



Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society

Newsletter 66 – Summer 2009

From the Chairman...

It's a great strength of our numerically small Society that we have such an active and supportive membership. **Ann and Rachel** – our roving exhibitionists - put up a very fine display at **Sheep North** a few weeks ago. Rachel was able to provide a couple of big fine ewes and these attracted quite some attention with commercial hill flock folk asking where they could get hill ewes as big and as strong.

Philip Onions from up Cumbria way has taken up the challenge of producing a series of Breeder/**Flock profiles** and to get the ball rolling has produced a sample of his own flock which is featured as part of this newsletter. I reckon you will all agree that Philip has done a grand job on this first of at least several (please!). The accent is on the flock of course, not the breeder, so it isn't too personal. The value of the exercise lies in the potential to share knowledge and to inspire others. We are all a bit isolated as woody breeders and it can only be for the good of Woody breeders and the breed if we can see what others are doing right and wrong.

So if Philip comes calling please give up some time to inform us of what you are up to out there! It's clearly an opportunity for self/flock advertisement anyway!

Over in Carmarthenshire **John Jones** has bravely stepped forward to take up the challenge of conducting a census of our breed, which we hope to get under way very shortly. You will receive either a paper questionnaire for completion and return in a sae provided or an email. Please look out for either and please, please return it as promptly as you can.

We have a good idea from Grassroots as to how many CFB registered ewes and tups there are but we are also asking how many unregistered animals there are amongst CFB registering

breeders and of course the big question is: how many are there on the hill. The results as with all census will be confidential and only published so as to show actual total numbers and their geographical groupings.

I'll be off to Stoneleigh this week (Wednesday) at the Royal Show along with Rachel Godschalk and John Jones to see Tim Brigstocke and Peter Titley of RBST (Executive Chairman and Vice Chairman) to see if our two organizations can work together on producing a **hill register** for our breed. Having spoken with Tim and Peter a month or so ago at the CFB meeting at RBST, there is clearly scope for union on this important project which we are already in the process of doing anyway. And indeed on the supplementary register to the CFB and other related matters.

So then, have a good hay making time and I hope to see you at our three premier woody events - the Hope and Melton shows and at Bretton Mills of course. Entries to the new woody classes at the Manifold show in the South west Peak are eagerly sought by the way. (It's on 8 August).

With best regards, Rob Ford

Woody Word – new feature!

There are a few words or phrases which are common to Woodies and the Woody Heartlands. Here's one...***burling***..cutting away dirty soiled wool usually before shearing. Also ***belting*** in other near parts but ***burling*** in the Hope Woodlands.¹ Elsewhere: crutching / dagging etc.

More donations gratefully received! *Next edition:* "a ***penistone***" (not what you think it is)

¹ Source: Words of the White Peak: Holland: ISBN 9781898670155

NSA North Sheep

The *Lancashire Telegraph* reports that thousands of people flocked to North Sheep on 3 June, “an event that showcased what the industry had to offer. And there was an overwhelming sense of optimism among exhibitors and sheep industry leaders that farming had a bright future.” The 200+ trade stands included a great selection of feed, nutrition and veterinary products, handling equipment and much more – and of course there were huge numbers of sheep!

With Rob Ford and Paul Dixon to share the load, we still found we were kept busy all day. The stand proved a good meeting place for established and recent Woodland breeders; we were delighted to welcome old friends, to meet new ones, and to put faces to names we already knew.



The display showed up quite reasonably against those of other breeds, and we were complimented on our promotion of the commercial aspect of Woodlands. Rachel had brought one ewe with purebred Woodlands and one with WFW/Texel x Beltex crossbred lambs at foot. The crossbred lambs were two weeks younger than the purebreds, so did not show quite as much size difference as we had hoped, but still managed to make the point of putting Woodland ewes straight to a terminal sire without an intermediate mule.

The hosts for North Sheep were the Stott family, at Laund Farm, Chipping, near Preston, a beautiful location between the Ribble Valley and the Forest of Bowland. The Stotts farm 500 acres, all of which are in the LFA, rising to 650' and beyond. Their traditional sheep enterprise of 500 Swaledale and 120 Beulah ewes and 50 pedigree Bluefaced Leicesters is complemented by 400 Friesland milk sheep, whose milk goes mainly to produce cheese, including the locally named Parlick Fell. More details at www.northsheep.org.uk/hostfarm/

Rachel & Ann Godschalk

Show results

Suffolk Show - Judge: Dan Bull

Aged ram: David Perfitt
Shearling ram: Jo Taylor
Ram lamb: Jo Taylor
Aged ewe: Jo Taylor
Shearling ewe: Jo Taylor
Ewe lamb: Jo Taylor
Champion: Jo Taylor's shearling ewe
Reserve Champion: Jo Taylor's shearling ram.

Honley Show – Judge: Martin Warburton

James Gill's sheep won all six classes. His aged tup was Champion, and his shearling ewe took Reserve Champion.

