

Sheep Breeders Round Table 2022

Defining the future role for AHDB in sheep genetic improvement

Kim Matthews

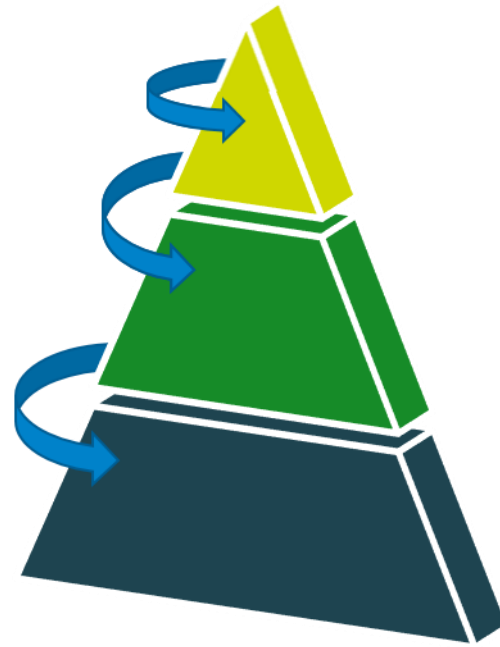
Overview

- Context – what needs improving from where we are today
- Defra/AHDB scoping study
- AHDB's delivering the future of farming programme
- Current review (being undertaken by Chris Murphy)
- Next steps

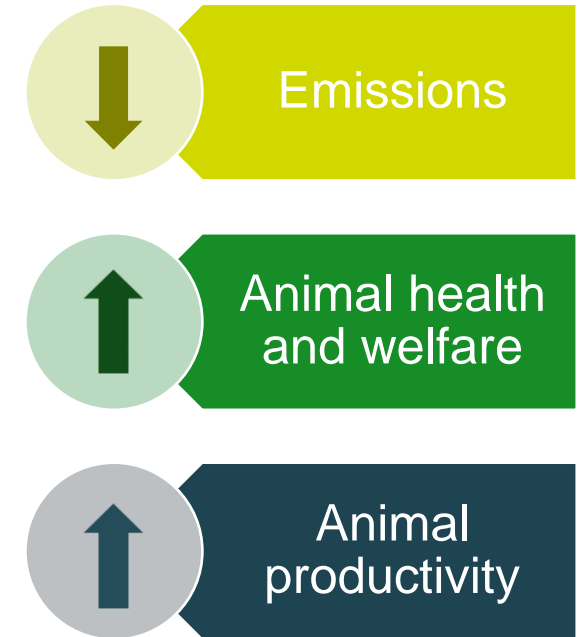
Why breeding?



