



Cotswold Sheep Society Newsletter

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Mrs Judy Wilkie, Mrs Margaret Pursch, Mrs Kate Kay,
Mr Robin Leach, Mr Derek Cross, Mr Richard Mumford, Mr Thomas Jackson

Editors: Norman Kay and Sandra Rath



Examples of The Hon Mrs Angela Reid's Queenford Flock

April 2008 edition

Congratulations to Angela Reid, who won the flock competition (large flocks) last year. Here she shares with us some thoughts about aspects of flock management

The Queenford Flock

Winning the Large Flock Competition was one of the most unexpected, and proudest, moments of my life. Until we moved to Queenford Farm, my only experience of sheep was bottle-feeding a pet lamb more years ago than I care to remember.

The farm consists of about ten hectares of pasture liable to flooding from the River Thames, some rough ground and yet more water in the form of flooded gravel pits. To deal with the grass we decided to buy a small flock of Jacobs to act as both mowers and freezer-fillers. Another consequence of the move was that as we had so much water around we thought we should keep some interesting ducks. So began our annual trips to the Rare Breed Show at Stoneleigh. For several years we walked past the Cotswold Sheep Society stand and we fell in love with the Cotswold sheep with their lustrous wool, smiling mouths and Rastafarian forelocks.

In 2000 we headed for Stoneleigh as usual. By chance, it happened to be the day of the Cotswold Sheep sale – and we could resist no longer. We bid for, and bought, Weylode Windflower from Lorraine Jackson. Luckily, she agreed to take her back to Gloucestershire as we had no trailer with us; we had intended to buy ducks - not sheep. We instantly realised that one Cotswold did not make a flock so we gratefully accepted when Lorraine offered to sell us Weylode Willow. We also bought three Chastleton shearlings and five ewe lambs from Charlton Farms - the Queenford Flock was born. Willow, Windflower and the three Chastleton ewes were tupped by Lorraine's Brockhampton Percy, and I was into my first season of lambing Cotswolds. It was February 2001.

We had had one ewe lamb, Agnes, as well as a reasonable number of ram lambs, and I was just beginning to congratulate myself on what looked like being a reasonably successful first season, when Foot and Mouth broke out. Even now I find it hard to think back to that time, when the television and papers endlessly presented us with heart-breaking scenes of death and destruction. I only mention it now, because it had two effects on me, and the flock.

Firstly, I became passionately aware of my responsibility, as a keeper of rare breed sheep, to protect and preserve my flock; something that is again in the forefront of my thoughts as we are now in the Blue Tongue Protection Zone. Secondly, and on a more prosaic note, when it came to tupping that autumn, I had no ram, and with the movement restrictions, no possibility of getting one. Luckily, because of my varied selection of ewes, and time spent learning how to use the Flock Books, I found I could use a combination of my ram lambs to cover all my ewes. Equally luckily, the boys were all willing, able and fertile! Since then I have continuously tried to improve my flock with the assistance of Middlewick Onyx, and more recently Tingewick Chaucer. Next year I hope, Tingewick Ignatius, and my own, Queenford Griffin will also play their part.

I have been on a huge learning curve since we acquired our first Cotswold and I am incredibly grateful for all the help and advice I have had from so many

people from the Cotswold Sheep Society over the years. However, I have learned some Cotswold lessons for myself, and some have been particularly painful.

Lesson One: There is nothing more important to a Cotswold than its stomach – so never stand between a Cotswold and a full feed trough.

Lesson Two: If there is lamb creep in the lamb creep feeder, and there is a particularly greedy Cotswold ewe, she will manage to squeeze her head in between the bars if she really tries... even if it kills her! No happy ending for this one I'm afraid and I no longer use creep feeders; instead I rig up hurdles to make creep areas in our field shelters.