East of England - Judge: Paul Dixon

Aged ram: David Perfitt
Shearling ram: Rachel Godschalk
Ram lamb: Ann Godschalk
Aged ewe: David Perfitt
Shearling ewe: Rachel Godschalk
Ewe lamb: Rachel Godschalk
Champion: Rachel Godschalk's ewe lamb
Reserve Champion: Ann Godschalk's ram lamb

Harden Moss Sheep Show and Sheepdog Trials *Judge: John Cottrill*

Aged ram: Jeff Dowey
Shearling ram: James Gill
Aged ewe: Paul Thorp
Shearling ewe: James Gill
Champion: James Gill's shearling ewe (this is a different shearling from the Honley Reserve Champion)
Reserve Champion: Paul Thorp's aged ewe.

Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society - Flock Profile

Name of Flock: The Keer Falls Flock

Flock Prefix: Keer Falls

Name of Breeder: Mr P J Onions

Contact Details: Address: Keer Falls Forest farm, Arkholme, Carnforth, Lancs. LA6 1AP

Telephone: 01524 221019

email: philip@keerfalls.co.uk

Mobile: 07806 700179

web site: www.keerfalls.co.uk

Flock Details: Year pedigree flock formed: 2001 **Size of pedigree flock:** Medium

[Small: 1-20; Medium: 21-50; Large: 50-100; Major Flock: 101+]

Breeding Policy:

Firstly we wanted to secure only tups with the ARR/ARR genotype. Then we are breeding for size, strength and power. I want a big strong animal, with good teeth, legs and muscle. I am looking for the animal to be tall at the shoulder but with a meaty back end too. These are hill sheep, so I want them to be hardy, but this is only proved by time, so I like ewes that have survived my ruthless cull policy! As for looks, I don't want horns that curl too tightly to the head (a fault of some of Nolo's lambs) nor do I want horns that flyaway like goat horns. I don't want sheep, especially tups, with black spots if possible.



Killybawn Nolo, 4 Shear, Stock Tup

Marketing Policy: I am looking to improve the quality of the flock, so only the tup lambs from the very best ewes are kept entire, all the others are reared as wethers and sold as Organic, Farm Assured, Rare



A gimmer hogg yet to be tupp

Breed Lamb direct from the farm in freezer packs. Poor gimmers may go the same way; the best are kept for breeding. Cast ewes may be used on commercial tups such as the Texel, if strong enough, or are sent to auction for killing. I rarely sell breeding stock at auction, as I am not happy with their quality meeting my high standards yet, but I may sell stock privately so contact me if you are interested in seeing them for yourself.

Showing Achievements: None yet, because I am not yet confident enough with the quality of my stock to show them yet.

Farm Details:

Year started to farm here: 1986

Size of farm: Group C

[Group A 1 - 20 ha, B 21 - 50 ha, C 51 - 100 ha, D 101 - 500, E 501 - 1000 ha, F 1000 +ha]

Land classification: Mostly LFA **Farm Type:** Beef and Sheep **Other crops:** Some poultry

Other Breeds of Livestock kept:

Sheep: Texel crosses, Mules, Swaledales, Jacob crosses, Wendsleydales and Woodland crosses

Cattle: Aberdeen Angus crosses.

I just wanted a photo of me from the top of the hill, with the farm behind and look what happens!



Description of farm:

Keer Falls Forest Farm is an Organic beef and sheep hill farm, that straddles the county boundaries of Lancashire and South

Lakeland. The Farm has a rich biodiversity that includes heavily rushed pastures, steep hills, flowering meadows, woods and copses, river side, streams, river, lakes and ponds. At the moment, all the fields are down as permanent pasture. The grass land has been unimproved for many years and is acidic, low in fertility and species rich. No inorganic fertilisers are used at all. No chemical sprays are used at all. All feeds used are GMO free [the farm is GMO free] and 100% organic.

Flock management – general details:

The flock is managed organically to Soil Association Standards. These Standards are complex and comprehensive, but are aimed at achieving a high level of general health and immunity to keep the whole flock healthy. Rotation and other management practices are aimed at reducing the need to worm sheep. The organic farmer must treat a sick animal, using veterinary advice. However routine use of wormers is prohibited. Flukers are permitted on this farm under derogation from the Soil Association because the land is so wet and fluke is a recognised problem. Heptavac-P is also permitted as part of the overall Health Plan. All livestock on the farm were also Bluetongue vaccinated in 2008 and will be again in 2009. Copper is the only permitted mineral on the farm because blood tests showed a deficiency. Copper boluses are administered in the second half of ewe pregnancy as per instructions. **No other routine treatments are used**, except a footbath to control footrot.

Stock for Sale

We understand that, sadly, there is to be a dispersal sale of all the stock from **Burpham Court Farm**, at Jacobs Well, near Guildford in Surrey, following the death of Mr Dearnley.

Amongst the sheep are a number of Woodlands – 23 according to the Combined Flock Book, though other lower numbers have also been quoted. There may also be lambs at foot. For further details, please contact Mrs Margaret Dearnley on 07810788649.

Wool Marketing Board exemptions

Having noticed that British Wool Marketing Board exemptions did not include WFWs, I contacted the Wool Board, who said that the exemptions list has been carried forward year on year for quite some time. The Wool Marketing Scheme requires those with more than four adult sheep to register their flock and market their wool with the BWMB. The exemption allows farmers to opt out, providing them with the opportunity to pursue other ways to market their fleece such as selling direct to spinners. However, lack of exemption doesn't mean that fleeces cannot be sold to hand spinners, the rule being that they can't be sold directly to processors who use mechanical means to process the wool. I am also told the Board isn't keen to spend time chasing miscreants.

RF

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