

BARBADOS BLACKBELLY BREED STANDARD

The attributes listed below describe the Barbados Blackbelly breed and should be used to evaluate sheep considered for registration with the Barbados Blackbelly Sheep Association International (BBSAI). Although this standard describes the phenotypic attributes of the breed, there are other attributes that are not easily defined but that are most valued about the Barbados Blackbelly breed. Attributes such as prolificacy, disease resistance, parasite tolerance, non-seasonal breeding, and mothering ability contribute to the *integrity* of the breed. The BBSAI encourages breeders to include these non-phenotypic attributes when evaluating and selecting stock to include in their breeding programs.

The BBSAI does not guarantee the quality of a registered sheep. The purpose of the BBSAI registry is to enable breeders to track the pedigrees of their animals. It is the breeder's responsibility to ensure that only sheep meeting these breed standards are submitted for registration. It is also the breeder's responsibility to cull any sheep that are Not to Standard and to prevent their genetics from contaminating the general population of Barbados Blackbelly sheep.

These are the tiers used to describe each attribute:

- **Ideal:** The perfect sheep. This is the sheep we all want, the sheep we all strive to breed.
- **Acceptable:** These flaws are generally cosmetic and rarely are genetically fixed across generations. If the flaw does persist across generations, the breeder should work to eliminate it.
- **Discouraged:** These are serious flaws. The breeder should recognize that these flaws, if allowed to pervade the flock, will compromise the flock's integrity. Elimination of these flaws should be a priority.
- **Not to Standard:** Sheep with these flaws should be culled from a breeding program. These flaws are detrimental to the future of the breed.

Head

IDEAL:

- The shape of the head is oval to triangular with a typical "roman" nose.
- The head of the ram is distinctly masculine, and that of the ewe is feminine.
- The muzzle is wide and strong with firm lips. Incisor teeth must meet the dental pad.

ACCEPTABLE: A ewe's head may exhibit some less feminine coarseness, but it must still be decidedly distinct from the ram's head.

DISCOURAGED: Muzzle more narrow than ideal

NOT TO STANDARD: Overshot or undershot jaw

Ears

IDEAL:

- The ears are pointed and when alert stick out from the side of the head parallel to the ground.
- The ear length should be approximately one-half the width of the animal's skull at the widest point of the skull.
- Some variation in the size of the ears is permitted.

ACCEPTABLE: Ears pointing forward or not parallel to the ground

DISCOURAGED: Floppy adult ears, half ears or less ("elf" ears)

Eyes

IDEAL:

- The eyes are almond shaped.
- The irises can be any shade of brown or golden brown.

DISCOURAGED: Eyes of a color other than brown or golden brown

NOT TO STANDARD: Inverted eyelids, blindness

Neck

IDEAL: The neck is strong and muscular, clean cut, and without loose folds of skin.

ACCEPTABLE: Occasionally, wattles are found, but are not discriminated against.

DISCOURAGED: A thin, scrawny neck

Poll

IDEAL: Sheep of both sexes are smooth-headed with no sign of any outgrowth of the horn plate.

ACCEPTABLE: Loose scurs or scurs affixed to a ram's horn plate no longer than 3/4 in. at maturity

DISCOURAGED: Loose scurs or scurs affixed to a ram's horn plate between 3/4 in. to 1 1/2 in. at maturity

NOT TO STANDARD: Ewes with horns or scurs; rams with horns or with scurs longer than 1 1/2 in.

Feet

IDEAL: The hooves are cloven, black, and clean-edged with shiny smooth surfaces.

DISCOURAGED: White hooves or hooves with white marks

NOT TO STANDARD: Marked deviations from ideal, including but not limited to deviations that interfere with the sheep's ability to walk normally.

Body

IDEAL:

- Body capacity should be relatively large in relation to the size of the animal.
- The body should be deep and wide with well-sprung ribs.
- A mature ram's testicles should be well developed.

NOT TO STANDARD: Cryptorchidism (a condition in which one or both testes fail to descend normally) in a ram

Tail

IDEAL:

- The tail is long, and reaches to the top of the hocks.
- It is not docked.
- It follows a continuous line down from the croup without any crookedness.

ACCEPTABLE: A short tip of white on the tail is permissible

DISCOURAGED: Short tails, crooked tails

Topline

IDEAL:

- The withers are higher than and sloping into a level back.
- The loin viewed from the top should be broad and strong.
- The croup (rump) should be long and gradually sloping.

