

# Market Lamb 201 Resource for Delaware County Fair

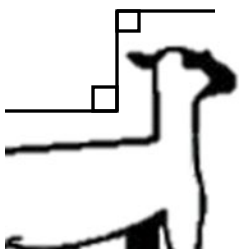
## Show Breaking Calendar and Technique

- Early to Mid – July
  - Start leading lambs outside on halters
  - Walk them around on the halter and let them get used to it (start with 5 – 10 minutes)
  - Allow them to get comfortable with you, the halter, and the walking
    - Earn their trust!
  - Start teaching the bracing process
    - Bracing: when the lamb leans into your leg, causing their muscles to feel firm
- Last week of July/First week of August
  - Walk and brace for longer periods of time to start building endurance
- Fourth week of August
  - Continue walking the animal
  - Brace the lamb for longer periods of time
    - Work them up to twenty minutes of brace time
- Last week of August – Fair time
  - Continue walking/bracing the animal for longer periods of time
  - If necessary, work on exercise plan you have put into place



## Teaching How to Brace

- While some club livestock are starting to be ‘bred’ with the “bracing gene” there is still plenty of work to be done on bracing when preparing for the fair
- Starting out
  - Before doing anything, let the lamb get comfortable with you
  - When holding the lamb’s head, you want to make sure you have complete control so that it cannot get away
  - Push the lambs head back, and put your left leg in front of its chest for it to push back on
    - You want the lamb’s head parallel with the floor, and making a 90 degree angle with its neck and the top of its shoulder (see image below)
  - Let the lamb get used to standing with you in a bracing position
- What if the lamb doesn’t push?
  - If you are struggling with getting the lamb to push/brace, there are a couple of things you can do
    - Get on the fitting stand with your lamb. While on the fitting stand, back the lamb off the back of the stand. The lamb will not feel the ground once it steps off the back, and will ultimately have the reaction to push back into you (brace!)
      - \*\*\*for safety reasons, you will need to have at least two people for this
    - If you do not have a fitting stand, you can still use the first method, just in a different manner. The same task will be accomplished if you set the lamb up on the edge of a concrete pad that has a drop, a porch, etc. Anything that has a ledge with a drop off will do the trick



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- Set your lamb up on a hill. Set them up like they should be bracing, and make sure their head is facing the top of the hill. Because the lamb's lower body is lower, they will feel like they need to go up the hill, causing them to push into you

### Showmanship Summary

- Prepping for showmanship on show day
  - Make sure your lamb is clean and ready to go
  - Make sure you are professionally presented
    - Collared shirt tucked in, long jeans, close toed shoes, belt
  - Be sure to watch the classes before you
    - Observe what the judge is looking for, and watch what the older/more experienced showman are doing
- Going into the Ring
  - Listen for your class – you don't EVER want to be late!!!
  - As you are lining up, don't fight with the other exhibitors for a spot. Be patient and calm – the judge is always watching, and your animal can sense if you get worked up.
  - Keep your eyes on the judge as you wait
- In the Ring
  - As you enter, be sure to make solid eye contact with the judge
  - Keep the animal between you and the judge as you walk and brace
  - When you pull into your spot to brace, be sure all four legs are set square, the lamb's head is high and his head/neck and neck/back are both making a 90 degree angle
  - Alternate eye contact between your lamb and the judge as you show
    - The judge may motion to pull you into a placing, so be aware

### Exercise: When, How, and What to Look For

#### When:

- When:
  - You want to start exercise depending upon the condition level of your lamb
    - If your lamb is thin, you may not work it at all, or may not work it until two – three weeks before the fair
    - If your lamb is too heavily conditioned, you will need to start exercising your lamb much sooner, probably around the beginning of August
- How:
  - Exercise helps lambs achieve the proper finish and handle by toning muscle
    - All animals are different and will require different running schedules based on condition, structure, etc.
  - There are a couple of ways you can choose to exercise your lamb, including
    - Treadmill
      - You can put your lamb on a treadmill two to three times a week
      - Time the lamb spends on the treadmill will be dependent on the amount of condition the lamb has; the more condition the lamb has, the longer it will be on the treadmill and vice versa

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- It would be ideal to have two to three people helping during this, as sometimes (especially at the beginning) the lamb will fight walking
- Running
  - Running can be as simple as walking your lamb a quarter to a half a mile from the barn and chasing them back
  - If running your lamb, be sure the area has no obstructions such as wires, rocks, etc.
- What to Look For:
  - How do you know if your lamb is thin or if it is too heavily conditioned?
    - The easiest way to tell is by looking at/handling the lamb's ribs and fore flank area
    - If your lamb is thin...
      - You can feel each of the lamb's ribs with ease, and there is little to no fat cover present on them
    - If your lamb is over-conditioned...
      - It is nearly impossible to feel the ribs on the lamb
      - When handling the lamb, it feels like your forearm in terms of fat vs. bone ratio
      - There will be lots of fat stored in the fore flank area

### Grooming and Fitting

- Shear your lamb in June or July
  - This will help promote growth of your lamb
  - Be mindful of insects – use fly spray
- Shear lamb(s) again one week prior to the fair
- Slick shear before the first Saturday of the fair, prior to weigh in
- Further grooming for show day is allowed
  - Check sheep department rules for more info