Sheep Breeders Round Table
Online conference
Monday 15th - Friday 19th November 2021

Sheep Breeders Round Table is pleased to present its first ever online event, proudly supported by AHDB.

Sheep Breeders Round Table is in association with Agrisearch, AHDB, HCC, QMS and NSA.

Registration for each session is via GoToWebinar – follow the links provided.

Programme

Monday 15th November 12.00 – 13.30

Conference will open with a welcome from Charles Sercombe, SBRT Chairman

Host: AHDB   **Chairman**: Emma Steele and Leah Shanks, AHDB

Back to basics: A practical guide on why and how to use EBVs within your commercial flock

Register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6134334115062137099

Participate in a back-to-basics discussion on why estimated breeding values (EBVs) are relevant to every commercial sheep breeding business.

Dewi Jones, Innovis, will shed light on how sheep end up with figures (EBVs) and how to interpret them. Dewi will be accompanied by two commercial sheep farmers, one with a terminal sire focus and one with a maternal breeding focus, both who use EBVs in their businesses. Together they will explain the benefits they see on-farm and give a really practical guide on how they incorporate recorded genetics into their flocks.

This will be an interactive session with opportunity to put questions to the panel. Confused by EBVs? Don't know where to start? Don't know what they mean? Think they are only relevant for pedigree breeders? Then this is a session for you!

Monday 15th November 19.00 – 21.00

Host: AHDB   **Chairman:** Prof Mike Coffey, Professor of Livestock Informatics

Breeding more efficient ewes

Register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3535897867801186572

Session 1: Multi-breed evaluation for maternal breeds
Samuel Boon, AHDB, will be talking about recent research and the planned launch of a new, multi-breed evaluation for maternal breeds. The new model will include updated breeding values for parasite resistance and new breeding values for traits like lamb survival, longevity, mature weight and body condition score in an approach that seeks to optimise performance, as well as reducing the carbon footprint of the national flock.

George Cullimore has a Signet Recorded Lleyn flock located near Bath. George will talk about the opportunities that exist to breed for parasite resistance and the opportunities this new analysis provides for his business.

Session 2: Enhancing maternal performance – New Zealand
Sharon McIntyre, Genetic Evaluation Technical Manager for Beef and Lamb New Zealand, works closely with SIL (the sheep recording service in NZ) in the creation and delivery of new technical services. She will talk about the latest developments in enhancing maternal performance in NZ, including current thinking with regard to ewe mature size and longevity.

Tuesday 16th November 19.00 – 21.00

Host: Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC)   **Chairman:** John Richards and Nia Davies, HCC

Innovative technology to support the sheep sector

Register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1892268721764662284

Session 1: Hill Ram Scheme – Adding value to the hill flock
The Hill Ram Scheme brings the latest technology to hill flocks in Wales with the aim of strengthening the Welsh sheep sector through long-term genetic improvement. This is achieved by utilising DNA parentage technology to understand their flock's genetic performance – allowing farmers to improve their flocks and meet market requirements with little to no change to their extensive systems and also creating a critical mass of performance-recorded hill flocks within Wales' stratified sheep system. Join Janet Roden, sheep geneticist, together with a HCC Hill Ram Scheme farmer to discuss how performance recording can add value to the hill flock.

Session 2: Maternal trait development using genomic data
John McEwan, is a principal scientist at AgResearch in New Zealand, specialising in sheep genomics. He will join us to discuss how the use of genomic data, through DNA analysis, can improve maternal traits in the Southern Hemisphere and how this can be applied to the UK sheep industry.

Wednesday 17th November 19.00 – 21.00

Host: Quality Meat Scotland (QMS)   **Chairman:** Bruce McConachie and Beth Alexander, QMS

Terminal sire breeding and new ways to sell stock

Register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6610804180668013580

Session 1: Terminal sire breeding and the role of CT scanning
Selecting terminal sire traits in breeding sheep is no easy task. Computed Tomography (CT) scanning is one tool to help inform decisions. Scanning using CT is a more accurate method for identifying characteristics which cannot be measured by ultrasound and allows, among other things, better identification of the best animals in a flock for breeding. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) runs a CT scanning service for sheep, and Nicola Lambe from SRUC will be joined by two breeders utilising this service to discuss how it is beneficial to their operation.

Session 2: Marketing of sheep during Covid and beyond
Covid-19 has forced us to adapt many elements of our day-to-day lives, and the 2020 tup sale season was one like no other, with many sales taking place online. QMS will be joined by two farmers who have adapted to on-farm marketing of sheep.

Thursday 18th November 19.00 – 21.00

Host: AgriSearch

Chairman: Jason Rankin, AgriSearch, and Edward Adamson, AgriSearch Sheep Advisory Committee

Future proofing your sheep business

Register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7065388467079066380

This session will cover four distinct areas.
- **RamCompare feed efficiency study -** Naomi Rutherford will explain the results of the feed efficiency trials conducted at Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Hillsborough as part of the RamCompare NI project.
- **Lessons from 15 years of on-farm maternal sheep breeding studies -** Aurélie Aubrey, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), will provide an overview of long-term breeding studies conducted on commercial sheep farms across Northern Ireland.
- **Targeted Selective Treatment (TST) of anthelmintics –** Prof. Eric Morgan from Queen's University will be joined by John Martin, project sheep farmer, to explain the new European Innovation Partnership (EIP) project and provide a summary of the first year experience of implementing TST practices on farm and its impact.
- **Accelerating Ruminant Carbon Zero (ARCZero)** – John Gilliland (Devenish, Group Lead) will be joined by Roger Bell, project sheep farmer, to discuss the initial findings of a European Innovation Partnership (EIP) project aimed at accelerating livestock's pathway to net carbon zero involving a group of seven farmers across Northern Ireland.

Friday 19th November 12.00 – 13.30

Host: National Sheep Association (NSA)   **Chairman:** Dan Phipps, NSA Chairman

Breeding sheep for the future – genetics to meet the requirements of farmers, society and policymakers

Register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5244514748110071564

Session 1: A view from overseas
Denis Gautier, Institut de l'Élevage, France, will look at the role of innovative technology to progress genetics. He will explain how 'The Digital Farm' evaluates innovative technology for breeders and commercial sheep farmers.

Session 2: The UK agenda - Can genetics keep everyone happy?
Phil Stocker, NSA Chief Executive, will provide an overview on breeding for meat, wool and milk, environmental targets and societal expectations around a managed rural environment. his is followed by a facilitated discussion led by Dan Phipps, NSA Chairman, involving sheep breeders from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Summary of the week / closing comments from Charles Sercombe, SBRT Chairman