SBRT
Sheep Breeders Round Table

Sheep Breeders Round Table 2026

BREEDING SOLUTIONS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Biennial conference
Friday 20–Sunday 22 November 2026

Radisson Blu Hotel East Midlands,
Castle Donington, Derby DE74 2TZ

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Conference programme: Breeding solutions for a changing world

Friday 20 Nov	Breeding for the environment (Part 1)	Session 1
14:00–14:10	Welcome to conference from SBRT Chair	George Fell, Pedigree breeder
14:10–14:15	Janet Roden - Chair, Innovis	
14:15–14:30	The role of rumen volume and feed efficiency	Nicola Lambe, SRUC
14:30–14:45	EBVs influencing methane production	Karolina Kaseja, SRUC
14:45–15:00	The impact of the rumen microbiome	Joana Lima, SRUC
15:00–15:15	Breeding indexes for environmental goals	Emma Dods, Innovis
15:15–15:30	Breeding decisions and the flock carbon footprint	Karl Behrendt, Harper Adams University
15:30–15:45	Q&A	
15:45–16:15	Refreshment break	

Friday 20 Nov	Genomics and sheep breeding	Session 2 WEATHERBYS SCHEPPIC
16:15–16:20	Emma McGowan – Chair, QMS and SBRT Committee	
16:20–16:35	Major genes or a major distraction	Samuel Boon, AHDB
16:35–16:45	Breeding using DNA parentage	Richard Rossiter, Breeder
16:45–17:00	Genomic inbreeding	Pourya Davoudi, AHDB
17:00–17:15	Building genetic resources for breed improvement in the Oxford Down sheep	Melissa Marr, Roslin Institute
17:15–17:30	Marketing the modern ram - how €urostars & science shape the Irish sheep industry	Aisling O' Mahony, Sheep Ireland
17:30–17:45	Q&A	
20:00–Late	Conference dinner supported by the Coop After dinner speaker - The sheep world according to Mark Ferguson, neXtgen Agri	nextgen AGRI co op

Saturday 21 Nov	Breeding for the environment (Part II)	Session 3
9:00–9:05	Welcome to conference from SBRT Chair	George Fell, Pedigree breeder
9:05–9:10	Global Methane Genetics initiative – overview & aims	Kim Matthews - Chair, AHDB
9:10–9:30	Doing more with what we already record: Indexes to reduce carbon footprint	Harriet Bunning, AHDB
9:30–9:50	An update on SRUC's participation in international sheep methane projects	Ann McLaren, SRUC
9:50–10:00	Q&A	
10:00–10:30	Does the UK need a low input sheep progeny test? - Part 1	Liz Genever, Independent consultant
10:30–11:00	Refreshment break	

Saturday 21 Nov	To shed or not to shed – is that the question?	Session 4
11:00–11:05	Samuel Boon - Chair, AHDB and SBRT Committee	
11:05–11:25	Genome editing for wool shedding	Simon Lillico, Roslin Institute
11:25–11:35	Q&A and introduction to next session	
11:35–11:45 11:45–11:55 11:55–12:05	Productive maternal sires for the modern sheep producer - in this interactive session three breeders will talk about their enterprises and explain why you should buy their ram.	Tim White – Exlana breeder Will Sawday – High Country Romneys Hayden Woolley - Low FootPrint Lamb
12:05–12:20	Virtual ram sale	
12:20-12:30	Discussion	
12:30–14:00	Buffet lunch	

Friday 20th November - Sunday 22nd November 2026

Saturday 21 Nov	Genetics – worth the investment?	Session 5
14:00–14:05	Liz Genever - Chair, Consultant and SBRT Committee	
14:05–15:30	Getting your genetics business ready for future - how to identify traits to make or save money, save time or delight a customer - using UK-based breeding business examples (identified via SBRT competition)	Mark Ferguson, neXtgen Agri CEO & Head Shepherd podcast, New Zealand
15:30–16:00	Refreshment break	