Cumulative
and permanent

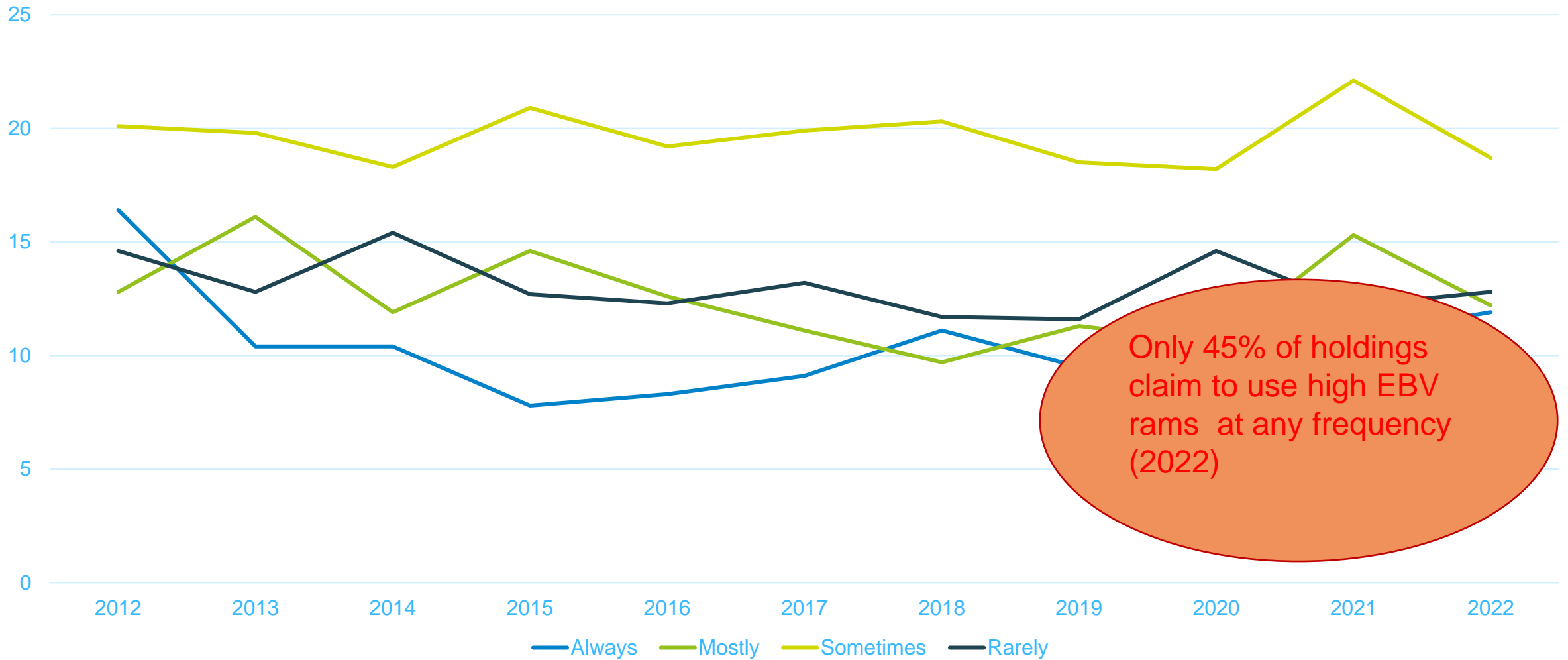


Improvement at the top
percolates through industry



Impacts all key drivers
of livestock production

% holdings using rams with high EBVs (Defra farm practices survey)



Only 45% of holdings claim to use high EBV rams at any frequency (2022)

Levy payer feedback key themes



- Current data is too complicated, difficult to understand
- Too many sources of data
- Health status of bought in stock also integral
 - Health scheme status of current and previous herds
 - Vaccination records

– and possible solution?

- Single portal containing or linking to all available data
- Animal landing page with top level detail and click-through access to more detailed data
- Simple visual presentation of EBVs
- Provision of multi-breed and crossbred evaluations



Questions to answer at this stage



1. What are the economic and environmental impacts of genetic progress in UK beef and sheep?
2. What are the metrics for success?
3. What is the scope of the portal?
4. What developments need to take place (and in what order) to deliver the vision?
5. How do we create a sustainable model for widespread data collection?

Defra/AHDB scoping study

- Jointly funded with Defra
- Delivered by AbacusBio, SRUC and CIEL
- Focussed on what the industry needs, not who should deliver it

DEFRA/AHDB scoping study

Provide the evidence base for decisions regarding the development of a UK genetic improvement infrastructure for beef and sheep.

WP1

- Quantify historical and potential future benefits of genetic improvement in the UK beef and sheep sector.
- Define appropriate metrics to monitor progress

WP2

- Define the most appropriate industry genetic improvement infrastructure for the UK sheep and beef sector
 - *Industry consultation, quantitative assessment, business plan proposal*

WP3

- Establish potential of a national phenotype and/or genotype collection programme to deliver government and industry objectives on sustainability and the environment
 - *Cost benefit analysis*

Defra/AHDB scoping study – key findings

- Annualised financial benefits have increased by around 50% since 2015 to £14.7m
- Impact of genetic improvement can be improved by a number of ways, but key factors are:
 - Selection intensity (in the hands of breeders)
 - Adoption (breeders & commercial producers)
- Most effective infrastructure requires consolidation (a national approach) and simplification for the end users while building in appropriate new tools and traits
- Clear cost-benefit in a national phenotype and genotype collection programme

AHDB plans

The main image is a promotional graphic for an event. It features a man in a dark blue shirt crouching in a field of green plants under a blue sky with white clouds. The AHDB logo is in the top right corner of the image. The text 'Delivering the future of farming' is written in large white letters across the middle. Below it, the date 'Thursday 10 November 2022' is in yellow, and the invitation 'Join us to see your levy in action' is in white. A QR code is in the bottom right corner.

