



SHEEP BREEDERS ROUND TABLE 2013

Transforming data into profit

BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 1st–3rd NOVEMBER 2013

At Eastwood Hall, Mansfield Road, Eastwood,
Nottingham, NG16 3SS

Chairman - Jonathan Barber Treasurer - Chris Lloyd Secretary - Liz Genever

Committee - Sam Boon, Huw Jones, Jo Pugh, Siôn Aron Jones

Friday 1st November - Lawrence Room

12.00 Lunch

12.30 Registration desk opens & check in available

14.00 **Quick Signet Update – Samuel Boon**

This session will provide an update of Signet activity

14.15 **Where next for terminal sire evaluations?**

This session will allow feedback to be gathered on whether breeders and commercial producers would like rams to be analysed on an across breed basis.

- Welcome - Kim Matthews, EBLEX
- An across breed evaluation for terminal sires – Samuel Boon, Signet
- Technical issues - Kirsty Moore, SRUC
- Lessons from UK Dairy evaluations – Marco Winters, DairyCo

16.00 Tea and coffee

Written questions to be submitted

16.30 **Across Breed EBVS - Interactive session**
led by Kim Matthews

- What questions should we ask?
- SWOT analysis for the UK
- Next steps and Vote

17.15 **International sheep session - Focus on Sweden**

The Swedish sheep industry – including an update on Sweden's new sheep breeding programme - Jenny Strömne.

An overview of the challenges and opportunities for sheep farmers in Sweden – Tomas Olsson

20.00 **Drinks Reception – sponsored by EBLEX, HCC and QMS**



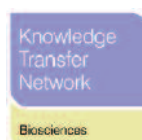
20.30 **Conference Dinner**

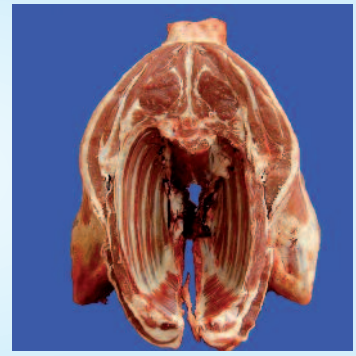
The After Dinner Speaker will be Martin Redfern, National Head of Agriculture at Barclays

For further information on Sheep Breeders Round Table

Please contact

Karen Morris on 0247 647 8828 or karen.morris@eblex.ahdb.org.uk





Saturday 2nd November - Lawrence Room

9.00 Registration

9.15 **Jonathan Barber** – Chairman's Welcome

9.20 **1: Looking to the future**

Chaired by Phil Stocker, NSA

9.25 **Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the Year 2013**

Profitability and sustainability for the next generation

Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the Year competition identifies sheep producers who are striving for excellence. This year's winner will be discussing why they won and how the experience may help their business.

9.45 **Paul Heyhoe**, *Senior Analyst, Market Intelligence, AHDB, Stoneleigh.*
paul.heyhoe@ahdb.org.uk

The Outlook for the Sheep Sector – what do the numbers tell us?

Lamb prices have been volatile for the last few years, and Paul will discuss the factors that have been at play. He will also look at the impact of Spring 2013 on ewe and lamb numbers.

10.05 **Mark Needham**, *Agriculture Team, Coleg Sir Gar, Carmarthenshire.*
mark.needham@colegsirgar.ac.uk

How to engage young people with sheep farming

Mark will talk about how he is encouraging students into sheep farming, and the importance of new information and research for engagement. He will discuss the techniques and messages, eg no trim policy, that should be taught to students.

10.25 Discussion

10.45 Tea and coffee

11.15 **2: From overseas**

Chaired by Huw Jones, Bioscience KTN

11.20 **John McEwan**, *Senior Scientist, Animal Genomics, AgResearch Invermay.*
john.mcewan@agresearch.co.nz

Session sponsored by



The future of sheep breeding from a New Zealand perspective

Sheep breeding in New Zealand is evolving as technology develops and industry objectives alter. Three themes will be explored in John's talk; firstly how can genomic selection and other advances in sheep be implemented in an increasingly multi-breed composite population. Secondly, how shifts in trait emphasis will be needed as the industry moves increasingly into high value meat production from maternal ewes grazing predominantly hill country pasture while reducing labour costs. Finally, the implication of recent research results on the genetics of low methane emitting sheep and the research into reducing the environmental footprint of sheep farming.

12.15 Discussion

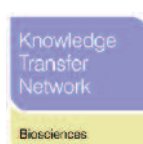
12.30 Lunch & opportunity to look at the posters

13.45 **3: The debate – Is genomics cost effective for the UK sheep industry?**

Chaired by Chris Lloyd, EBLEX

13.50 **Mike Coffey**, *Animal Breeding and Genomics /EGENES, SRUC.*
mike.coffey@sruc.ac.uk

For the motion - Genomic selection is an accurate and cost effective way to enhance rates of genetic gain – the UK needs to act now!





13.55 **Geoff Pollott**, *Bioinformatics and Genetics, Royal Veterinary College, London.*
gpollott@rvc.ac.uk

Against the motion - The cost benefit of using genomics in sheep is very different to the dairy industry.

