

JANUARY 2017

The AGM of members of the association is to be held on Wednesday, 1st February 2017 at 7.30pm at the offices of Welshpool Livestock Sales, Buttington Cross, Welshpool

2017 SALE DATES:

WELSHPOOL:

- Wednesday, 13th September (Ewes)
- Thursday, 14th September (Ewe Lambs)
- Thursday 12th October (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

BUILTH WELLS:

- Friday, 15th September (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)
- Tuesday, 17th October (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

RUTHIN:

- Saturday, 16th September (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

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Welsh Mules Sheep Breeder's Association Newsletter

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A look back at 2016's sales

2016 proved a better year than some had predicted with steady demand throughout and a good recovery for some from a difficult 2015.

The yearling ewes sale at Welshpool on 7th Sept saw prices increase from an average of £134 in 2015 to £140 for 7,200 sheep forward. H & E Powell, Llwyngwilym, Rhayader got the best price of £195 for a pen sold to D Lloyd & Co, Cefn Barrach. The sale of 9,000 ewe lambs the following day continued well, where the average of £101 was £6 up on 2015 with the top price of £205 paid by J & W Jones, Red Gwenthrif for ewe lambs raised by E & S Hughes, High Park Farm, Stone Heath. The winner of the ewe lamb competition was Geraint Powell, Glanmiheli, Kerry, Newtown.

The Builth Wells sale on 9th Sept saw prices for 3,600 yearlings ease back slightly to £134 although demand for the higher priced ewes was buoyant with H & E Powell, Llwyngwilym, Rhayader getting £222 to top the day again for a pen sold to RT Jones & Co, Coryn, Garth, Builth Wells. Demand for 8,200 ewe lambs was more consistent, holding through to the end with the average for the day matching that of Welshpool at £101. RG & BM Jones & Son, Tymawr, Garth topped the sale at £195 with a pen sold to G Evans, Ffridd. The prize for the best pen of ewe lambs was won by TV Hughes & Co, Godregarreg, Llangadog. The Elwyn Bennett

Cup for the best total consignment was won by Messrs DB & MM Fairclough & Sons, Wernhir, Newbridge-on-Wye.

The final sale of the Welsh Mule Week at Ruthin on the 10th Sept saw a significant improvement on the rather disappointing 2015 sale. Yearling ewes averaged £136, up £23 on 2015 with the top price of £148 gained by RD & C Davies, Ty Canol, Llanfair TH for a pen bought by JT Cunnah & Sons, Marian Bach, Cwm Dyserth. The Keith Evans Memorial Cup for the best pen of yearling ewes was awarded to PA & JP Smith, Bodtegir, Llanfihangel GM. Ewe lambs recorded an increase of £10 on average compared to 2015 at £86 with R & G Roberts, Hengaer, Glanrafon receiving £118 for a pen sold to HM Morris & Son, Penrhewl, Tregeiriog, the pen that had won the competition for the best pen of ewe lambs at the sale.

In the October sales, the 1,000 yearlings forward at Welshpool were up by £14 on 2015 at £130 with IJ & MEO Jones, Plasmadoc, Dolfor obtaining the highest price of £150 for a pen sold to Nanhoron Farms, Pwllheli. One of J Thomas & Son, Tanhouse Farm, Dolau's pens of ewe lambs obtained the best price of £135 when sold to Messrs Eaton, Northampton while the sale average for ewe lambs was up £2 at £84. At the Builth October sale, yearling prices rose by £14 on the equivalent 2015 sale to £129 with ewe lambs up by £2 at £85. AD Powell, Llwyn Neuadd, Abbeycwmhir obtained

the best yearling price of £135 for a pen sold to DR Williams & Sons, Womaston Farm, Walton while RG & BM Jones & Son, Tymawr, Garth, Builth Wells won the Vernon Wilson Cup for the best pen of ewe lambs, a pen that also scooped the best price of £125 when sold to S Williams & Son, Broadaxe, Prestigne.

Field Officer, Marcus Williams felt that both vendors and buyers had been generally satisfied while Kevin Parry, association chairman was also happy with the overall outcome after what has been a difficult year for sheep producers. Better returns for finished lambs may have enabled commercial producers to re-invest in breeding stock in Mr Parry's opinion who was also particularly pleased with the improved returns in Ruthin.

Ian, Sean & Cerys Fairclough received the Elwyn Bennett Cup on behalf of DB & MM Fairclough & Sons, Wernhir, Newbridge-on-Wye for the best consignment of ewe lambs at the Builth Sept sale from Field Officer, Marcus Williams and judge Richard Thomas.



TAGGING SEQUENCE

The association's executive committee has agreed the following sequence of tag colours for the next seven years. The NSA has been informed as well so that hopefully other societies might want to adopt the same sequence.

