

JULY 2013

For this year's sales, ewe lambs must be tagged with a yellow electronic tag in the left ear and a

PURPLE

coloured tag in the right ear

**2013 SALE DATES:
WELSHPOOL:**

- Wednesday, 11th September (Ewes)
- Thursday, 12th September (Ewe Lambs)
- Thursday 10th October (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

BUILT WELLS:

- Friday, 13th September (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)
- Tuesday, 15th October (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

RUTHIN:

- Saturday, 14th September (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

Welsh Mules Sheep Breeders Association Newsletter

Welsh Mule Sheep Breeders Association Ltd; Gorseland, North Road, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 2WB Phone No 01970 636688;

e-mail: info@welshmules.co.uk website: www.welshmules.co.uk

Promising response at promotional events

The association has been present at a number of demonstration or promotional events in preparation for this year's sales and Field Officer Marcus Williams has been particularly busy in recent weeks as have John and Richard Thomas, Tanhouse, Dolau who prepare the demonstration sheep for the association's stand at all events.

The main thrust of activity since the spring has been the series of Open Day's that the National Sheep Association arranges along the length and breadth of Great Britain. These are invariably excellent events to meet potential and new sheep buyers. They are well organised and attract a good crowd of interested farmers.

The association was particularly successful at the NSA South West Open Day held on June 11th at Moortown Barton, Know-

stone, South Molton, Devon. Not only did Marcus Williams receive an unexpectedly large number of enquiries for breeding stock for the autumn but the association won first prize in the competition for the best sheep breed stand justifying the decision to take a bigger stand than usual to the event. Marcus also reported that many recent buyers visited the stand and provided a lot of positive feedback.

On 21st May, the NSA held Welsh Sheep 2013 at Beili Ficer Farm, Llansawel, near Llandeilo and the association had another successful event although more producers than buyers called by on the day, which was to be expected. There was a big demonstration of other breeding sheep during the day that will ensure that the Welsh Mules will need to be aware of new as well as old competitors.

The association was also in the proverbial lion's den at the NSA's North Sheep on 5 June at Crimple Head Farm,

Beckwithshaw, Harrogate, North Yorkshire and the heartland of the North Country Mules. The association does have customers in the area and gathered the names of prospective new ones. The most positive reaction came from the farmers who visited the stand and commented on the outstanding sheep prepared by John & Richard Thomas.

Stands for displays such as the ones attended over the past couple of months have to be carefully planned and organised well in advance and Marcus paid tribute to all the support he'd received. "I'm very grateful for the support of Hywel Davies and Mary Gittins at Llandeilo" he said "Flower arranging isn't my strong point so Mary input was great!" He also thanked John Thomas and Mike Rees for their help in the South West, Brian Roberts and young member Iwan Roberts Nantyrhendy in the North and Kevin Parry who attended all three Open Days.

Ewe Lamb Competitions:

Please remember to submit your entries by 9.00am on the day of sale.

The Welsh Mules' display at NSA South West's Open Day was judged the best stand at the event. Receiving the prize platter from judge John Wakeham, Kivells Auctioneers are Kevin Parry, Mike Rees, John Thomas and Marcus Williams



Changes to Conditions of Sale Entry

The 2013 Sale Entry Forms and Conditions of Sale Entry pamphlet have been distributed to association members with this newsletter and members will notice that there have been some changes to both for this year's sales

The Sale Entry Forms now require members who use a pour-on to treat scab or lice to confirm that on the declaration in the sale entry form while there are new

conditions of sale entry on dispute resolutions

The association endeavours to minimise the likelihood of problems happening in the first place and sale inspectors have a very important role to play in this regard. However, they can't be expected to identify each and every problem and difficulties sometime come to the fore. More often than not, vendor and buyer will sort the matter out without involving the

association but sometimes buyers will contact us to ask for help to resolve a dispute.

The executive committee of the association reviewed the current procedures and sought advice on whether they needed to be changed at all.

In future, should there be such a dispute or difference, the association will arrange for the matter to be settled by an expert (to be

appointed by agreement between the parties or, in default of agreement, by the Association) and such person will act as expert and not as arbitrator and his decision will be binding on the parties.

