

Wales & Border Ram Sale 24th September, 2012

Pedigree breeders were prepared to pay for quality tups at Europe's biggest ram sale, the NSA Wales & Border held at the Royal Welsh Showground on Monday 24th September, but the commercial trade struggled above 400 guineas. The sale grossed almost £2.2 million, just a few hundred pounds down on the previous year, with a top price of 6,800 guineas paid for a Blue Faced Leicester ram, the second year running that the breed has claimed the highest figure.

Other front runners included a Welsh Mountain shearling, sold for 5,000 guineas, another from the same batch of Welsh Mountains that sold for 4,500 guineas, a Texel that sold for 3,900 guineas, and a Charollais that sold for 3,800 guineas. The Suffolks saw a top price of 1550 guineas for a non MV ram, the Border Leicesters 1020 guineas, the Berrichon du Cher 1350 guineas, and a Lleyn 2100 guineas.

NSA Wales & Border Ram Sale Committee Chairman, Gwynne Davies, said it had been an excellent sale with a good crowd. The mood had been buoyant and the trade clearly reflected confidence in the sector.

He added: "There was a great buzz around the sale rings, and before bidding started, with quality tups selling well. It was evident by the variety of breeds being loaded into trailers that the sale is a One Stop Shop for producers who come to Builth to buy all their tups for the season.

"The heavy rain overnight and on the morning could have been a challenge if we had still been in the marquees, but the excellent facilities we enjoy in the buildings meant it all went smoothly."

The Bluefaced Leicester shearling that topped the sale was also the breed champion, bred by the Harding family of Shrewbridge House, Shrewbridge Court, Nantwich. It was shown by Sophie Harding who is an equine vet and who runs a reduced flock of 30 ewes with her father, Ray, and sold to Philiplaugh Estates, Philiplaugh, Selkirk, and Alan McClynont, of Selkirk.

The ram is out of Middle Jukesfield, a ram they paid 7,000 guineas for at Carlisle. The mother was a full sister to a gimmer that sold for 5,500 guineas at Carlisle five years ago.

Sophie said it had been an 'interesting' trade, with big, strong, correct, sheep making a decent price. She added that people had been more discerning although they had had a very good day, with probably the best pen of sheep they had brought in 15 years of selling at Builth.

Bluefaced Leicester Society Wales Chairman Aled Jones had Reserve Champion with his ram lamb and won both the Sam Williams Eskley Flock Memorial Trophy and the RCH Trophy given for the best pen of lambs to honour the work done by chief steward Arthur Yates of Hexham. The society is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary.

A Welsh Mountain shearling ram home bred by Alun, Marie, and Sarah Jones of Llanafan, Builth Wells, sold for 5,000 guineas, one of the highest prices the breed has seen at the NSA Wales & Border sale. It went to Bill Evans of Nantmel.

A second ram from the same batch sold for 4,500 guineas sold to Robert Jones of Erwood. He had the top price Welsh Mountain tup last year. The Jones family run 800 improved Welsh Mountain ewes, after switching from Beulahs two years ago.

A Charollais shearling ram sold by Huw Roberts of Bach ym Byd, Bachrhewl, Ruthin, made 3,800 guineas and was sold to Redhill Charollais, Rutland. A Texel shearling ram, the champion in its class, from Cefyn Pryce of Yr Helyg, Llanfair Caereinion, sold for 3,100 guineas.

The Texel breed championship at the NSA Wales & Border Ram Sale at the Royal Welsh Showground on Monday 24 September was won by a ram lamb owned by Robert Bennett of Meifod, Powys. It sold for 3,000 guineas. The highest priced Texel sold for 3900 guineas to a buyer from Dukesfield, Hexham.

The top priced cross breed was a Millennium Bleu from Richard Pilkington and sold for 2050 guineas. A Blue Texel ewe from the Alexander family of Galston, Ayrshire, sold for a top price of 1180 guineas to A Cooke of Llantillio, Crossenny, Abergavenny.

A Suffolk shearling ram from David and Sandra Owens of Luntley Court Farm, Pembridge, Leominster, took the breed top price of 1550 guineas. It went to G Davies and Co Llanfechan, Builth Wells.

A Suffolk ram lamb from Charles Harding of Lodge Farm, Atterton, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, went for 1150 guineas to IBERS, Aberystwyth. Mr Harding runs 200 pedigree ewes, a hundred and twenty lambing in January and eighty in April.