Friday 17th November – Lawrence Room

12.00 Lunch

12.30 Registration desk opens, and check-in available

14.00 Welcome to Friday’s session – Kim Matthews, AHDB

14.05 Signet Update – Samuel Boon
An update of Signet Breeding Services activity in 2016 and 2017, including an update of the terminal sire breeds’ combined breed analysis (CBA).

14.45 Levy boards’ plans for promoting sheep genetics
Updates from AHDB (Katie Thorley), HCC (Gwawr Parry), QMS (Emily Grant) and AgriSearch (Elizabeth Earle).

15.15 RamCompare results – Liz Genever, Bridget Lloyd and Samuel Boon
A summary of the project and what has been achieved. Plus an introduction to the presentation of the results. The results will be available at the coffee break.

15.45 Coffee Break

16.25 Questions on RamCompare – chaired by Kim Matthews, AHDB
The panel will consist of Samuel Boon, Liz Genever and Bridget Lloyd (AHDB), Fiona Lovatt (the Evidence Group), John Brocklehurst (Sainsbury’s) and Abbygail Moran (EGENES).

17.00 International sheep session – Focus on Iceland
Eyjólfur Ingvi Bjarnason and Eyþór Einarsson, sheep production consultants, Icelandic Agricultural Advisory Centre.

With Emma Eyþórsdóttir, Associate Professor, The Agricultural University of Iceland.
eyjolfur@rml.is, ee@rml.is and emma@lbhi.is

There are around 500,000 sheep in Iceland. Eyjólfur and Eyþór will be providing background to their industry and the recent and current activity that has been targeting genetic improvement.

20.00 Drinks Reception – sponsored by AgriSearch, AHDB, HCC and QMS

20.30 Conference Dinner
The After Dinner Speaker will be Peter Hardwick (AHDB) – What does Brexit really mean for the sheep industry?
Saturday 18th November – Lawrence Room

8.45 Registration

9.00 Jonathan Barber
Chairman’s Welcome

9.10 1: Improving genetic gain – terminal traits
Chaired by Kim Matthews, AHDB

9.20 Mike Coffey, Professor of Livestock Informatics
mike.coffey@sruc.ac.uk
With Nicola Lambe, sheep geneticist,
SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian
nicola.lambe@sruc.ac.uk

New carcase traits in genetic evaluations
Mike will be discussing the commercial benefits of RamCompare and what could be learnt from the beef industry in terms of industry-derived data.
Nicola will be discussing the new scanning recommendations and the new computed tomography (CT) derived traits for rams.

9.55 Nóirín McHugh, Research Officer - Beef and Sheep Genetics, Teagasc Moorepark, Co. Cork
noirin.mchugh@teagasc.ie

How to accelerate rate of gain
Nóirín will be highlighting the work that is being done by Sheep Ireland to increase the genetic potential of Irish rams. She will discuss the project that is comparing the performance of Suffolk and Texel rams coming from New Zealand and Ireland. She will explain how they are using genomics to develop their evaluations.

10.25 Discussion

10.45 Coffee break

11.15 2: How to encourage more people to eat lamb
Chaired by Phil Stocker, NSA

11.20 Rizvan Khalid, Senior director, Euro Quality Lambs Ltd, Shropshire
rizvan@euroqualitylambs.co.uk

The potential of halal for the UK sheep industry
Muslims consume approximately 20% of all the sheep meat sold in England. Rizvan will be discussing the halal sheepmeat market and future opportunities, including how consumer demands are changing.

11.45 Ed Smith, research and development project manager, Texel Sheep Society,
Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
edsmith@texel.co.uk
With Neil Clelland, livestock geneticist,
SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian
neil.clelland@sruc.ac.uk

Genetic solutions to improve meat quality
SRUC, Texel Sheep Society, ABP and Morrisons have been working together to understand the components of meat quality in lambs and whether genetic solutions are available. Neil and Ed will be discussing the project and what it will mean for the sheep industry.

12.10 Rachel Lumley, Cumbria
r_lumley@hotmail.com, @rachellumley

Why increased consumer awareness and understanding of the sheep industry is our marketing key
Rachel will be discussing how she is developing a social media following for ‘Sheep365’ channels which enable those who are keen to engage with a wide range of people. She will be discussing why she thinks a wider understanding of sheep farming practices, including the seasonality of our industry is our key to marketing products to consumers.

12.35 Discussion

12.50 Lunch (with opportunity to look at the posters and submit questions for the panel session after lunch).
13.45  **3: Panel session – How to get the industry to act positively**  
Questions will be submitted in advance by the audience via paper and Twitter. Chaired by Chris Lloyd.

