



SHEEP BREEDERS ROUND TABLE 2015

Get better or get gone

BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 20 – 22 NOVEMBER 2015

At Eastwood Hall, Mansfield Road, Eastwood,
Nottingham NG16 3SS

Chairman – Jonathan Barber, Treasurer – Chris Lloyd, Secretary – Liz Genever

Committee – Sam Boon, Joanne Briggs, Luned Evans, Michael Blanche



#sbrt15

www.nationalsheep.org.uk/sbrt

Friday 20th November

12:00 Lunch

12:30 Registration desk opens and check-in available

14:00 **Signet Update** – Samuel Boon

An update of Signet Breeding Services activity in 2014/2015

Maternal Trait Update

Researchers from SRUC will report on work relating to the analysis of maternal traits:

- Maternal ability and litter size – Kirsty Moore
- Ewe longevity and lamb survival – Jo Conington

15:00 **Combined Breed Analysis**

An update on the Combined Breed Analysis for Terminal Sires proposed at SBRT13 and an opportunity for discussion.

- Research findings – Kirsty Moore, SRUC
- RamCompare – Liz Genever and Sam Boon, AHDB Beef and Lamb

16:15 Tea and coffee

17:00 **International sheep session – Focus on Norway**

Thor Blichfeldt, *Head of Breeding and AI for the Norwegian Association of Sheep and Goat Breeders (NSG)*

TB@nsg.no

Norway was one of the first countries to engage in co-operative breeding schemes. Thor will provide an overview of the Norwegian recording system and talk about the importance of working together to achieve a common breeding goal, through co-operation and centralised decision-making.

20:00 **Drinks Reception** – sponsored by AHDB Beef and Lamb, HCC and QMS



20:30 **Conference Dinner**

The After Dinner Speaker will be John Scott, Farmers Weekly Sheep Farmer of the Year 2014 and chair of QMS Sheep Industry Group

For further information on Sheep Breeders Round Table

Please contact: Karen Morris on 0247 647 8828 or sheepbreedersrt@ahdb.org.uk





Saturday 21 November

8:45 Registration

9:00 **Jonathan Barber**
Chairman's Welcome

9:10 **1: What did the review of genetic improvement tell us?**
Chaired by Phil Stocker, NSA

9:20 **Kim Matthews**, *Head of R&D, AHDB Beef and Lamb, Stoneleigh*
kim.matthews@ahdb.org.uk
With **Paul Westaway**, *chair of AHDB Beef and Lamb R&D committee and beef farmer from Gloucestershire*
paul@livestockinternational.com

Why was the review needed?

AHDB Beef and Lamb funded a review of genetic improvement for the beef and sheep industry, with special reference to the potential of genomics. Kim will provide a background to why the review was done and highlight the key messages. Paul will discuss what the review means for the industry.

9:55 **Eamon Wall**, *manager, Sheep Ireland, Bandon, Co. Cork*
ewall@icbf.com

What have been the outcomes in Ireland?

Ireland went through a similar process in 2008 and major changes have occurred. Eamon will be discussing what they did in the following years and what their plans are.

10:25 Discussion

10:45 Coffee Break

11:15 **2: Making the rumen more efficient**
Chaired by Kim Matthews, AHDB Beef and Lamb

11:20 **Jamie Newbold**, *Professor of Animal Science and Director of Research, IBERS, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion*
cjn@aber.ac.uk

Are we ever going to win the war against the rumen?

Jamie will be discussing research work on manipulation of the rumen microflora to impact on methane emissions. He will also talk about the impact of rearing systems on the rumen population.

11:45 **Jimmy Hyslop**, *Beef and sheep consultant, SAC consulting, Bush Estate, Midlothian*
jimmy.hyslop@sac.co.uk

What have we learned about measuring Net Feed Efficiency in beef cattle?

Jimmy has been working with the Stabiliser Cattle Company on a TSB-funded project on net feed efficiency. He will discuss how we should think about feed efficiency and provide guidance for similar initiatives.

12:10 **Nicola Lambe**, *sheep researcher, SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian*
nicola.lambe@sruc.ac.uk

Can we measure feed efficiency in sheep?

Nicola has been investigating the options to measure feed efficiency in sheep and goats. She will discuss the challenges and possible options for the UK.

12:35 Discussion

12:50 Lunch (and opportunity to look at the posters)



13:45 **3: The debate – “We should give up recording hill sheep”**

Chaired by Chris Lloyd, AHDB Beef and Lamb

13:50 **Will Haresign, retired livestock geneticist, IBERS**

wih@aber.ac.uk

For the motion – Investment should focus on those breeds that wish to engage with performance recording, where genetic gains over the last decade have led to a significant return on investment.

