**Charollais Breed Specification**

**Breed Description**

This breed standard should be used by breeders to make their selection of breeding stock. Judges should also apply this standard in their assessment of animals at shows. Changes have been made in the description of head colour to allow for regional variations and breeder preference.

**General**

The Charollais breed is a terminal sire breed so emphasis should be placed on its excellent fleshing qualities and growth. The purpose of the breed is to breed rams for crossing with commercial ewes to produce quality meat lambs for slaughter. Easy lambing is an important trait associated with the breed, so is skeletal structure to ensure this is essential. The fineness of bone that the breed is renowned for also contributes to the higher killing out percentage of their progeny. Selection and assessment of the breed falls into two categories; structural correctness and breed characteristics.

**Structural Correctness**

**Teeth**

Teeth should ideally be short, straight and directly onto the pad. Deviations away from this optimum either back, forward or splayed are undesirable.

Feet and Pasterns

Feet should be neat and balanced, cleats should not be open nor misshaped. Pasterns should be short, straight and upright.

**Shoulders and Topline**

Shoulders should be well fleshed and level. They should not be narrow and pointed nor too heavy and coarse. The breed should not carry excessive fat over the shoulder. The topline should be strong and level with good length.

**Front Legs**

Straight, balanced legs are most desirable; neither too close nor too wide apart. They should be a good colour. Bone should neither be too fine or heavy. Soundness of movement is important.

**Back Legs**

Legs should be set well apart but not extreme. There should be good definition of hock; not over bent or too straight. Again, bone should neither be too fine or heavy. Good balanced mobility is important.

**Testicles**

Rams must have two adequately sized testicles of approximately the same size and normal consistency.

**Udder**

Ewes should have no hardness, lumps or malformation in the udder.

**Breed Characteristics**

**Loin**

This should be long, wide and deep. The eye muscle should be full. Animals should not be over fat across the loin.

**Gigot**

The gigot should be thick, deep and full. The rump should be thick and wide. Narrow, sloping rumps are undesirable.

**Growth**

Growth is important in the breed, therefore well grown sheep are of merit. However, sheep that are just tall and without good fleshing qualities are not of merit. Big is only beautiful if accompanied with good loin and gigot.

**Head**

A good Charollais head is full of character, alert and without wool. The skin colour is pink with a varying amount of creamy, sandy or white coloured hair. The varying amount of hair gives animals within the breed a difference in appearance. A distinctive feature of the breed is a white flash above each eye. Regional / breeder preferences as to the amount and colour of head hair are acceptable. Heads should not be too small in the muzzle and should be broad between the eyes. Females should have a kind head and rams a stronger masculine head. (Please note that heads should not be too wide – Charollais rams are renowned for their easy lambing, a feature which we must retain).

**Fleece**

Charollais sheep should have a good quality fleece; dense but not too long nor open. It should be complete over the body without breaks but not extending down the legs or over the head.