Lesson Three: If the patch of nice, bright green stuff beside the river looks greener than the grass the Cotswolds are standing on – be sure that at least one will have a go at getting it. When it finds itself up to its knees in water and its mouth full of tasteless waterweed, it will wait there until some nice person turns up with a Quad bike, a rope, and a friend, to pull it out of the water... eventually.

Lesson Four: Absolutely the only time that a Cotswold is not interested in following a feed bucket is when it means intentionally getting its feet wet - even if it is to save it from being marooned on an island in the middle of a rapidly rising river.

Lesson Five: It is hard to find a shearer who doesn't groan when you tell him you have a number of nicely horned Jacobs and some Cotswolds, the size of small hippopotami, for him to deal with.

Lesson Six: If you have a puppy that thinks playing with sheep might be fun – put them in a field with some older ewes and their lambs – it will soon be put firmly in its place.

Lesson Seven: If a Cotswold needs a vet it will always be at a weekend, and if it has a problem lambing -it will always be in the middle the night.

However, there are many wonderful things we have discovered about Cotswolds over the past eight years; they are fantastic mothers, have lovely even temperaments, and having their backs scratched sends them ecstatic. I am particularly fond of my rams, who are all perfect gentlemen, except for the odd joust with a cheeky shearling upstart. This year we are lambing twenty-one Cotswold, eight Jacob and three Jawold ewes. As I write this, all the Cotswolds have lambed, and I have remembered just how much hard work, and how little sleep is involved during lambing. However, things have improved recently as we now have 'Sheep TV.' This wireless CCTV is not an all-action channel, and it can be as exciting as watching paint dry, but it has meant I can monitor exactly what is happening in the barn without endlessly having to go and check. Interestingly, it is often the sound that alerts me to impending disaster, rather than the picture.

Life with a flock of Cotswolds is never dull - every year there have been new challenges, and problems to overcome, and I am sure that will never change. Winning the competition has been incredibly encouraging as I now know that I must have managed to get at least some of the answers right.

Angela Reid

COUNCIL CORNER

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The Society has decided to print in the newsletter a brief outline of what the Council is discussing at its meetings. Currently this includes:

Members Open Day: An invitation to all members to come to this open session on Sunday 18th May at Aldsworth Village Hall from 12 - 4.00 pm. We want everyone to contribute their views and ideas about the future direction of the Society. The day will include:

- an information exchange on what other members are doing on box schemes /marketing wool / flock management
- an opportunity to see and comment on the proposed new website
- presentation on a computer based society flock book and flock management, systems information on the society's own meat marketing scheme and Trade Marks
- proposed changes to the organisation of the Society and greater membership involvement
- full discussion and open debate

Everyone is welcome. **It is vital that all members, new or old, attend.**

Liquid refreshments will be provided but bring your own sandwiches for a picnic lunch! Don't delay - put the date in your diary. This is an unmissable chance to have your say on the future of our brilliant Cotswold sheep.

**** AN IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY ****

Flock Competition: It has been agreed to offer the Flock Competition again this year with a flat fee of £25 per entrant and Mr R Boodle has kindly agreed to judge the Competition again for us. If you would like to enter the Competition this year please complete the enclosed Flock Competition form and return to the Secretary by 20th June 2008.

Ear Tags: It was unanimously agreed to continue with the current system until the outcome of the electronic tagging which is due in about two years time.

AGM and Open Day at Wyck Rissington Village Hall: Sunday 10th August – All members are most welcome to attend our AGM at 11am and then to enjoy a social and informative walk around Mr Derek Cross's farm at Church Westcote. A more detailed programme will be included within the next newsletter. **** AN IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY ****

Advertising: It was been decided that we will stop our regular advertisement in the Ark magazine and to replace this with adverts in the Smallholder magazine.

Trade Mark Licence: The Council encourage all members to use our meat and wool trade marks as much as possible as it is important to use it or else we will lose it. If you would like to register to use the Society Trade Mark Licence please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary for more information. For those who want to know more about the two Trade Marks, a presentation and question and answers session is included in the Members Open Day on 18th May.

