

JANUARY 2018

The AGM of members of the association is to be held on Wednesday, 31st January 2018 at 7.30pm at the offices of Welshpool Live-stock Sales, Butting-ton Cross, Welsh-pool

2018 SALE DATES:

WELSHPOOL:

- Wednesday, 12th September (Ewes)
- Thursday, 13th September (Ewe Lambs)
- Thursday 11th October (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

BUILTH WELLS:

- Friday, 14th September (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)
- Tuesday, 16th October (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

RUTHIN:

- Saturday, 15th September (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

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Welsh Mules Sheep Breeders Association Newsletter

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The association's 2017 sales

The association's September sales saw steady trade throughout. Yearling ewes at Welshpool on 13th Sept saw prices increase by £4 from the 2016 mark to an average of £144 with H & E Powell, Llwyngwilym, topping the market at £238 for a pen of ewes sold to G Price, Parc y Deri. 8,900 ewe lambs were sold the following day where the average of £100 was down just a £1 on the previous year. The highest price of £200 was received by G Powell, Glanmiheli, for a pen bought by Messrs Evans, Upper Ffridd, Geraint was the winner of the competition for the best pen of ewe lambs forward at the sale for a pen of coloured-face sheep. In a unique double, Geraint's brother, Morton of Drefor Farm, won the prize for the best white-faced ewe lambs at the sale.

At the Builth Wells on 15th Sept, prices for yearlings increased by £15 compared to the same day in 2016 on the back of very competitive bidding for stronger ewes. Yearlings averaged £151 with H & E Powell, Llwyngwilym, again obtaining the best price, this time of £260 for a pen sold to G Price, Parc y Deri, and one sold to G&W Crothers, Tilgard Rd, Kells. This was a record price for yearling ewes sold at the association's sales. Demand for the entry of 8,500 ewe lambs was even and consistent, with the average for the day at £101 the same as for 2016. MJ & JM Price, Penycrug, topped the market with a pen sold for £228, sold to R&G Jones, Red Gwentrew, RG & BM Jones & Son, Tymawr, won the prize for

the best pen of ewe lambs at the sale while the Elwyn Bennett Memorial Cup was won by Elwyn son, Stephen.

The sale at Ruthin on 16th Sept saw a small drop in prices on 2016 for both yearlings and ewe lambs but with a higher number of sheep forward. Yearlings averaged £131, with the top price of £158 being gained by RD & C Davies, Ty Canol, for a pen bought by E Jones, Manor Farm, Thedingworth, that also won the Keith Evans Memorial Cup for the best pen of yearling ewes. Ewe lambs averaged £84 down just £2 on 2016 with Gareth Jones, Ty Nant, receiving the best price at £110 from W Owen, Braich Saint. EW Jones a'l Feibion, Rhiwaedog were awarded the prize for the best ewe lamb pen. The October sale in

Welshpool was challenging with yearling prices down to £106 compared to £130 in 2016 while ewe lambs eased back to £80 from £84. JE Evans & Son, Middle Nantserth topped the yearlings at £150 for a pen sold to JC Evans & Co, Belan Newydd while EN & EJ Bound, Cefnbeidiog had the best price for ewe lambs at £118 from WO Jones & Son, Fraithwen.

There was steady demand at Builth the following week with the average yearling price down for a smaller entry at £112, down £16 on the year with AD Powell, Llwyn Neuadd getting the best price of £133 from DR Williams, Womaston. Ewe lamb trade was also steady with the £81 average down £4. EH Bennet & Son, Trelwydion obtained the best return of £130 for the pen that won the Vernon Wilson Cup for the best pen of ewe lambs at the sale: it was bought by OB Pugh, Godway.

While we've claimed that trade was 'hot' at some Welsh Mule sales in the past, we've good grounds to argue that that was really the case at the Builth sale in October when the catering van caught fire! Thankfully, the Builth Wells Fire Brigade was on hand to ensure that the fire was quickly and efficiently put out. A further thanks to Brightwells staff for promptly finding an alternative caterer to ensure that no one went hungry.



TAGGING SEQUENCE

The association's executive committee has revised the tagging colour sequence for the next seven years. The NSA has been informed so that other societies might want to adopt the same sequence.

2018	PINK
2019	BROWN
2020	PURPLE
2021	GREEN
2022	BLUE
2023	ORANGE
2024	WHITE

2017 Sale results in detail

Welshpool	2017	2016
September:	Av Price	Av Price
Yearlings	144.10	139.96
Ewe lambs	99.89	101.25
October:		
Yearlings	106.21	130.08
Ewe lambs	79.81	84.06
Builth Wells		
September:		
Yearlings	150.82	134.03
Ewe lambs	101.15	101.55
October:		
Yearlings:	111.95	128.59
Ewe lambs	80.89	84.91
Ruthin		
Yearlings	130.83	136.22
Ewe lambs	83.77	86.39

Shows & Demonstrations

The association attended a number of shows and demonstrations during the year including NSA Wales Open Day, the Royal Welsh and NSA South West Sheep. The South West event had been the smallest event attended during the year but it was the one that generated the greater number of enquiries from potential buyers. Many of the visitors had been buying North Country Mules in the past and there had been some interest in converting to Welsh Mules.