13:55 **Jo Conington, livestock geneticist, SRUC**
joanne.conington@sruc.ac.uk

Against the motion – Genetic variation in hill breeds will lead to economic benefits to the UK sheep industry.

14:00 **John Yeomans, sheep breeder, Newtown, Powys**
yeomans.ranch@btinternet.com

For the motion – We have tried a variety of options, but it is still not working.

14:05 **Samuel Wharry, sheep breeder, Carnlough, Co. Antrim, NI**
samuelwharry@tiscali.co.uk

Against the motion – We need to exploit the genetic potential of hill breeds, but there are things breeders need help with.

14:10 Discussion

15:10 Coffee

15:40 **4: Innovate from within**
Chaired by Mike Coffey, SRUC

15:45 **Ron Lewis, Professor of Animal Breeding and Genomics, University of Nebraska – Lincoln**

rlewis5@unl.edu

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Sheep breeding in the US

Ron will give a brief overview of the US sheep industry, describing successes and challenges in its genetic improvement programme and opportunities that lie ahead.

16:15 **Carroll Barber, sheep breeder, Wymondham, Norfolk**
carroll@charollais sheep.com

The rise, fall, rise and future of co-operative breeding programmes

Carroll will be discussing what has happened in the 25 years since Sire Reference Schemes began. She will indicate what worked and what didn't, and what has been learnt. She will highlight what the future may bring.

16:35 **Shaun Hall Jones, sheep producer, Carmarthenshire**
shaunhalljones@aol.co.uk

Genetic Improvement – The Future of a Profitable Sheep Enterprise?

Shaun was an HCC scholar in 2013 and travelled to New Zealand. He will be discussing the findings of his scholarship and how he has changed his business.



16:55 **Mike Miller** *N. Sch., sheep producer, Blandford, Dorset*
michael.miller20@yahoo.com

Matching the breed to the system, or vice versa

Mike has recently completed a Nuffield Scholarship on wintering options for ewes. He will be discussing the radical changes to his system in the last few years and what he learnt from his Nuffield trips.

17:15 Discussion

17:30 **Poster Session**
Authors will be standing by their poster.

19:15 **Wine Reception** – sponsored by SRUC



20:00 **Dinner**
Featuring the inaugural SBRT awards – categories include best poster and best audience question.

Sunday 22 November

9:20 **5: Future gazing**
Chaired by Lynfa Davies, HCC

9:25 **Joe Angell**, *researcher, University of Liverpool*
Joseph.Angell@liverpool.ac.uk

Dealing with Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis

Joe will be talking about the work that is being done at the University of Liverpool on CODD. He will also be reporting on his PhD project that is looking at treatment options and will present early conclusions from his work.

9:45 **Mike Stear**, *Professor of Immunogenetics, University of Glasgow*
Michael.Stear@glasgow.ac.uk

Testing for parasite resilience

Mike will be discussing findings from a project validating whether saliva can be used as a proxy for faecal egg counting. He will be talking about other options for collecting phenotypes for parasite resilience.

10:05 **Neil Clelland**, *SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian*
neil.clelland@sruc.ac.uk

What do new CT measurements tell us?

Neil will be discussing his AHDB Beef and Lamb, SRUC, HCC and QMS-funded PhD on using computed tomography to predict meat quality in sheep breeding programmes, as well as referring to related work on spine length and vertebrae number.

10:25 Discussion

10:40 Coffee Break

11:10 **6: To do list**
Chaired by John Scott, QMS

11:15 **Fiona Lovatt**, *sheep vet, Eggleston, Barnard Castle, Co Durham*
fiona@flockhealth.co.uk

Are we sure that fertility tests are working?

Fiona will be talking about developing new Sheep Veterinary Society recommendations on ram fertility testing for vets. She will provide information on a project she is working on about the repeatability and reliability of scrotal measurements.

11:45 **Mike Coffey**, *Professor of Livestock Informatics, SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian*
Mike.Coffey@sruc.ac.uk

Using abattoir derived carcass data within breeding evaluations

Mike will be discussing how commercial data has been used within beef breeding evaluations and possible options for sheep evaluations.

12:15 **Donagh Berry**, *Quantitative geneticist, Teagasc, Moorepark, Co. Cork*
donagh.berry@teagasc.ie

What are the potential genomic solutions for the sheep industry?

Donagh will be discussing his work on genomics in the beef, sheep and dairy industry, and outlining how genomic approaches could benefit the Irish sheep industry.

12:45 **Jonathan Barber**
Chairman's Closing Remarks

13:00 Lunch