Council Nominations: Nominations have been received for Mr D Cross, The Hon Mrs A Reid and Mrs C Cunningham. Council recommended that all three people should be elected at the AGM on 10th August 2008.

Website: It was agreed that the current website address of cotswoldsheep.org.uk will be lapsed and our new website address will be www.cotswoldsheepsociety.co.uk which has very kindly been donated to the Society by Mr P Froehlich. Please note our new email address is therefore info@cotswoldsheepsociety.co.uk. ** PLEASE NOTE NEW WEBSITE AND EMAIL DETAILS **

Membership subscriptions: The Registrar would be grateful if any outstanding subscriptions could please be paid for as soon as possible.

Wool Competition: Bob Palmer would like to launch an Annual Competition for Wool Users. He would be happy to donate the wool to schools and colleges in September 2008 so that the entries of their work could be displayed at the Moreton Show the following year with a presentation to be held at the Moreton Show. Please do let the Secretary know if you have any suggestions of possible schools or colleges that the Society could approach for this competition.

FORTHCOMING SHOWS:

Members of Council will be at all the Shows listed below and they very much hope to see you there.

Royal Agricultural Day at The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester on Monday 26th May

The Royal Agricultural College is running a Food and Farming day as part of the Year of Farming and Food on May 26th which will be open between 10am-4pm. Entry is free and Mrs K Kay is kindly co-ordinating a Society presence there.

The Society Summer Show - 6th July 2008

Once again the summer show will be held at Cirencester Park as part of the Cotswold Show. Last year we were blessed with lovely weather & over 100 Cotswold sheep were entered in the show. We are determined not to be put off by bluetongue & subject to the Defra regulations will hope to see as many of you again. This is our own show and an opportunity for everyone to have a go at showing in a friendly & supportive

way and without too much of a competitive atmosphere! Entry fees are cheap and the rosettes are spectacular so come and have a go. For those who have never entered or won a rosette we have a novice class where you can bring that beautiful lamb you bred this year.

All entrants to the summer show automatically receive free entry to the Cotswold Show, and any other members of the society who would like to come as spectators will also get free entry .It is a good opportunity to meet up with other members & watch the show & some lovely sheep. You simply have to contact Kate Kay (01453 833458) 2 weeks before the show so she can send you entry passes.

Entry forms are enclosed in this newsletter with details but if you need any further information please contact Kate.

Monmouth Show – Thursday 28th August

Further details on this Show will be printed in the next newsletter but it is very much hoped that all Society members will try and target this Show this year as they have kindly agreed to let us have our own Breed section if we have a minimum of three competitors entered into the ‘Any Other Longwool’ section.

Breeds of Gloucestershire Sale – Friday 1st August 2008

Mrs L Parkes is kindly co-ordinating this Show for the Society. If you would like to advertise in the Catalogue please let Mrs L Parkes know as soon as possible - adverts are £60 full page, £40 half page , £20 quarter page. Further details will be in the next newsletter but please do contact Mrs L Parkes if you have any queries in the meantime. Please complete and return the attached entry form to her by Friday 20th June 2008.

CONGRATULATIONS

We would like to congratulate Jonathan and Annabelle Crump of Wick Court Arlingham on the birth of their baby Henrietta.



COTSWOLDS - THE FUTURE

Andy Hall, who is a full-time shepherd, has given his thoughts on the marketing potential of Cotswolds

In 2006 there were 1588 breeding Cotswold ewes registered with the society. This currently lists the Cotswold breed as category 4: At Risk on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust watch list; putting them in the same category as other long wool breeds and traditional UK sheep breeds such as Balwen, Devon and Cornwall Longwool, Dorset Down, Lincoln Longwool, Manx Loaghtan, Norfolk Horn, Portland, Wensleydale and Whitefaced Dartmoor. For the breed to gain minority, or mainstream status it would require the number of registered breeding animals to be around 3000 and above, requiring the breeding flock of Cotswold sheep to double. In 2006 450 Cotswold females and 69 Cotswold rams were registered with the society. At this rate it would take the Cotswold breed a further 3 years to reach minority status, let alone being classified as a mainstream breed. With the average Cotswold flock being 15.88 sheep it is not too bold to say that the chance of the Cotswold ever being classed as a mainstream breed, with the same numbers as well known commercial breeds to be very low.