The panel will consist of Dewi Jones, Neil McGowan, Fiona Lovatt and Bryan Griffiths.

15.10  **Coffee**

15.40  **4: Improving genetic gain – maternal traits**  
Chaired by Doug Bell, QMS

15.45  **Mark Young, Head of Innovation, Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock, York Science Park, York**  
mark.young@cielivestock.co.uk

*Genetic approaches to improving lamb survival*  
Poor lamb survival is a key cause of reproductive inefficiency in flocks globally with no detectable improvement over the last forty years. Mark will discuss the options that could be used, based on his work with Sil in NZ over the last 15 years and with help from collaborator Forbes Brien from University of Adelaide.

16.30  **Janet Roden, Independent geneticist, Aberystwyth**  
janetroden@btinternet.com

*Using genetics to improve performance on hill farms*  
Janet will discuss work that has been undertaken on some hill farms in Wales to improve the genetics. This is specifically relevant due to the increased competition in the light lamb market.

16.45  **George Cullimore, Performance Recorded Lleyn Breeders (PRLB) Group**  
goomebarn@gmail.com

*Getting better at collecting what is required*  
George will highlight the work that the PRLB group have been doing in terms of supplying large quantities of electronic data to Signet.

Karen will discuss the work she has done with the PRLB group on using IgA levels in saliva as a new phenotype for selecting for parasite resistance. They will discuss plans for the new IgA EBV.

17.00  **Joanne Conington, Livestock Geneticist, SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian**  
jo.conington@sruc.org.uk

*Improving maternal traits in a terminal breed*  
Jo will discuss the Innovate-funded project aiming to understand the genetic and genomic solutions to breed Texel ewes more resistant to mastitis. The project is also looking for genomic solutions to lameness.

17.15  Discussion

17.30  **Poster Session – Authors will be standing by their poster.**

19.15  **Wine Reception – sponsored by SRUC and EGENES**

20.00  **Dinner Discussion on the future of the sheep industry – led by AHDB**
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9.20  5: Data driving decisions
Chaired by Dave Ross, Agri-EPI centre

9.25  Huw Williams, sheep farmer, Banc Farm, Talley, Carmarthenshire
huw180@hotmail.co.uk

Effective methods of recording parentage in extensive systems
Huw received a HCC scholarship in 2015 and visited Australia and New Zealand comparing different methods of DNA shepherding and EID tracking. He will be discussing the most appropriate technologies for the UK.

9.45  Aurélie Aubry, sheep research scientist, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), County Down
aurelie.aubry@afbini.gov.uk

Working alongside farmers to drive innovation
Aurélie will be talking about the research work that is being done at AFBI and on farms across Northern Ireland, in particular with breeding strategies. She will mention the Data Hub and how that could drive genetic improvement in the future. The talk will provide a summary of how the new CiE-funded feeding equipment at AFBI is being used to understand energy and protein requirements, emissions and feed efficiency for sheep.

10.05 Jasmeet Kaler, Associate Professor in Epidemiology and Farm Animal Health, University of Nottingham
jasmeet.kaler@nottingham.ac.uk

and George Williamson, Agricultural Research Manager, Dunbia, Belfast
gwilliamson@dunbia.com

Thinking differently about how to collect health data
Jasmeet and George will talk about how innovative technology can be used for recording and management of lameness and other health data. They will also discuss findings from their research on farmer’s beliefs on adoption of technology.

10.25 Discussion

10.40 Coffee Break

11.10  6: Doing our jobs better
Chaired by James Ruggeri, HCC

11.15 Kate Phillips, independent sheep consultant, Shropshire
katephillips58@aol.com

Improving the welfare and longevity of rams in commercial sheep flocks
Kate will report on the findings of the Animal Welfare Foundation-funded project on ram welfare and longevity. The project team worked with National Sheep Association to gather feedback from a range of commercial sheep farmers, including what they expected from rams in terms of ewe to ram ratio and longevity. She will discuss the recommendations for ram breeders and buyers to ensure rams have a long and productive working life.

12.00 Lesley Stubbings, LSSC Ltd, independent sheep consultant, Northamptonshire
lesley@lssc-ltd.co.uk

How to maximise the potential of sheep production
Lesley, along with Nerys Wright (AHDB) and researchers from the University of Nottingham, have completed a four year AHDB-funded project on maximising weaning weight of lambs. Lesley will be discussing the findings, particularly in relation to body condition scoring and weight targets for lambs at eight weeks and 90 days of age.

12.45 Jonathan Barber
Chairman’s Closing Remarks

13.00 Lunch