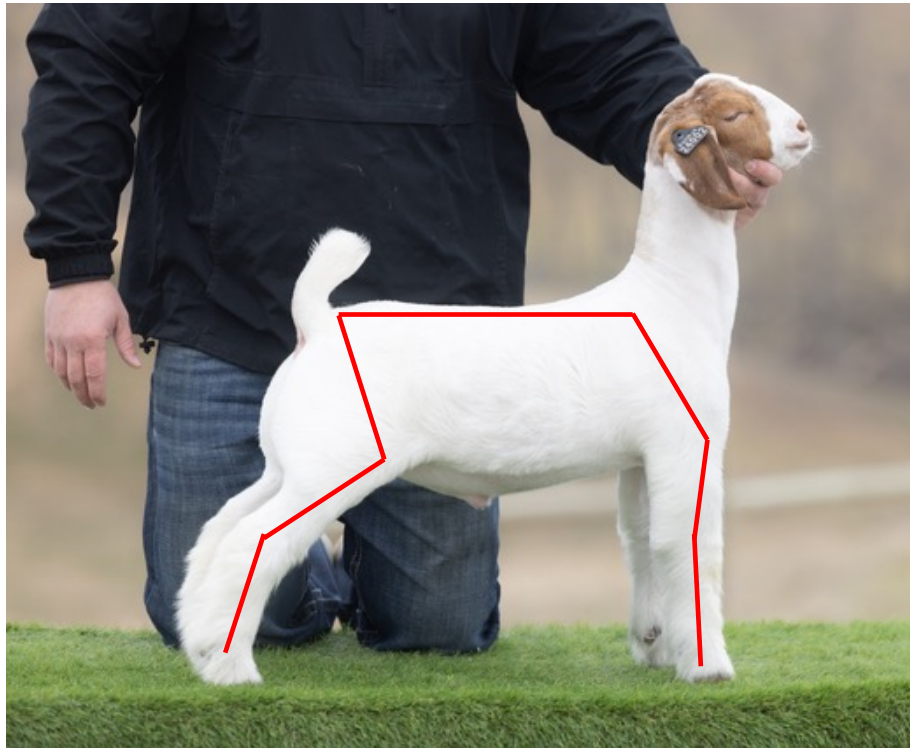


# Structure

- How are these animals organized in their skeleton?
  - Comfortable?
  - Uncomfortable?
- Factors to look for:
  - Proper angle to shoulder and knee
  - Levelness of topline and hip
  - Length of hip
  - Squareness of hock
  - Strength of pasterns
  - Appropriate set to hock



# Ideal Structure:



Ausmus Livestock



Hobbs Show Lambs



# Structure Evaluation



Google Images



# Balance/Eye Appeal





# Evaluating Balance

- Symmetry from the side
- Does everything match and blend together?
- How close are the “thirds” to matching?
  - Front 1/3 (length of neck and shoulder)
  - Mid 1/3 (length of body)
  - Rear 1/3 (length of hip)
- Bone should match the amount of mass they have up high



Pulse, Sullivan Supply



# Poor Balanced Example:



Google Images



# Evaluating Eye Appeal

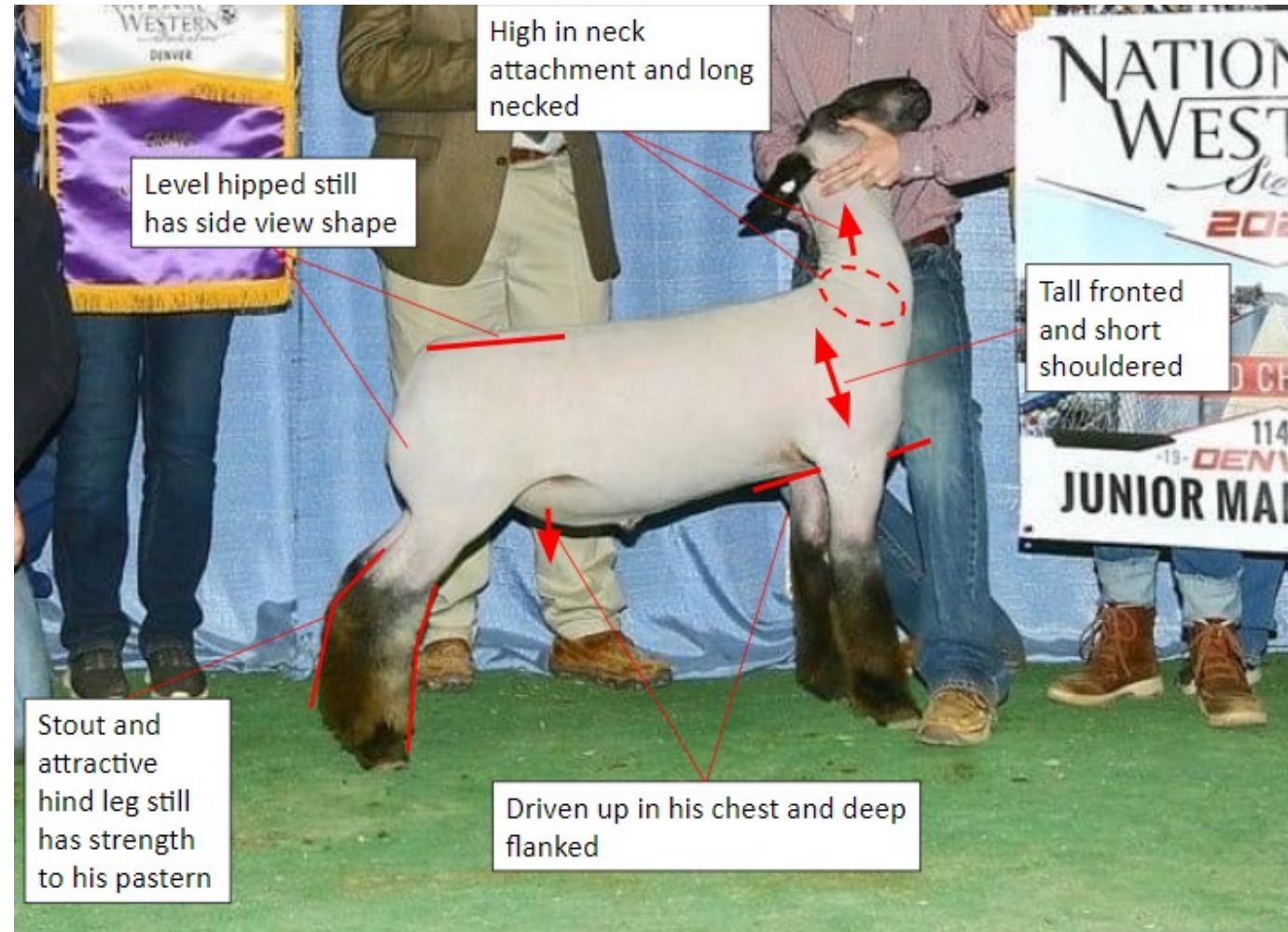
- How esthetically pleasing is that animal?
- Factors
  - Upfront
    - High neck attachment
    - Thin necked
    - Clean and shallow chested
    - Tall shouldered
  - Shallow chest and soft flank → “bottom line”
  - Length and levelness of hip
  - Stout and appropriate hindleg posture



Pulse, Sullivan Supply



# Eye Appeal



Google Images



# Eye Appeal

What components make this wether attractive from profile?



# Resources

- Google Photos
- <https://www.persiansheep.com/persian-sheep/sheep-conformation-101.aspx>