With the number of breeding ewes within the UK the production of pedigree Cotswold or Cotswold cross lamb for consumption is very small scale, destined for select butchers, home kill and farmers markets. As previously shown, it is not viable to say that the Cotswold can become a major player in the commercial lamb producing market within the near future. With the current low wool prices and the dominant force of the Merino, the days of the Cotswold and other traditional long wool breeds as a force within the world wide supply of wool are numbered. So, with the Cotswold being a relative small force within commercial lamb and wool production, where does this mean the breed can go in the future to bolster its popularity within commercial sheep farming?

In my opinion, the only way to increase the popularity of the breed is within the surplus number of rams registered each year and rams not registered or slaughtered. This is because at current stocking rates of rams per ewes at tugging, the breed only needs around 30 rams to cover all the ewes. Leading me to believe that, given the right publicity, the use of a Cotswold ram as a crossing sire in the production of half-bred ewes to produce a "Cotswold Mule", is the direction the breed should be going in to remain a force within the UK sheep industry. This would use hybrid-vigour to produce a ewe that retains all the benefits of the two starting breeds. The most prolific and popular of the mule breeds is the North of England Mule that crosses the hardiness of the Swaledale ewe with the milky, prolific, early maturing Blue Faced Leicester ram. To put this in context around 200,000 North of England Mule ewe lambs will be sold every year. If the Cotswold breed could produce just 1% of what the North of England Mule breeders sell a year, this would result in an extra 2,000 ewes within the UK that carry Cotswold genes.

The main characteristics of the Cotswold breed that would be passed on to half-bred ewes would be hardiness, exceptional docility, longevity, large lean lambs, superb mothering ability and increased wool production. With its lambing percentage of

150-175% and a low percentage of lambing difficulties it would lend itself greatly to outside lambing flocks. Thus, showing that the Cotswold has all the relevant traits for a top class half-bred ewe for low input, low labour sheep systems. It is then just a matter of picking the correct upland ewe which can be crossed with Cotswold rams to produce this half-bred. In my opinion, the ideal ewe needs to have a lambing percentage between 150-200% and be a large framed ewe to compliment and retain the larger frame of ewes found within the Cotswold breed, aiding in the production of large lean lambs. A sheep that fits this bill would be the North Country Cheviot the largest of the UK's hill breeds. It has shown, on upland grazing, to have a lambing percentage up to 180%, and to produce lambs to a carcass weight of 21kg in 16 weeks. Although this breed is just my suggestion, research and trials would ideally be carried out to determine the correct hill breed in this creation of a brand new half-bred ewe.

In summary, the Cotswold breed needs to move into the 21st century fighting to remain a force within the UK sheep industry, and not be resigned to staying a minority breed only seen at agricultural shows. For this to happen, the Cotswold needs to spread its genes through the use of surplus rams to produce a brand new half-bred ewe fit for the 21st century. More and more sheep farmers are turning to low input, low labour systems but which still produce a large lean lamb within 16 weeks for the commercial lamb market. This article is just one opinion for the future of the breed but I feel it could be a step in the right direction.

Andy Hall

DID YOU KNOW?

Parasite Control

As many parasitic worms become resistant to commercially available wormers more emphasis is being placed on controlling worms in other ways.

Faecal Egg Counts (FEC) are particularly useful as they enable you to monitor the worm burden on your flock and control what is actually there rather than giving a blanket worm treatment to all of your sheep. By doing pre- and post- worming counts you can pin point any resistance in your flock and use a more effective wormer.

To learn more about parasite control you can consult the Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep - SCOPS - documents, available on the Internet and via the National Sheep Association.