If you have an query regarding these changes, please phone the Association Secretary on (01970) 636688. Thank you.

Sale Entry Forms

Please note that the Sale Entry Forms for the September sales need to be returned to the relevant auctioneers as soon as possible and in any case by the closing date of entry of

Monday 29th July 2013.

We strongly urge all members to submit their application by this date so that arrangements for the sale draw can be completed

on time. The draw needs to take place in the first week of August so that sale catalogues can be prepared on time . Delay can mean that late entries are not included in draws and have to be forward at the end of the sale.

You should also remember also that all ewe lambs have to carry a yellow electronic ear tag in the left

ear and a similarly numbered purple management tag in the other ear.

Any ewe lambs that are tagged with the wrong coloured management tag will have to be sold at the end of the sale but if they are forward without an electronic ear tag, they cannot be sold at all. Mistakes can and do happen though we urge you to be cautious.

CLOSING DATES FOR

RETURN OF SALE

ENTRY FORMS:

September Sales

Monday 29th July

October Sales

Monday 16th Sept

A request from the Field Officer:

2012 was an exceptionally difficult year for all farmers with the atrocious weather conditions: it started to rain in April and didn't appear to stop for months. It did mean that we had more foot problems in the ewes than usual and a very small number of buyers reported that they'd needed to treat the sheep when they'd been brought home. Inspectors often find it very difficult to identify problems with ewes' feet when they are penned together tightly at sales and consequently some problems do slip through the net.

As an association, we need to be actively aware of disease problems that can have an impact in our sales, including emerging diseases

like contagious ovine digital dermatitis or CODD as it's known and exercise as much caution as possible to stop it becoming more established . Please note the article on CODD based on a HCC pamphlet on the subject and produced with their permission.

We ask all vendors to be as vigilant and as careful as possible when assessing sheep to bring to the sales to prevent the spread of any foot or other sheep health problems and to maintain the association's reputation for high quality breeding ewes.

As a simple rule, if any sheep is lame, please leave it at home!!



The Welsh Mules' sale at Ruthin is traditionally the last of the association's series of September sales with some 6,000 ewes normally on offer. Set in the rolling Clwydian Hills, it attracts buyers from far and wide but especially from its North Wales base, along the coast to Anglesey and the Lleyn Peninsula

For your information - Last year's sale results

| Welshpool | 2012 | 2011 |
|---------------------|----------|----------|
| | Av Price | Av Price |
| Sept Sales: | £ | £ |
| Yearlings | 152.43 | 140.95 |
| Ewe lambs | 106.07 | 95.05 |
| Oct Sales: | | |
| Yearlings | 133.89 | 131.95 |
| Ewe lambs | 91.34 | 81.80 |
| Builth Wells | | |
| Sept Sales: | | |
| Yearlings | 156.36 | 145.50 |
| Ewe lambs | 107.31 | 97.11 |
| Oct Sales: | | |
| Yearlings | 127.81 | 124.92 |
| Ewe lambs | 92.06 | 82.40 |
| Ruthin | | |
| Sept Sales: | | |
| Yearlings | 140.59 | 135.11 |
| Ewe lambs | 98.08 | 90.09 |



The auctioneers' rostrum in Welshpool is always a hive of activity during the association's sale and was particularly busy in 2012

Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis - CODD

This is a relatively new lameness condition of sheep, first reported in the UK in 1997. It is an infectious disease that can spread rapidly through a naïve flock. It is severe and painful and a serious welfare and economic problem to affected flocks.

The cause is not fully understood but spirochaete bacteria, similar to those of bovine digital dermatitis are involved, hence cattle with digital dermatitis can be a disease risk for sheep. CODD starts at the coronary band (hoof-hair junction) and unlike footrot does not involve the interdigital space. Infection spreads down the foot separating the horn from the underlying sensitive structures; ultimately the whole hoof capsule may fall off.

Treatment

Treatment and control protocols for footrot are not effective for CODD.