14.00 **Rob Hodgkins (N. Sch)**, *Sheep Breeder, Lock Farm, Pulborough, West Sussex.*
locksfarm@googlemail.com

For the motion - We can use genomic selection technology to advance our ewes.

14.05 **Will Haresign**, *Director of Teaching and Learning, University of Aberystwyth*
wih@aber.ac.uk

Against the motion – Genomic selection is not a cost-effective technique for adoption by the UK sheep industry.

14.10 Discussion

15.10 Tea and coffee

15.40 **4: Collecting and using data**
Chaired by Kate Phillips, ADAS

15.45 **Matt Blyth**, *Sheep Producer, Woolbeding Farm, Midhurst, West Sussex.*
flockmanager@aol.com
With **Lesley Stubbings**, *LSSC, Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire.*
lesley@lssc.fsnet.co.uk

Driving the business on with figures

Matt will explain what data he collects and how he uses the results. Lesley will illustrate how she is using Matt's data plus others to answer questions she has been asking for years.

They will also discuss what they need to help them make better use of the information.

16.15 **Ronald Annett**, *Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Hillsborough.*
Ronald.Annett@afbini.gov.uk

Developing a sustainable supply chain

Ronald led the project funded by Marks and Spencer Ltd to investigate the merits of using Highlander and Primera genetics in UK sheep flocks. He will discuss the findings and what it could mean for the industry.

16.45 **Keith Davis**, *Daniels Farm, Blakeney, Gloucestershire.*
k.y_dav15@tiscali.co.uk

Lessons from the dairy sector

Keith is a dairy farmer from Gloucestershire and a DairyCo board member. He is aiming to make the most of the data he collects. He will provide some background to his system, what he collects, and how he uses it to change his management.

17.15 Discussion

17.30 **Poster Session**

Authors will briefly introduce their posters in the Lawrence Room and will then be standing by their poster.

19.15 **Wine Reception**
Sponsored by SRUC



20.00 **Dinner**

Featuring the prize giving for the photo competition, and a quiz prepared by the committee.





Sunday 3rd November - Lawrence Room

9.20 **5: What is research yielding?**

Chaired by Siôn Aron Jones, HCC

9.25 **Geoff Pollott**, *Bioinformatics and Genetics, Royal Veterinary College, London.*

gpollott@rvc.ac.uk

With **Poppy Frater**, *Beef and Sheep Scientist, EBLEX,*
poppy.frater@eblex.ahdb.org.uk

Sheep Breeds Survey

EBLEX and HCC sent out the sheep breeds survey at the end of 2012. As it is the fifth one since the mid-1970s, Geoff will discuss the trends in sheep breeds over that time. Poppy will discuss the main results of the recent survey with particular reference to changes in the ranking of breeds.

9.45 **Jo Conington**, *Livestock Geneticist, SRUC*
joanne.conington@sruc.ac.uk

The genetics of lamb survival

Jo will discuss research on the value of including aspects of lamb survival into sheep breeding programmes, what practical implications this might have for both recording lamb survival and suggest how a new approach to managing different vulnerable groups of sheep will have on both survival and growth.

10.05 **Ben Strugnell**, *Vet, AHVLA Thirsk, North Yorkshire.*

Ben.Strugnell@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk

With **Fiona Lovatt**, *Flock Health Ltd, Barnard Castle, Co.Durham.*

fiona@flockhealth.co.uk

What can dead sheep tell us?

Ben and Fiona have been running an EBLEX project looking to see what information can be gathered from ewes at a fallen stock centre in the North East. They will discuss the findings of the project, and how the approach has considerable scope to benefit the industry by providing prompt and cost-effective diagnosis of important diseases.

10.25 Discussion

10.40 Tea and coffee

11.10 **6: What do we need to look out for?**

Chaired by Richard Oates, QMS and Scottish Sheep Strategy

11.15 **Clare Phythian**, *Sheep Vet, University of Bristol.*
c.j.phythian@bristol.ac.uk

Welfare outcomes

Clare will be discussing the possible implications for the industry on the introduction of welfare outcomes to assurance schemes. They are already being used in the poultry, pig and dairy industries.

11.40 **George Fell**, *Sheep Breeder, Thorganby*
georgefell@meatlinc.co.uk

With **Lutz Bunger**, *Geneticist, SRUC*

lutz.bunger@sruc.ac.uk

Thinking about breeding differently

George and Lutz will be discussing their Technology Strategy Board (TSB)-funded project studying the performance of cross bred Meatlinc sheep. Texel and Charollais sires have been selected on the "590 principle" - Top 5% EBVs and 90%+ accuracy values. Progeny will be monitored to see how selective backcrossing could develop a new composite breeding line.

12.05 **Julie Finch**, *Operations Director, Innovis.*
Julie@innovis-aber.org.uk

Incorporating meat quality into breeding programmes

Many factors influence lamb meat quality and eating quality. This project has examined the impact of selecting sires based on muscle density (as measured by CT scanning) on the eating quality and nutritional composition of the resulting slaughter lambs.

12.30 Discussion

12.50 **Jonathan Barber**

Chairman's Closing Remarks followed by lunch