2017	WHITE
2018	PINK
2019	BROWN
2020	PURPLE
2021	GREEN
2022	BLUE

Last year's sale results in detail

Welshpool	2016	2015
	Av Price	Av Price
September:		
Yearlings	139.96	133.77
Ewe lambs	101.25	95.15
October:		
Yearlings	130.08	115.99
Ewe lambs	84.06	82.15
Builth Wells		
September:		
Yearlings	134.03	136.19
Ewe lambs	101.55	92.75
October:		
Yearlings:	128.59	112.89
Ewe lambs	84.91	83.65
Ruthin		
Yearlings	136.22	112.72
Ewe lambs	86.39	76.27

Shows & Demonstrations in 2016

The association regularly attends shows and demonstrations across the country to drum up support for the association's sales and to promote the breed. These invariably include the Royal Welsh Show and regional events organised by the National Sheep Association (NSA). Probably the most successful event that we visit however is the bi-annual NSA Sheep Event in Malvern and 2016 proved no different. There were a number of interested visitors who called by to ask for further information and to request that sale catalogues be forwarded to them. It's always gratifying to see those enquiries turned into actual sheep purchases when farmers who have called on the stand turn up at the sales. Malvern is also an excellent event to catch up with old friends who call by the display and who have supported the association for many years.



Our promotional activity at Malvern was helped not just by an excellent stand organised by Field Officer, Marcus Williams (that was judged the second best sheep society stand at the event) but by the exceptional standard of sheep that won the competition for the best sheep displayed by a sheep society. Those sheep had been prepared by John & Richard Thomas, Tanhouse, the Hughes family, Godregarreg and Daisy Williams, Trefeglwys. Marcus (left) and Richard Thomas were both delighted to receive the first prize in the form of an auctioneer's gavel from Keith Davies, Welshpool Livestock Sales on behalf of the sponsors, the Livestock Auctioneers' Association with judge Clive Davies looking on.

Tail docking and the law

At last autumn's sales, a member asked for clarification on the tail docking of sheep, the society's policy and what was the actual regulation covering the practice.

Since its formation, it's been an association requirement that all ewes sold through the association's sales must have their tails docked between 3 and 4 inches. Tails that are considered to be too long or too short by sales inspectors will be rejected with inspectors paying special attention to tail lengths of ewe lambs. Invariably, some sheep are rejected although the numbers are not high. The main concern arises when tails are considered to be too short. Inspectors will reject ewes whose tail is insufficient to cover the vulva.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 prohibits procedures that involve interference with the sensitive tissue or bone structure of an animal otherwise than for the purpose of its medicinal treatment. The Act makes it an offence to carry out the prohibited procedure or in some circumstances, to permit another person to carry it out. It would imply that tail docking is not allowed under the law. However, other regulations specify procedures that the 2006 Welfare Act doesn't apply to. For example, while cutting tails of sheep may be regarded as a mutilation and therefore prohibited, it is permitted as an exception to the Welfare Act under the Mutilations (Permitted Procedure) (Wales) Regulations 2007 as are other practices that could be regarded as mutilations such as castration, ear notching, ear tagging or dehorning.

While the 2007 Regulations permit the tail docking of sheep, it also lays down in its Schedule 5(5), the requirements that have to be adhered to when carrying out tail docking. The Schedule states:

- "In all cases, enough of the tail must be retained to cover the vulva of a female animal or the anus of a male animal.
- When the method used is the application of a rubber ring or other device to constrict the flow of blood to the tail, the procedure may only be carried out on an animal aged not more than 7 days.
- When any other method is used an anaesthetic must be administered."

While most farmers are aware that tail docking using a rubber ring or other device to restrict the flow of blood to the tail has to be carried out on a lamb that is not more than 7 days old, it's not always appreciated that if any other process is followed, **it can only be done if an anaesthetic is used** otherwise it becomes an offence.



The Keith Evans Memorial Cup for the best pen of yearling ewes at Ruthin was presented to Dylan Evans on behalf of PA & JP Smith, Bodtegir by association chairman Kevin Parry with judges Emrys Williams, Henblas and Eifion Morris, Penrhewl looking on.

Richard Webber of Shearwell Data Ltd presented the award for the best exhibit of Welsh Mule sheep at the Royal Welsh last July to R A & W H E Jones, Red Gwenthrew, Newtown





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**For the 2017 sales, ewe lambs must
be tagged with a yellow electronic
tag in the left ear and an WHITE
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

2016 Competition Winners



Geraint Powell, Glanmiheli, received the cup for the best ewe lamb pen at the Sept sale in Welshpool from judges J Davies and RH Jones with Kevin Parry, Lloyd Powell and Luke O'Bryan looking on



R & G Roberts, Hengaer Isaf, Glanrafon came top in the ewe lamb competition at Ruthin and received the winners' cup from Keith Parry supported by Emrys Williams and Eifion Morris.

Mark, Phillip and Stephen Shedd of Barton Farms, Barton Hartshorn awarded 1st prize for the best pen of ewe lambs at the Sept Builth sales to TV Hughes & Co, Godregarreg, Llangadog,

Neil Jones, Ty Mawr with father Gwyn receives the Vernon Wilson Cup for the best ewe lamb pen in the Oct Builth sale from Marcus Williams with judges R&C Davies, Ty Canol, Llanfair TH looking on.