Sandra Rath

SHOW DATES FOR 2008

SHOW DATE	SHOW	TEL NO	CLOSING DATE
26 and 27 April	Wonderwool		
Fri 13th June - Sun 15th June	The Three Counties Show	01684 584900	8th April
Sun 15th June	Rare Breeds & Minority Breeds	01684 584900	8th April
Thurs 3rd July - Sun 6th July	Royal Show	02476 858273	23rd April
Sat 5th July - Sun 6th July	Cotswold Show, Cirencester	01285 652007	16th June
Sat 19th July	Stroud Show	01453 883646	to be advised
Mon 21st July - Thurs 24th July	The Royal Welsh	01982 553683	7th May
Wed 30th July	Sheep 2008	01684 892661	31st March
Fri 1st Aug and Sat 2nd August	Show and Sale	01451 830461	20th June
Mon 25th August	Berkeley Show	01453 543335	5th August
Thurs 28th August	Monmouthshire Show	01291 691160	25th July
Sat 6th September	Moreton-in-Marsh Show	01608 651908	16th July
Sunday 14th September	Frampton Show	01452 740698	Stand only

SOME THOUGHTS ON LINE BREEDING

Perhaps many of us have had similar thoughts: You observe your flock. You see an excellent shearling ewe, and also a good quality ram. You think, 'if I bred from them the resultant lambs might be doubly excellent'. But, they are related, so should I take the risk? Does line breeding offer an acceptable foundation for a breeding programme, or are its dangers outweighed by its potential?

This article is written by a trained zoologist, but not by an expert and it does not claim to provide an authoritative view. I just hope to open the subject for consideration and discussion.

So, what is line breeding?

'**Inbreeding**' is the breeding of two sheep that are related. This contrasts with what we mostly practice, which is '**outcrossing**', in which the two parents are quite unrelated. '**Line breeding**' is the term used in respect of less intensive forms of inbreeding. Inbreeding is equivalent to what humans would describe as incest (parent – offspring, or mating between full siblings). In contrast breeding between more distant relations (half-siblings; aunt-nephew' uncle-niece; cousins) would be line breeding.

The effect of line breeding is to increase the likelihood of genetic inheritance. This can be positive if the result is the appearance of desirable features in the offspring. But it can also prove negative when it brings undesirable recessive genes to the fore – such as the appearance of black wool. Inbreeding also reduces genetic diversity in a flock.

When we use line breeding we are aiming for offspring which display the desirable characteristics of their ancestors in respect of our breed standards, such as size, quality of wool, black noses, and so on). However, such breeding can increase undesirable as well as desirable characteristics. Even if we ruthlessly cull those animals where undesirable features are apparent, others which are not apparent may persist into further generations such as a propensity to health problems.

One Cotswold breeder commented that 'line breeding' is where the experiment works for us – but if it does not work out then we call it 'inbreeding'!

Alfred Mansell

In 1902 a small book was published by Arthur Mansell called 'Pure Bred Flocks, their formation and management.' In his book he obtained the views of twenty top sheep breeders at that time to a number of questions, one of which was "*What is your opinion as to the selection of sires? That is to say, which is most successful – line breeding, a certain amount of similarity of blood, or decidedly fresh?*" Of the twenty the great majority argued for line breeding with a small amount of fresh blood sometimes. As one wrote "Line bred sires are undoubtedly more impressive, and for

improving an under-bred stock are invaluable, but after a time very much inbred flocks probably lose a little size and bone”. Interestingly. One of the top breeders at that time was W.T. Garne for Cotswold sheep. He wrote *“I do not go in for line breeding but like to get as much fresh blood as I can....”*

Our own breeders.

