MARKETING OF LAMBS AND EWES

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Evaluate specifications of the UK lamb market.

 Explain how to select lambs for the market through regular handling and assessment of conformation and fat class.

The Lamb Market

- England produces 8 000 000 lambs each year for home and export consumption
- Export market currently stands at 22%
- Home market Supermarket (34%), Catering (27%), Butchers (10%), and Other retail (7%).
- The lamb market is worth some £343
 million

UK Sheep Trade

 Exports are predominantly to France and Belgium mainly as chilled carcases.

• The weak value of sterling has benefitted UK sheep meat exporters.

• UK imports are from New Zealand, Australia, Ireland and Argentine.



 In groups of 3, use the internet to find out the 7 key steps required for marketing lambs.

Key Steps for Marketing Lambs

- 1. Identify your market (s)
- 2. Understand what the market needs
- 3. Assess your sheep against market needs
- 4. Monitor prices
- 5. Regularly assess sheep
- 6. Market when conditions matches specification
- 7. Monitor returns

England Market

- Broadly all markets require lambs:
 - with the right weight
 - with good conformation and
 - not over fat
- Currently half the England lamb crop is failing to meet these requirements
- 59% E/U/R 2/3L
- 18% Poor Conformation
- 23% Too Fat

Carcase Classification

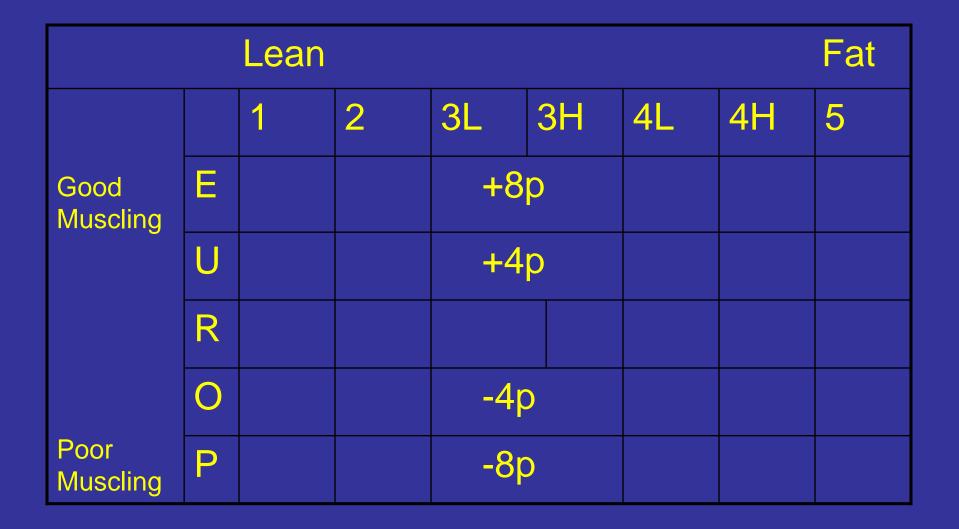
- Carcase assessment addresses conformation and fat
- Fat cover is scored on a 1-5 scale
- Conformation is assessed from E to P
- Combining scores for conformation and fat determines the markets which lambs suit best.

Activity 2

In pairs draw a chart showing the EUROP carcase grading system for lambs.

• On your chart indicate areas of highest demand and areas of low demand.

Carcase Classification



Activity 3

 In your groups, use the internet and flip chart to identify the lamb specifications for UK supermarkets, local butchers and export markets

Typical Specifications

Supermarkets
Weight: 16-21kg
Conformation: E, U, R
Fat Class: 2, 3L, 3H

NB: Most dead weight markets pay up to 21kg

Typical Specifications

Local Butcher
Weight: 16-22kg
Conformation: E, U, R, O
Fat Class: 2, 3L, 3H, 4L

Typical Specifications

Exporter

-Weight: 12-19kg -Conformation: E, U, R -Fat Class: 2, 3L

Warning!

 -Conformation P and Fat Class 4H and 5 are traded at discount prices.
 -No Demand

Activity 4 Lamb Prices Analysis

 Using the internet find out the current prices for the following lambs deadweight as of 03/05/2019. R3L, U2, E3L, O2, P2, R4H and P1.

Websites: <u>www.eblex.org.uk</u> or <u>www.fwi.co.uk</u>

Handling and Assessing Lambs

- Regular handling and weighing, flock monitoring and managing feed maximises profit
- Information gained provides valuable feedback on the progress of the lamb crop
- It allows nutrition to be adjusted and markets to be targeted
- Avoids sending stock with poor conformation or excess fat to market.

Video Activity 5

- Watch video below and list down areas you are handling on a lamb for both conformation and fat assessment.
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fehGs8LMg Z0
- 2. What are spinous processes?
- 3. What are transverse processes?

Assessing Conformation

Shoulder and Loin

- E Spinous processes undetectable, flesh creating a very convex profile, very broad shoulder area
- U Spinous processes just detectable, flesh beginning to create a convex profile
- R Spinous processes less prominent, with flesh creating a straight profile under the hand
- O Spinous processes still prominent, less concave with some evidence of flesh beginning to fill the hand
- P Very prominent spinous processes evident, very concave profile to centre of hand

Assessing Fat Class

- Dock
- 1 Individual bones very easy to detect
- 2 Individual bones easy to detect with light pressure
- 3 Moderate pressure to detect individual bones
- 4 Firm pressure to detect individual bones
- 5 Individual bones cannot be detected

Assessing Fat Class

- Loin
- 1 Very easy to fill between processes which are very prominent
- 2 Prominent spinous and transverse processes felt easily
- 3 Tips of processes rounded. Individual bones felt as corrugations with light pressure
- 4 Spinous processes felt with moderate pressure. Transverse with firm pressure
- 5 Individual processes cannot be felt.

Assessing Fat Class

- Rib
- 1 Individual ribs feel very bare and easy to detect
- 2 Individual ribs show slight cover but still easy to detect
- 3 Individual ribs have softer feel, with fat cover becoming more evident and over ribs, which are now less easy to detect
- 4 Individual ribs only detectable with firm pressure
- 5 Individual ribs undetectable, soft, rolling, spongy feel.