Field Officer Marcus Williams was particularly grateful to John & Richard Thomas, Tanhouse and others who'd prepared demonstration sheep for the displays: he felt that they'd been of a very high standard. The evidence of that was the fact the association's stand won prizes at both Welsh Sheep and NSA South West for the quality of the sheep on display.

In 2018, the highlight of the association's activities will be the NSA Sheep event in Malvern which always draws a large crowd of producers and potential buyers. **Please note however that due to an unfortunate clash of date at the Three Counties showground, the event is being held earlier than usual on Wednesday, 18th July 2018, a week before the Royal Welsh Show at Builth which is due to be held between 23rd and 26th July.**

President & Vice-President

The association has always been fortunate to be represented by Presidents or Vice-Presidents who've been committed to the association and to the Welsh Mules. When Ceiriog Jones (whose father Emyr had preceded him in the post) stepped down last year, he was succeeded by Gwyn Davies, Llanfechan, who was one of the association's earliest members. Gwyn served on the executive committee for a number of years before stepping down. He is supported as Vice-President by another popular stalwart of the association Mike Rees who also served on the executive committee until two years ago. Mike has also been a regular supporter of the association at shows and demonstration events where he has been an ardent promoter of the positive values of the Welsh Mules. Both Gwyn and Mike have been selling high quality Welsh Mules at the association sales from the start and have, by their example, shown the way for others to follow.

Sheep scab in Wales - report published recently

Sheep scab in the UK has increased 100-fold over a 25-year period since scab treatment was deregulated in 1992, with the highest prevalence in Wales. Professor Richard Wall of Bristol University recently published a report based on a survey of farmers that was used as the basis of a detailed investigation into the prevalence and distribution of sheep scab in Wales. Prof Wall came to some sobering conclusions. He noted that the data collated suggested that the cost of sheep scab to Welsh sheep producers in terms of losses and treatment is likely to be in excess of £8million per year.

972 farms took part in the survey and scab was reported on those farms in 16% of cases in the previous year with 3% reporting multiple incidences in the one year while 29% of farms reported scab on at least one occasion in the previous 10 years. 23 farms experienced an outbreak between 6-10 times during that period. These results show a similar pattern to previous surveys although lower than one conducted in 2010. Prof Wall's report confirmed that scab prevalence was higher in Wales than in the rest of the UK. Most outbreaks occurred between Sept and January and were clustered around Brecon, North Ceredigion and Northern Gwynedd (in the Bangor area) with farmers who used common grazing significantly more likely to have had a scab outbreak in the last 10 years than farmers who did not. Prof Wall observed that such clustering meant that control and management efforts can be focussed on a relatively small group of farms and farming systems to maximise its cost effectiveness.

Nearly a third of those farmers who brought in sheep either through purchase or movement from an outside source (e.g. tack) did not use any quarantine procedures before introducing those sheep to the home flock. 58% did not use any preventative treatment on bought in sheep. 69% had not had a diagnosis to confirm the presence of scab while **10% used products with no label claim for treating scab**. Hill and upland farmers were more likely to be affected with two thirds of those reporting scab based there. 27% of farms with common grazing reported a scab incidence, significantly more than those that farmed without common land. The survey showed that most scab outbreaks occur between September and January - right in the middle of the autumn sheep sales. It goes without saying therefore that association members need to pay close attention to ensuring that sheep they present for sale at official sales are free of the problem. Prof Wall's report highlights the importance of correct diagnosis and correct treatment, following product guidelines and instructions implicitly. It's essential that the association maintains its hard-won reputation as a source of good quality, healthy breeding stock if we are to continue to attract buyers and its important that every member plays his or her role in keeping scab and other health problems out of our sales.

Left: Stephen Bennett won the cup named in honour of his late father, Elwyn, for the best consignment of ewe lambs at Builth in Sept and was presented by association president Gwyn Davies. Also in the photo, Stephen's son Huw and judges Elwyn Owen and Hywel Price.
Right: Kevin Parry presented Dilwyn Davies, Ty Canol with the Keith Evans Memorial Cup for the best yearling ewe entry at Ruthin, with judge Mr Jones, Manor farm looking on.





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**For the 2018 sales, ewe lambs
must be tagged with a yellow
electronic tag in the left ear and a
PINK 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

2017 Competition Winners



Emyr Jones Rhiwaedog & family receiving the cup for the best entry of ewe lambs at Ruthin from association chairman, Kevin Parry, Llwynrhidyll last September



Marcus Williams presents the Vernon Wilson Cup for the best ewe lambs in the Builth October sale to Huw Bennett, Trellwydion, with father Stephen and judges Nigel & Hannah Williams looking on.

Geraint Powell, Glanmiheli gets the cup for the best ewe lambs at Welshpool in Sept from vice-president Mike Rees. Judges G&T Evans and N Pugh and Geraint's helper, Luke O'Bryan in support.

Association President Gwyn Davies presented Neil Jones, Ty Mawr & son, William with the cup for best ewe lambs at Builth in Sept seen here with busy judges Gareth & Tomos Evans.