I also asked some of our own breeders about their views on line breeding. The Crossman family in the USA report that they have line bred for 17 years focusing on the the genetics of a line of ACRA Cotswolds, having bought in only two rams of different genetics. Their results have been very positive with minimal recessive trait expression. As a result they say they can offer stock with fairly unique and concentrated genetic make up. A British Cotswold breeder tells us *“if one is lucky enough to be successful at breeding through intuition/natural ability – to keep a closed flock can strengthen those bloodlines – and sometimes an outcross to another of the same policy can produce an inbred hybrid vigour situation and some truly exceptional animals produced.”*

Now, most of us are not scientists. We have small flocks and may have invested much money in our rams. We may wish to pass on some good qualities shown by our sheep to the next generation. So, we decide to try an element of line breeding in the hope that these good qualities will be inherited rather than undesirable ones. In this light, what is it worth remembering?

- The success of continued line breeding of the same animals over several generations diminishes. An animal seems less able to thrive, and important genetic variations become more circumscribed.
- We must be prepared to cull animals where significantly undesirable features appear rather than hope we can eradicate them by further breeding. This is especially so for rams.
- Line breeding seems to incorporate a significant element of chance. Whilst we may want to breed for increased size for instance, we should remember that there is not just one ‘Big Size’ gene. Each parent has many genes that interact in a very complex way in the resultant lambs. Interestingly, as to size one breeder has commented size should be secured through the dam and the ‘stamp’ through the sire.

Do you have any thoughts or experiences on the use of line breeding? Write and let us know.

Norman Kay

EXTREMISM, IDEALISM AND HARMONY - Taboos

When I first saw a Cotswold sheep I was fascinated by their 'dreadlocks'. I was reminded of Bob Marley, linked the Lion of the Cotswolds to the Lion of Zion and thought why aren't they black? I have written this article from that observation and desire to understand more. I am a scientist, not a historian so please forgive any errors. I do not wish to offend and apologise if I do so, please read it with as open a mind as possible.

Black Cotswolds

In prehistoric times, more than 6,000 years ago, the natural sheep of this country would have been small, multicoloured hair sheep similar to the Soay. Their hair would have been lost by moulting and used to make natural cloth.

In the Roman age, the choice in Rome was for the pure white sheep with softer curly wool that they were able to breed there due to the warmer climate. The Romans were extremists in their beliefs, actions and entertainment preferences. They liked to dye their cloth with rich colours to suit their extravagant lifestyles, and the finer, purer and whiter wools were best for their purpose. When the Romans invaded Britain the indigenous population had to adapt to the extremist values of the Romans in order to survive. At the same time as bringing their sheep to this country the Romans also brought with them Christianity, their belief being in one God. The British population, however, were largely still pagans with the goddess and god together ruling with many lesser gods. One pagan ritual involved travellers sacrificing a black lamb when they came to a crossroads to the goddess (representing maiden, mother and crone of the otherworld), so that she would guide them safely on their journey. The newly reformed Christian Romans, could not accept the old pagan concept of the goddess and may have seen the need to breed black sheep out of the total population to stop this practise altogether. The Romans were also known for their lack of tolerance for other ethnic human populations whom they 'cleansed' without thought. Could this have been the start of the desire to breed out black genes to form pure white flocks of sheep?

Moving forwards in time to the fourteenth century when most of the wool from Britain was exported to Florence and Flanders to be fulled, spun, dyed and woven into the cloth that they desired in those areas. Cotswold wool was then valued as the best wool in Europe. At that time the pure white sheep would have belonged mainly to the Lords of the Manor, Abbeys and churches. Along with the white sheep some black sheep would have been naturally born, but at that time little value would have been placed upon their wool, as the only use then for black wool was for making grey stockings. As wool was a source of riches it was taxed heavily, this was an idealistic time when only the best was considered worthwhile, a time when purity and riches were of greatest value to mankind.

So with that in mind are we still keeping to the extremist views of our Roman invaders or the idealism of later times? Do these views relate to today's more multicultural and harmonious society that is moving towards more natural products and in which coloured wool is highly regarded? With Cotswold sheep historically capable of having one of the finest available wools, should we be keeping to the old, rigid ideals from the time of our invasion by Rome? Can we not look forward now that

we are in a more enlightened age? The Benedictine nuns of Our Lady of the Rock monastery on Shaw Island, Washington State in USA have embraced black Cotswold Sheep, (see photograph) as have many others in America.



