

## Showmanship

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Showmanship works about the same way a regular lamb show does. The major difference between the two? In a lamb show your lamb is judged. In showmanship you are judged on how well you show your lamb.

**Showmanship starts before you even enter the show ring.** If you aren't in the first class to be judged, take advantage of it. Look at the show ring. Are there any low or unleveled spots? Are there some places that have shadows blocking the light? If there are, take note of it because this can be useful once you are in the show ring. Unleveled ground may make your lamb awkward looking when it's set up, something you don't want. Try to get your lamb set up right underneath a light. It's not always possible, but a lamb with direct light on it is easier seen. Another thing you should look for before entering the show ring is the judge. Decide which person is actually the judge and which people are just volunteers or helpers. Some people go into the show ring looking *for* the judge instead of looking *at* the judge. You should also pay attention to the previous lamb classes and how they are judged. See what direction the judge makes the lambs walk in, where the lambs are to be set up first, and so on. Most judges will finish a class by commenting on the exhibitors. Listen to what the judge has to say. Try to avoid things he/she dislikes about exhibitors and try to accomplish what the judge enjoys about the exhibitors.

**Make a good first impression.** When you are "on deck" or in the next class, think about everything you need to avoid and accomplish. When you enter the ring, this will be the judge's first impression of your showing style.

**Make sure your lamb is in between you and the judge at all times.** If you are the first of your class to enter the show ring watch the judge and listen to where he wants you to lead your lamb. If you aren't at the beginning of the line, follow where the other exhibitors lead their lambs. Don't follow too far behind the person in front of you and don't get too close either. You don't want your lamb to be crowded out because the judge won't be able to see your lamb. Always leave a little extra space than normal between you and the person in front of you. This way if the person behind you gets too close to your lamb, you can get a little closer to the lamb in front of you, but still have plenty of room. When leading your lamb, place one hand under its chin near the jaw line and your other hand on the back of your lamb's head, right below the ears. If your lamb will not walk when you are leading it, take your hand off of its head and tap or squeeze the lamb's dock. As soon as your lamb is where it needs to be, get its legs set and in place as soon as possible.

**Always set the back legs up first.** If your lamb's back has a tendency to sag, you can scratch its belly in order for it to raise its back. If your lamb's back has a hump in it, you can stretch its back legs out a little farther. If your lamb just

won't set its feet up right, walk it around in a circle and return to the same spot and begin setting the legs again. The whole time you are leading your lamb and then setting the feet, **keep one eye on the judge and one eye on the lamb.** This sounds impossible, but you should look at the judge, then glance at your lamb, look at the judge, then glance at your lamb, and so on. Don't pay more attention to the judge than you do to your lamb and don't pay more attention to your lamb than you do to the judge. The judge and your lamb require equal attention from you. Once your lamb's legs are in the right positions keep your lamb in a brace and hold its head up high. Your lamb's neck should be perpendicular to its back and its head should be parallel with its back. **Keep your lamb in a brace the whole time.** Bracing is when your lamb pushes into your body. This tightens the muscles on the lamb for the judge to feel. Don't dangle your lamb in the air. The only time that you need to stop bracing your lamb is when you are leading it, or when the judge comes around to look at the front of your lamb. When the judge looks at the front of your lamb, don't stand against your lamb. Stand beside your lamb, about a step away from touching it. Hold its head up and watch the judge. Once the judge moves on to looking at the next lamb, go back to bracing your lamb. When the judge begins feeling the lambs, you will need to get your lamb to brace as hard as it can in order to show just how much muscling your lamb has. Remember, some judges will ask you questions about lambs while you are in the show ring. Be prepared to answer these types of questions beforehand.

The most important thing to remember when showing in showmanship is to **have the right attitude.** Be confident that you are showing your lamb well and to the best of your ability. If your lamb is stubborn or gets away from you, don't give up. Keep trying and keep your cool. If you win, you have the right to be happy about it, but don't shove it in other people's faces. Thank the judge and shake his/her hand. If you lose remember what you learned to make your next show worthwhile and don't forget to congratulate the winner. **Even if you placed dead last in your class, if you tried your very best you are a winner. Remember that winning builds confidence and losing builds character.**