AHDB

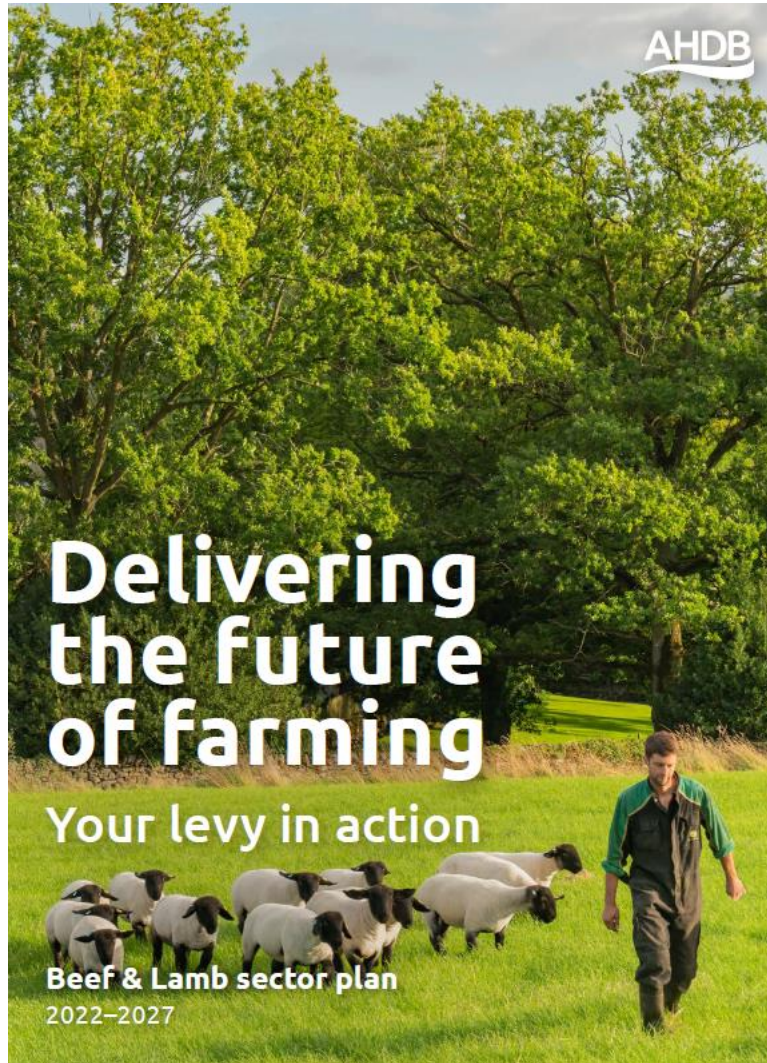
Delivering the future of farming

Thursday 10 November 2022

Join us to see your levy in action

A square QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the graphic, enclosed in a white border.

Beef and Lamb Sector Plan



‘The levy should be used to support the reputation of red meat, and all other work should be aligned behind that goal’

Colin Bateman, Beef and Lamb Sector Chair



Beef and Lamb Sector Plan

Reputation

So, what do we mean by reputation?
In consumers' eyes the hot topics are their own health, animal health and welfare, and the environment.

Marketing

Levy payers can only support the reputation of the industry if they have good opportunities to sell the beef and lamb that they produce at profitable prices.

Exports

The more beef and lamb we can sell around the world, the better chance we have of getting the best value for the whole carcass and so support farmgate prices.

Insight and evidence

It is only possible to protect and promote the reputation of beef and lamb if we can provide evidence of excellent on farm practices demonstrated across our industry.

Work reducing or stopping following the vote

The sector council has acted on clear messages from levy payers to amplify our work on marketing, exports and reputation. Delivering this work, combined with a reduction in total income, means that hard choices have to be made and some work must be reduced or stopped.

- Animal health and welfare and environment work must underpin the reputation of red meat and not duplicate what others may be doing
- Transition from BPS and People in Agriculture will be pared back
- Collaboration with Government to find alternative funding schemes must be explored.

Strategic review of AHDB's beef and sheep genetic and genomic evaluation services

Information gathering

- Stakeholder interviews
 - Around 40 one to one 1 interviews underway
 - Breeders, societies, farmers, commercial breeding companies, others
- Survey
 - Breed societies, farmers, breeders
 - Around 120 received
- Workshops
 - To refine the prioritisation and define what some of the responses mean

Review summary



AHDB valued as an 'honest broker' but not meeting industry's genetics leadership expectations



Shared industry goals, objectives, or targets are lacking



Desire for more industry partnerships and collaboration



Data management is a clear role for AHDB



Evaluations too technical, too complex and not well understood

Key themes – AHDB role

- Engagement
- Collaboration
- Facilitation

Next steps

- Receive final review (end of the month)
- Consideration by B&L Sector Council and agreement on WHAT we should do
- Develop a plan on HOW we will deliver
- The outcome must be focussed on delivering value back to levy payers
- This is the start of an ongoing process
 - Please engage with us on this journey!!

Do not lose sight of the goal!

To generate additional returns to the beef and sheep sectors, and reduce their environmental impact, through delivery of greater access to and uptake of superior genetics.

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SAVE
THE
DATE