Consult your vet and establish a treatment plan for your flock that may include (a) Topical antibiotics by spray in individual cases, or footbath of the group. None are currently licensed for

use in sheep; they can be prescribed by your vet and carry a standard 28 day meat withdrawal. (b) Injectable antibiotics to affected individuals. These are licensed for use in sheep, one (Timlicosin) may only be administered by a vet due to human safety issues. Treat promptly and isolate affected animals

Vaccination for footrot is not licensed to control CODD and was thought to be ineffective. However recent work has shown this may not be the case. CODD and footrot may both be present in flocks and studies have shown the presence of *Dichelobacter nodosus* (the bacteria responsible for footrot) in the majority of feet with CODD.

Prevention

(a) Isolate all bought in animals (including your own sheep returning from grazing away) and footbath straight off the lorry. (b) Observe for lameness over two weeks. (c) Catch and examine any lame sheep (d) Examine all, if feasible, before joining the main flock. (e) If in doubt, keep separate (f) Avoid co grazing with cattle if any are lame or the herd have a history of bovine digital dermatitis

Summary

- CODD is not the same as footrot
- Get a proper diagnosis
- Prepare a treatment and control plan with your veterinary surgeon
- Treat promptly



Photo: An early case of CODD. (Article by kind permission of HCC)



**Welsh Mule Sheep
Breeders Association Ltd**

Gorseland, North Road, Aberystwyth
Ceredigion SY23 2WB

Phone No: (01970) 636688

Fax No: (01970) 624049

Remember: Ewe lambs must be tagged with a yellow electronic tag in the left ear and a PURPLE coloured tag in the right ear

YOUR CONTACTS WITH THE WELSH MULES

The association's Field Officer, Marcus Williams has many roles to play from promoting the Welsh Mules at shows and events to following up queries after sales. He is on hand to help both vendors and buyers and can be contacted on 07768 816919.

The association's official auctioneers can be contacted at:

For the Welshpool sale:

Welshpool Livestock Sales; Buttington Cross, Welshpool, SY21 8SR
(01938) 553438

For the Builth Wells sale:

Brightwells; 33 High Street, Builth Wells, LD2 3DL (01982) 553614

For the Ruthin sale:

Vale of Clwyd Livestock Market; Plas Glastir, Ruthin LL15 1PB(01824) 702025
Jones Peckover; 1 The Roe, St Asaph, (01745) 583260

Red House Farm's Welsh Mules on target

TE Williams & Sons of Red House, Trefeglwys, Caersws have been producing prime finished lambs for Waitrose from Welsh Mule ewes for nearly 15 years via Livestock Marketing Ltd in Aberystwyth.

The family's flock of Welsh Mule ewes are crossed with Texel rams to produce lambs from the third week of February and through March to enable them to start supplying the Waitrose scheme from May and to continue to do so regularly afterwards.

"We've always found the Welsh Mule to be an ideal ewe for us" said Russell Williams of Red House Farm. "She will regularly achieve a good lambing percentage and the Welsh Mule really is an excellent mother. In fact ,she performed better this year under harsh conditions

than any of our other breeds or cross breeds. She is very milky and is able to rear lambs that grow well and quickly, lambs that have good carcasses that consistently hit the exacting specification that our customers expect"

Even though the 2013 lambing season was especially demanding for everyone, with very challenging weather conditions making lambing difficult, Red House Farm still managed to get lambs away at the same time as normal, admittedly at slightly lower weight than the usual 19kg

plus due to the season but more will be on the way in the next few weeks.

In three draws starting on 23rd May, the Williams family supplied two hundred and seventeen lambs to Waitrose and two hundred and five, or ninety five per cent, were bang on target with carcasses coming to an average weight of 18.1kg.

| | 23rd May | 6th June | 14th June | Total |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-------|
| Number Entered | 44 | 112 | 61 | 217 |
| No hitting specification | 41 | 107 | 57 | 205 |
| % Hitting Spec | 93% | 96% | 93% | 95% |
| Average Weight | 18.0 | 18.1 | 18.3 | 18.1 |



The association's sale at Builth is always an impressive sight, especially on a sunny day—and we do get one some years!