

Fitting and Showing Your Lamb

What do handlers mean when they talk about “fitting a lamb”?

Fitting includes all of the grooming and handling you do with your lamb before taking it to a show or a fair. You will need to train your lamb to stand for grooming so that you can wash, shear, and clip it, and trim its hooves.

How early should you start working with a lamb? You will need to let your lamb get used to you over the course of several weeks. At first, just visit the lamb a few times a day and work your way up to petting the lamb. Be gentle. After about two weeks of being near and petting the lamb, you can start to pat rather than pet, and get the lamb used to you running your hands up and down its legs and around its body .

You can introduce a halter to the lamb so that it gets used to wearing the halter and once it is familiar with a halter then you can start to teach it to being led around. Other aspects of training are described in the 4-H reference guides. This reference guide assumes that your lamb is already halter broken and that it will stand still and is willingly to be led.

What Equipment Do You Need?

A trimming stand is very useful but not absolutely necessary. If your lamb is used to being tied and standing still you can restrain the lamb in a halter. The lamb’s head should be held at the most desirable height or position for showing when you are doing the trimming.

A small tool box can be used as a tack box or bag to keep your equipment in. This keeps all tools in one place so that you can find them each time you work with your lamb. When you take your lamb to a fair or show grounds, your display area will look tidier because your tools will be contained in the box or bag. It is very important that you have all of your show equipment clean and ready prior to the day the show starts.

Lamb Terms

Setting the Lamb Up: When you take your lamb in front of a judge at the show or fair, the judge will expect the lamb to stand in a show position. This is called setting the lamb up.

Bracing the Lamb: Training your lamb to hold it’s back stiffly, or braced when it is asked to do so. Bracing helps keep the lamb’s back line straight, not humped up.

Items for Your Tack Box or Bag

1. lamb halter
2. hoof trimmers (club may have one)
3. wool card
4. curry comb or wool rake
5. rags and scraps of cloth used to clean shears or dry the wool
6. brush
7. trimming shears
8. blanket (optional)
9. bucket
10. electric shears (optional)
11. whetstone (optional)

