



BREED STANDARD GUIDELINES

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GENERAL

The purpose of the Breed Standard is to indicate the degree of excellence of the animal by means of a description and a score by points according to visual appearance and performance to aid stud-breeding selection and for the benefit of new breeders. These values are recorded to give a true reflection of the positive or negative traits of the sheep and are used for comparative analysis within a flock.

The society will approve inspectors from time to time to class Dorper sheep and enter the classing details on the registration record of the inspected animals. At the time of inspection the animals will be tagged with and approved tag by the inspector and the number recorded and forwarded to the Society. The inspection is a quality assessment on a voluntary basis.

The Dorper Sheep Breeders Society of Australia Inc. recognise that the breed is in the development stage in Australia and therefore present the following standards as guidelines to stud breeders and growers interested in the breed. The breed standard is adapted from the South African Standard of Excellence.

It is generally agreed that the main aim for the Dorper and White Dorper is to propagate the breed to a level of quality and critical mass to be able to provide sires for stud breeding, upgrading other breeds, and terminal prime lamb sires. The direction of the breed for the foreseeable future should be to increase numbers of pure stock primarily concentrating on conformation of the animal without losing the qualities of early growth weight and hardiness that have been inherent in the breed for 50 or more years.

The following score system is recommended for easy analysis;

Very good	5 points
Above average	4 points
Average	3 points
Poor or below average	2 points
Very poor with cull points	1 point

The following comprises the Breed Standard.

1. Conformation:

- Head:
Strong and long, with large eyes, widely spaced and protectively placed. Strong nose, strong well-shaped mouth with well-fitted deep jaws. Undershot or overshot jaws must be culled. *Some deviation in jaw length is permitted in South Africa. It is considered a cull fault in Australia due to the high heritability of the problem* The forehead must not be dished.
The size of the ears must be in relation to the head. A developed horn base or small horns are the ideal. Heavy horns are undesirable but permissible. The head must be covered with short, dullish black hair in the Dorper and dull, white hair in the White Dorper. The head must be dry i.e. without indications of fat localisation.
- Forequarter and neck:
The neck should be of medium length, well fleshed and broad and well coupled to the forequarters. Shoulders should be firm, broad and strong. A moderate protrusion of the brisket beyond the shoulders, moderate width and good depth are the ideal. Forelegs must be strong, straight and well placed with strong pasterns and hoofs not too widely split. Weak pasterns and bowed legs must be discriminated against according to degree. Shoulders that appear loose, a brisket that slants up too sharply with no projection beyond the shoulders, crooked legs and weak walking ability, are faulty.
- Barrel:
The ideal is a long, deep wide body, ribs well sprung, loin broad and full. The sheep must have a long straight back. A slight dip behind the shoulders is permissible.
- Hindquarter:
A long and wide rump is the ideal. The inner and outer twist to be well-fleshed and deep in adult animals. The hind legs must be strong and well-placed, with sturdy feet and strong pasterns. Faulty pasterns must be discriminated against according to degree. The hocks must be strong without a tendency to turn in or out. Sickie, bandy or perpendicular hocks are culling faults.

- Udder and sex organs:
A well-developed udder and sex organs are essential in the ewe. The scrotum of the ram should not be too long and the testicles should be of equal size and not too small. A split scrotum is undesirable.
- General appearance:
The sheep should be symmetrical and well proportioned. A calm temperament with a vigorous appearance is the ideal.

2. Size or growth rate:

A sheep with a good weight for its age is the ideal. Discrimination against extremely small or extremely big animals must be exercised. *It is recognised that the larger animals are not as able to produce during extreme conditions due to the stress of maintaining body mass. The Dorper is a medium sized sheep and very productive for its size. In Australia the bigger style of animal may suit the higher rainfall area*

3. Distribution of fat:

Too much localisation of fat on any part of the body is undesirable. An even distribution of a thin layer of fat over the carcass and between the muscle-fibres is the ideal. The sheep must be firm and muscular when handled.

4. Colour pattern:

Dorpers: A white sheep with black confined to the head and neck is the ideal. Black spots, to a limited extent on the body and legs are permissible, but an entirely white sheep or a sheep predominantly black is undesirable. Brown hair around the eyes, white teats, white under the tail and white hoofs are undesirable. *Ewes carrying excess of colour or undesirable pigmentation can be used for breeding during the development phase of the breed but rams should be downgraded to flock status.*

White Dorpers: A white sheep, fully pigmented around the eyes, under the tail, on the udder and the teats is the ideal. A limited number of other coloured spots is permissible on the ears and underline. *The White Dorper can be born with yellow or grey patches that fade with time. Pale colouring that fades out can be tolerated in ewes during the development phase of the breed but rams should be downgraded to flock status.*

5. Cover or Fleece:

The ideal is a short, loose, light covering of hair and wool with wool predominating on fore quarter and with a natural clean kemp underline. Too much wool or hair is undesirable. Exclusively wool or hair is a fault. Manes are a disqualifier. *Australian conditions indicate that a clean shedding sheep is the most desirable type for economical management and to prevent carcass downgrading due to grass seed penetration. Breeders are encouraged to select for maximum shedding of wool during Spring – Summer*

6. Type:

Type is judged according to the degree to which the sheep conforms to the general requirements of the breed. Emphasis is placed on conformation. Size and fat distribution when determining type, while colour and covering are of secondary importance.