Saturday 21 Nov	Measuring performance - phenotype is king	Session 6
16:00-16:05	Matt Harding - Chair, Pedigree breeder and SBRT Vice Chair	
16:05-16:20	RamCompare results: what have we learnt and what is next?	Laura Eyles, AHDB
16:20-16:40	ChazCompare: correlating conformation at conception into currency at kill	Andrew Walton, Pedigree breeder
16:40-17:00	One database, better breeding: How commercial data shapes real genetic progress	Sean Godfrey, Sheep Ireland
17:00-17:20	Challenge Sheep – lessons learnt from ewe performance	Amey Vaughan and Zoe Lloyd, AHDB
17:20-17:35	Q&A	
17:35–17:45	Does the UK need a low input sheep progeny test? - Part 2	Liz Genever, Independent consultant
19:00–20:00	Drinks reception supported by Egenes, SRUC	
20:00–Late	Conference dinner supported by the Coop	

Sunday 22 Nov	Healthy genetics	Session 7
9:00–9:05	Emily Clark – Chair, EMBL's European Bioinformatics Institute and SBRT Committee	
9:05–9:25	Breeding for Maedi Visna resistance	Rachael Tarlinton, Nottingham University
9:25–9:45	Contrasting effects of climate change on parasite-proof sheep phenotypes	Eric Morgan, Queens University Belfast
9:45–10:05	Breaking down barriers to investigating new conditions	Heather Stevenson, SRUC Veterinary Services
10:05–10:25	FEC and nematode species, are they important?	Dave Bartley & Agata Delnicka, Moredun Research Institute
10:25–10:40	Q&A	
10:40–11:10	Refreshment break	

Sunday 22 Nov	The hills are alive with lamb survival	Session 8
11:10–11:20	Mark Young - Chair, Livestock Genetics Consultant	
11:20–11:40	Ancestry to advantage: hill sheep evolution in Ireland & an introduction to Oviflock	David Coen, Sheep Ireland
11:40–11:55	Welsh Sheep Genetics Programme - phase 2 update	Eleri Thomas, HCC
11:55–12:15	Measuring methane in hill sheep - what have we learnt?	Janet Roden, Innovis
12:15–12:30	Improving lamb survival	Samuel Boon, AHDB
12:30–12:45	Q&A	
12:45–13:00	Conference end – closing comment from SBRT Chair	George Fell, Pedigree breeder
13:00–14:30	Buffet lunch – departure afterwards	

A note from the SBRT Chair



"We are delighted to introduce our SBRT 2026 programme with a range of exceptional speakers who look forward to sharing their insight with you over the weekend. We hope this conference will inspire much thought and debate around the many questions that surround our UK lamb industry; profitability, sustainability, welfare, environment and carbon reduction."

"Together we are proud to host this great opportunity for everyone in the industry to come together to discuss the latest developments in sheep genetics and their impacts, the whole way through the lamb supply chain. It is a great privilege to be able to put on a conference at the forefront of the industry, helping to shape its future."

George Fell

The Sheep Breeders Round Table Committee would like to thank the following:

- **AHDB, our key sponsor for their assistance and support with this event.**
- **Our committee which includes levy boards and NSA alongside independent members, for their dedicated commitment throughout the two years to help us deliver this biennial conference.**
- **All organisations who have sponsored this event - the financial support enables us to deliver a high class, professional event whilst allowing costs to be kept to a minimum, ensuring it is accessible for all to attend.**
- **Special thanks to our speakers and researchers - for their fantastic contributions including their presentations and posters. Their motivation, enthusiasm and support is vital for the future development of this sector - without them we would not have a conference!**
- **Finally, to you all for taking the time to join us for this weekend event.**

A reminder that you can access the following from the QR code:

- **Research posters are available during and after the conference.**
- **Presentations will be available after the conference.**
- **Your feedback – your opinion matters, please complete the online form, your feedback will be considered whilst developing plans for SBRT 2028!**

Committee:

George Fell (Chair), Matt Harding (SBRT Vice Chair), Chris Lloyd (Treasurer), Bridget Lloyd (Secretary), Samuel Boon (AHDB), John Morrow (Agrisearch), Russ Thomas (HCC), Eleri Thomas (HCC), Emma McGowan (QMS), Nicola Noble/Anna Wilson (NSA), Liz Genever (Independent), Ed Brant (Breeder), Richard Oglesby (Breeder), Steven Johnston (Breeder/Academic), Ann McLaren (Academic), Emily Clark (Academic).

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