DISCOURAGED: "Saddle back" or "sway back"; short, steep croup

Forequarters

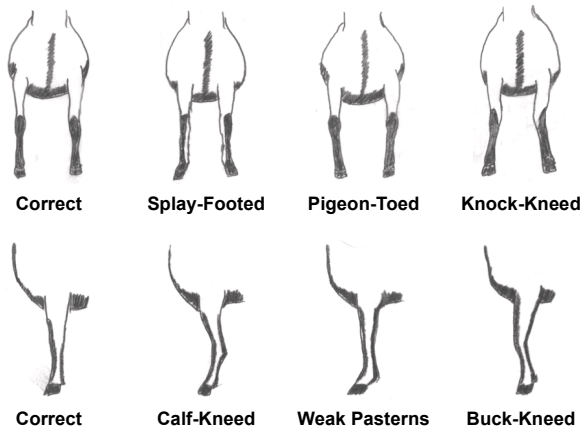
IDEAL:

- The arm and the shoulder blade are well muscled.
- The forelegs appear straight when viewed from the front and side.
- A slight tendency toward splay-footedness (toes that point outward) is not uncommon.
- The pasterns are strong and springy.

DISCOURAGED:

- Weak, bony shoulder blades that protrude from the body.
- Any minor deviations from straight legs, including such things as weak pasterns, feet that are pigeon-toed, and knees that are knock-kneed, calf-kneed, or buck-kneed.

NOT TO STANDARD: Marked deviations from ideal, including but not limited to deviations that interfere with the sheep's ability to walk normally.



Color and Marking

IDEAL:

- Body color can vary from light fawn to brown to dark red.
- Points can vary but should include a contrasting black belly extending down the back side of the rear legs and including the underside of the tail.
- The top of the nose and the lower jaw are black and may include a continuing black stripe down the front of the neck that connects with the belly.
- A wide black mark runs from the inside corner of each eye to the crown of the head and may continue downward to the mouth. These markings are called facial bars. They are sometimes more pronounced in the ram.
- There may be an additional black mark from the outside corner of the eye to the corner of the mouth.
- There is a crown of black hair at the top of the head.
- The inside of the ears is black.
- The forelegs and hind legs are black downward from the knee or hock; often the outside edge of the leg is not black.
- A ram may have a light tan "saddle" above and including the ribs

DISCOURAGED:

- Black or white markings found anywhere on the body other than those listed
- A dark facial color that obscures the black facial bars
- A coat color that is so extremely dark that a clear delineation cannot be seen between the dark body color and the black belly color

NOT TO STANDARD: Absence of a black belly or black facial bars

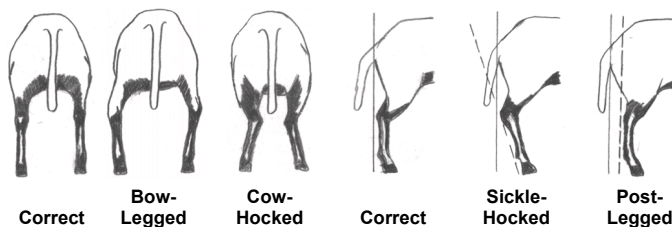
Hindquarters

IDEAL:

- The hindquarters should be muscular with a long, gradually sloping croup (rump).
- The hind legs viewed from behind should be straight.
- From the side view, a vertical line dropped from the posterior of the buttocks should hit the point of the hock and the back of the ankle and contact the ground 1 in. to 2 in. behind the heel.
- A slight tendency toward cow-hockedness is not uncommon (when viewed from behind, the 'back knee' or hock is set inward, resulting in a splayed look in the back legs).

DISCOURAGED: Bowed legs; sickle-hocked legs; and post-leggedness.

NOT TO STANDARD: Marked deviations from ideal, including but not limited to deviations that interfere with the sheep's ability to walk normally.



Coat

IDEAL:

- The coat consists of coarse hair that lies flat against the skin.
- An adult ram has a mane of coarse hair that covers the neck and downward to the chest.
- The hair coat contains sufficient lanolin to help shed water and repel ticks and other ectoparasites.
- If the sheep grows a winter undercoat of fine wool, that undercoat is completely shed every year.

ACCEPTABLE:

- A woolly "baby coat" often seen in lambs that does not shed the first summer but does shed thereafter
- A hair/wool mixture on the back of the rear legs that does not fully shed from year to year

DISCOURAGED: Small patches of wool along the topline that do not shed from year to year.

NOT TO STANDARD: A woolly coat that is not shed and that requires shearing

Size

IDEAL: Barbados Blackbelly is a slow maturing breed, and sheep do not reach ideal weight until about 2 years of age. At that time,

- rams weigh between 90 to 150 lb, with 100 to 130 lb being the average.
- ewes weigh between 70 and 120 lb, with 85 to 100 lb being the average.

ACCEPTABLE: Sheep older than 2 years who weigh more than the maximum ideal weight, providing that their weight is proportionate to the size of their body frame and they are not obese

DISCOURAGED: Sheep older than 2 years who weigh less than the minimum ideal weight



**Barbados Blackbelly
Sheep Association
International**