

Following is a short synopsis of the rationale for the Pen of 3 Carcass Competition ranking for the 2021 Wisconsin Sheep and Wool Festival.

Our approach to ranking lamb carcasses in a pen competition closely mirrors the same criteria where each carcass is evaluated separately on its own merits. In a pen competition - uniformity, consistency, and marketability of the entire pen play a substantial role.

1st Place -Pen 3 was a uniform pen that excelled in carcass composition. All three carcasses were quite acceptable in terms of fat cover from a pure carcass evaluation perspective. Ribeye areas of 3 inches and over excelled the contest; one carcass had 4.0 square inches. The pen had a high resulting projected % retail yield of 49.76% and a high average carcass index of 93.43.

2nd Place - Pen 1 was a very uniform set of carcasses, although more fat thickness and body wall combined with less ribeye area makes this a nice pen to finish second. The group was nicely muscled with ribeyes of just shy of 3 inches. Fat covers of .2 inches and slightly more are quite acceptable industry wide. Overall, a very desirable set, just lower in overall carcass index and retail yield.

3rd Place – Pen 2 displayed the highest live and subsequent carcass weight, contributing to a lower retail yield and carcass index. Albeit weights that are likely more industry acceptable. This pen did have an advantage in ribeye area over the 2nd place pen; however, it had on average more fat thickness and a high body wall thickness to keep those retail yield formulas low. This pen's advantage is the uniformity of the three lambs in terms of fat thickness compared to the 4th place pen.

4th Place – Pen 4 was uniform in the muscling area with similar ribeye areas. However, averaging with the lowest ribeye and leg conformation scores. Two lambs were on the light side of carcass weight to compliment the pen, and as a group, these lambs were relatively average concerning muscling.

In pure carcass shows, those of us engaged in carcass evaluation often let the numbers speak primarily for themselves. Projected % retail yield and carcass index are our primary tools as they utilize fat cover, ribeye area, carcass weight, and leg score in their determination. We still tend to look at market conditions relative to desired weight ranges and the acceptability of fat cover (too little is more often a problem than too much).