Benedictine nuns from Our Lady of the Rock with their prize-winning Black Cotswold sheep, Special thanks to Mother Hildegard for allowing us to use this picture of their prize winning sheep.

Horns

Moving to the subject of Cotswolds with horns. If this links again to Roman times and eradication of some Pagan rituals this could be linked to the horned god of nature, hunting and the underworld. In Britain this god had ram's horns, whereas overseas he was believed to have antlers. The Roman Christians demonised this god and changed the underworld, where souls were rounded up and laid to rest, to the underworld (and eventually hell) and over time the horned god became linked with the devil. The preference for polled sheep may reflect the extreme belief of horned sheep being linked to paganism and later the devil incarnate. I have been advised not to mix horned and polled sheep as this can be dangerous for the polled ones.

What does the future hold?

In modern times the emphasis for Cotswold sheep in Britain has become showing them but is there more to them than that? Perhaps they still have the potential to be one of the best wool sheep in the world, what has happened to the legendary 'golden fleece' for it to no longer be of its former quality - like spinning a spider's web?

There is no doubt that black Cotswold sheep exist in Britain but instead of being put to use for wool they are culled and used for meat. It may be that there is a place today for a premium naturally coloured wool. Do we miss this opportunity or do we embrace it? My feeling is that the Cotswold as a pure white sheep is so engrained in our history and beliefs that we may not be able to find a place for black ones, but if we cannot accept them as part of our Society, even on a separate register and feel the need to

alienate a stand alone Black Cotswold Society an opportunity could be missed. Perhaps If we choose to eradicate the black and horned genes from the Cotswold population are we then destined to have a weaker less hardy sheep as a result? Finally what if someone were to prefer a horned Cotswold, what do we do? Are we to judge what others are content with and say it is wrong, or do we try to see their point of view for what it is?

Sandra Rath

Further Thoughts on the Transport Regulations

Now for a descent into the surreal. And no, this is not an April's Fool's article.

What are the exemptions?

We wanted to clarify this possibly confusing issue. You will of course be aware that there are a few exemptions to the new(ish) Transport Regulations for some livestock keepers. I have consulted with DEFRA on this. As they say, what follows is guidance only and has not been tested in court. But it does follow the guidelines offered by the Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006 DEFRA Guidance. This can also be found on the DEFRA website.

Paragraph 1.3 lists the exemptions. Some of these are:

Transport of an 'individual' animal.

The Order explains the exemption allowed to transport an 'individual' animal. It does not mean an individual animal in a single transport vehicle. The Order permits more than one animal in a single transport vehicle provided that each is accompanied by a person who has responsibility for it during transport. Our spokeswoman said that one could have for instance four animals accompanied by four people in the vehicle each responsible for a single animal! And a single ewe with her dependent young "should be considered as an individual animal for the purposes of the Order".(See paragraph 1.14 of the Guidance)

Journeys of less than 65km.

The 65 km. distance applies to the total journey with those sheep for that day. So, if one takes sheep 40km. to a show and returns the same day, the relevant distance amounts to 80km.

Where the transport is not in connection with an economic activity.

We wanted to know whether taking sheep to shows amounted to an 'economic activity' after seeing an article in the current issue of 'Horse'. One reader asked whether taking her one horse occasionally to local shows and possibly winning a small amount of prize money meant she was exempt. The answer was that 'it would appear that this journey does not count as an economic activity as it is your hobby.' (Horse magazine have kindly permitted us to quote them).

So we telephoned DEFRA and talked to a spokeswoman. She said that the rules for horses and sheep are not necessarily the same. The distinction is that sheep can be

eaten whereas horses generally in this country are not! She referred us to their Guidance mentioned above.

