



Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society

Web site: www.whitefacedwoodland.co.uk

Newsletter 92– November 2014

From the new Chairman...

Greetings all; this is my first attempt at Chairman's drivel so please bear with me. Thanks to all of you for voting me into this role and hope I do the job justice.

There's never a quiet time on a livestock farm and this one is no different, busy getting sheep ready for tups and tups ready for sheep then letting them go. We've got eight out now with more going out every week from now till the end of November. We never really notice spring here, it's over and into summer when we've done lambing! Been a good backend for most with plenty of grass and unreal temperatures but alas most of the cattle had to be housed this week because of conditions underfoot. I'm very nervous in a morn now: pneumonia is a real worry with full sheds and foggy mists.

Think I just need now to thank all involved in the great work being done with RBST. Some progress looks just around the corner, so everything crossed for 11.11.2014. I think special thanks needs mentioning for Rob and Philip who are both very committed and have worked tirelessly through some dark times. Here's hoping this is when it all pays off, but as I say, all on the committee have done a great job.

Well that's it from me. Here's hoping all your tups get working, Santa brings plenty of pressies and look forward to days getting longer again.

Take care for now,
Paul Thorp

A reminder to those few of you who haven't yet been in touch, the Annual Subscription of £10 became due on 1 September.

The minutes of the AGM held on 18 October are being circulated with this Newsletter

Flock Book Review Committee

Following the AGM, we agreed to keep the Flock Book Review Committee going; to press on with the amalgamation of the two main flock books and to set up an inspection process that is fair to everyone concerned.

At the AGM we agreed unanimously to accept the registration process being proposed by the Flock Book Review Committee. That was very pleasing to all those who have helped set this up and I thank everyone on the committee for all their hard work and patience and Ruth Dalton from the RBST and Libby Henson of Grassroots who have both worked so hard to help us and advise us as to what is possible and what is not from their perspectives. I would also like to thank Debbie Wardell for her help even though she was unable to stay on the committee because of her other commitments, but we did appreciate the help you were able to give Debbie, thanks and thank you to Helen Wray too for stepping in and joining us at such short notice and for organising a great AGM.

So what happens next? Well Ruth has taken this to the RBST Conservation Committee today and they have been very supportive and agreed to our proposals too, which is great news, then we need to discuss with Libby how we could reduce our costs to an absolute minimum. But assuming that we can get around any issues that may arise from that then we now have a system for registering sheep that hopefully will unite all interested parties.

How will this work? Well first and foremost I want to remind you all that pedigree certificates are only an aid, a source of information that can help with your stock selection. First and foremost you must look at the sheep in front of you.

Examine its teeth and look at its pasterns, its back and conformation. Assess how broad it is, how strong its bone is, how long it is. Check out his testicles or her bag and then look at its head and horns. If that sheep is what you want in your flock then buy it, if not, no matter what the pedigree says, don't expect it to produce first class offspring just because it is related to a good sheep. It can only pass on its own genes, and not those it might not possess! Remember in each generation an animal only carries half of each parent's genes, so each individual within a generation will lose half the genes of the previous generations; so let's face it, if a sheep doesn't have what it takes, no matter who it is related to, there is a good chance that it has lost just what you want! Assume that if you can't see good traits, then it doesn't have them; although this is not always the case, it is a good place to begin!

Then if you only have a flock of sheep registered within the current CFB register and you don't want any animal from outside that's fine, you can carry on within that register, registering and using only sheep from that register. On the other hand if you only have WWSS registered Woodlands then your flock can remain within that part of the flock, that henceforth we will call the Hill Register. No one is going to make anyone buy any sheep that they don't want! If however you see a good sheep from one of the other registers or one that is not registered, then we have processes for that too.

To explain how this will work we have drawn up some system charts for you and a table of possible combinations. In the first chart, we have tried to show you what was the previous system; follow red arrows for sheep in the CFB and blue for those in the WWSS Register, and green for the Supplementary Register, which is still available for those wishing to put unregistered sheep into the CFB or what is now called the Full Pedigree Register (don't forget that sheep in the Hill Register can have full pedigrees too).

In the second chart we've tried to show you how we now intend to get sheep into the registers. Then once again you will see that the old CFB flock, now the Full Pedigree Register, is still in red, while the WWSS register, now the Hill Register is in blue and the Supplementary Register is in green.

Now we have agreed that sheep entering the Supplementary Register or the Hill Register will still have to be inspected and from known provenance (in other words that they must come

from a known source that breeds Woodlands true, but don't worry, between us all, we know who most of these are).

Then sheep can revolve within these two registers for as long as you like, breeding with sheep within these registers down through the generations, but if someone wants a Hill Registered sheep to enter their Full Pedigree Registered flock then as long as it has three generations of registered sheep in its family tree, in other word a full pedigree, it can. On the other hand if someone wants a Full Pedigree sheep in their Hill Registered flock, then it must be inspected and providing that it passes this inspection then they can too.

Otherwise unregistered or Hill Registered sheep with less than three generations of family tree, can only get to the Full Pedigree Register via the Supplementary Register and that means three generations of back crossing the offspring back with Full Pedigree sheep or by putting that sheep and all its offspring through three generations in the Hill Register.

Finally let me point out that both registers will now fit inside one overall Flock Book run by Grassroots Ltd; however each will be run separately, the Hill Register by the WWSS and the Full Pedigree Register, and the Supplementary Register by the RBST, with the Flock Book Review Committee offering advice and helping to coordinate the overall Flock Book. Please note: this whole thing is about cooperation between the RBST and WWSS and the FBRC can only advise each group. I appreciate that these new names for these registers are not what everyone would like, but each group can name their register as they want and it is not up to anyone else to dictate what the others should do, so I ask you for your patience and tolerance and go with it, it will work with time.

Having both registers in one Flock Book should mean that all those sheep registered should be under the protection of any plans laid out by government to protect rare breeds in the event of a major disease outbreak. We will only know how much that is worth when we have to face one! It will have to be tested out with that government when the time comes! They should all also be eligible for conservation grazing, but again that will need to be tested out with the authorities! I can't tell you what the authorities will or will not do and neither can anyone else, because when under pressure, who knows what politicians will do to protect themselves

politically and they might disregard all the previous rules!

So is all this clear? No? Well have a look at our charts, follow the arrows and see if you can get your head around the routes for moving sheep between registers. If you still don't get it, you are welcome to phone me on 015242 21019, but not after 9.00 pm please, some of us start work at 4.00am.

Take care,
Philip Onions

Sheep Wanted

Rachel has been contacted by several potential buyers wanting ewes or in-lamb ewes. Please let her know if you have anything you think would be suitable Phone: 07962 152242 or RachelGodschalk@whitefacedwoodland.co.uk

Sheep for Sale

John Jones has six to ten quality hill-bred draft ewes for sale. Good bloodlines and can be put to the tup before sale if required. E-mail: johnjonesbenjamin@yahoo.co.uk or phone: 01650 511485 or 07925 118278 (Machynlleth, Powys)

Veronica de Sully has two shearling tups for sale, both CFB registered:
Stannersburn Midnight - shearling tup out of a Roseberry tup and Beckermond ewe. He is proven and sired seven lambs last year.
Stannersburn Discovery - shearling tup out of a Roseberry tup and Beckermond ewe. Not proven. We also have eight tup lambs some of which will make the grade and we are open to offers.
E-mail: brsully@hotmail.com or phone: 07961 113108 Hexham, Northumberland

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