So, the Guidance (Paragraph 1.10) makes a distinction between those people who keep rare breed livestock as a hobby rather than for commercial purposes. It accepts that 'hobby' keepers may show their animals at competitive shows and indeed sell surplus stock. Such keepers would be exempt. Hobby livestock keepers would have to satisfy officials that they are not operating a 'business' enterprise for instance by not claiming relevant subsidy payments. However for those where farming is part of a commercial enterprise the Regulations do apply, even if showing sheep is only an ancillary activity and not itself done for gain.

Finally, even if the exemptions apply to you, of course it is still necessary to comply with the general animal welfare provisions associated with transporting animals.

What is the view of the RBST? It is that the Guidance is too uncertain, to open to different interpretations, and so members should go ahead and take the exam. To make sure they 'cover' themselves.

My comment.

These are European Community Regulations that the British government is required to enforce. Apart from the welfare provisions they are unhelpful, confusing, and add further expense and red tape to our enterprises. I hope that this article helps you decide whether the exemptions apply to you or not. You may want to look at the DEFRA website on this. You will find it on:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/farmed/transport/pdf/watoguidance180208.pdf>

Norman Kay

SHEEP FOR SALE/WANTED

This is a free service to buyers and sellers.

The list is constantly being updated, so please do contact the Secretary with requests to buy or sell. Any adult rams advertised for sale must also have their genotype results available.

FOR SALE:

Mr Roy Forward, Dolebury House, Jews Lane, Churchill, Winscombe, N Somerset.
Tel. 01934 852344

HAS FOR SALE:

- **Middlewick Ruraigh**, C8205, DOB 17/02/2003
Sire C7409 Middlewick Nocturne Dam C7304 Middlewick Nora

Mr Paul Hazel, Roel Hill, Hawling, Cheltenham, Glos. **Tel. 01451 850955**

HAS FOR SALE:

- **Roel Hill Noah**, C8963, ARQ/ARQ, DOB 13/03/2005
Sire C7721 Roel Hill Jack Dam C6922 Harford Ewe
"other older sheep available"

Mrs Pam Nieto, The Ridges, 37 Oxford Road, Hampton Poyle, Oxon, OX5 2QA
Tel. 01865 379748

HAS FOR SALE:

- **Ridges Amber**, C9787, ARR/ARR, DOB 09/03/2006
Sire C6999 Gatcombe Ram Dam C6962 Ridges Crumpet

Mrs Vicky Robbins & Mr John Gush, Rose Cottage, Southend, North Nibley, Wotton Under Edge, Glos. **Tel. 01453 543988** or **Mobile 07711847392**

HAVE FOR SALE

- 4 Females of mixed ages
- 4 Shearling Ewes by Middlewick Monsoon C6870
- **Tyndale George**, C10096, ARR/ARR, DOB 13/04/2006
Sire C6870 Middlewick Monsoon Dam C8847 Tyndale Freya

Miss Fiona McMahon & Mr Barry Pollock, Station Stables, Lydford, Devon, EX20 4BW, **Tel:01822 820225**

HAVE FOR SALE - later this spring

- 1 ewe born April 2006 COT387

From the overstocked **Harford Flock**, a few top quality ewes with twin lambs at foot for sale.

Lambs by Burfords Larry C8058

Harford ewes by Oakhill Victory C6888, Northleach George C6702,

Give Pat Quinn a ring on 01451 850346, Fax 01451 851034

or email: pq@patquinn.plus.com

Mr.Robert. Emmerson, Swyre Barton Farm, Cirencester

Two ewes both with an un-registered single male lambs at foot born Feb 08.

- Colesbourne ewe C9006, DOB: 04/04/2005 Sired by Middlewick Monsoon
- Colesbourne ewe C9010, DOB: 09/04/2005 Sired by Middlewick Monsoon

There lambs were sired by Conygree Ram C9657

FROM THE EDITORS

Views in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the editors or the Society.

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