



Cotswold Sheep Society Newsletter

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Council Officers

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Secretary - Mrs. S. Webb Treasurer - Mrs. L. Parkes

Council Members

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Mr. S. Parkes, Mrs. M. Pursch, Mr. J. Webb, Mr. J. Dale (co-opted)

Editor

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This Newsletter is independently edited and readers should be aware that the views expressed within its pages do not necessarily reflect the views held by Council.

EDITORIAL

Mark Pettitt

Happy New Year.

As the new editor of this newsletter, I would like to thank John Flanders for producing the newsletter over the last few years and giving me advice and pointing me in the right direction to get me started. I would be very interested to hear what people would like to see in future editions. I have had some suggestions from a few people but would like to hear from more of you as there must be a wealth of knowledge and I am sure different people have different ways of doing things that may be of interest to others.

As a newcomer to keeping sheep, I know I still have a lot to learn. From the scary thought of imminent lambing, with all the possible problems that may crop up, to deciding whether to vaccinate and how to get the best out of my sheep for producing meat, fleeces and for showing.

I have been looking to find articles that may be of interest to members. In doing so, I have found that there is plenty of research and information that I wouldn't otherwise have looked for. In fact, I have now subscribed to NSA and receive their Sheep magazine and I have found useful information on the XLVets website. One article from which, about giving lambs the best start in life, I have reproduced in part, with their kind permission, in this newsletter.

As a novice to keeping sheep, I am continuing to find new things to challenge me, which at the time can be stressful but I think need to be looked on as gaining experience. I have detailed some of my recent challenges in my article 'The View From Here' and I would be interested to know members' views on vaccinating.

After my first experience of showing a ewe lamb and shearling at the Cotswold Summer show in July, I decided, after taking advice, to lamb early this year. One thing that I can be sure of is that the Cotswold Sheep Society is made up of a very kind and friendly group of people who are willing to help and offer advice. They quite clearly also like their food, as I have found by attending a few of their gatherings.

RBST GENE BANK

Richard Broad - RBST Field Officer (South)

Each year we publish the RBST Watchlist which puts all the breeds by species into categories, based on numbers of registered pure bred females. The Cotswold is in Category 4 (At Risk), which has a ewe number range of 900 to 1500. This is quite a big range but each year we receive data from the Cotswold Breed Society and all other rare breed societies to help us categorize the breeds.

In Category 4 the Cotswold has for company various breeds including the Hill Radnor and the Soay. All three breeds have roughly the same female population; however they get to the figures in very different ways. The following table is based on a three year average of data the RBST has received from the three Breed Societies.

| Breed | Number of Flocks registering | Number of Males registered |
|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cotswold | 53 | 40 |
| Hill Radnor | 30 | 42 |
| Soay | 87 | 96 |

As you can see from the figures each breed has its strengths and weaknesses. The Soay has a large number of breeders, which register a larger proportion of males; therefore the average flock size is very small. This will encourage the use of a lot of males, but might cause wide breed type.

The Cotswold has the middle road of the three breeds with a good number of flocks coupled with a decent number of rams kept each year. Therefore flock size is larger but ram choice is still possible.

With the Hill Radnor, flock size is obviously the largest of the three breeds, and ram numbers are good. However we might see the individual larger flocks keeping a lot of rams and thus reducing the genetic range of the breed.

So in summary a breed's health needs to be looked at on all levels including registered female populations and numbers of flocks, ram registrations and number of rams used to sire the next generation.

The View from Here

Mark Pettitt

The last few months have continued to be a steep learning curve for me. It can be wonderful to see your healthy sheep grazing in your field but it can also be devastating to walk down to your field to find all your lambs suddenly looking very ill. One Saturday at the end of October, all my lambs were looking healthy. The next day, Sunday, they were all looking terrible, heads down and unsteady on their feet. I called my 'mentor', Steve Parkes, who told me to call the vet immediately. The vet came, injected them with antibiotics and an anti-inflammatory. The next day, two of them had died. The vet came out again, did a post-mortem, and prescribed Bravoxin for what appeared to be *Chlostridium*, but sent samples off for analysis. The results came back to show *Pasteurella*, so Heptavac was then prescribed. The rest of the lambs took a while to recover but are now looking very well. I will vaccinate with Heptavac P+ from now on.

I decided to show sheep for the first time last year at the Cotswold Summer Show, thinking that my sheep were prize-winning specimens. How wrong I was. But it didn't matter, I was made to feel very welcome and as usual there was plenty of delicious food. What I did learn was that producing prize-winning sheep involves feeding them well, and that it might be advisable to lamb earlier to allow more growing time before the shows.

So this year our ten ewes should be lambing between the middle of January and early February, with my wife's 'big' birthday right in the middle (Sorry Wendy!). I am looking forward to it but am a bit nervous (about the lambing that is). Last season I lost two lambs and nearly the ewe, when I failed to notice that the ewe hadn't given birth to a third lamb that had died inside her. This year Wendy and I are taking time off work to make sure one of us is around so we don't make the same mistakes. We intend to get the ewes inside our newly built lambing shed in good time and have a camera up to check up on them while we are not there. We will also have a bottle of antibiotics to hand in case we need to assist a ewe in lambing.

On our five acre smallholding, we also have a few Tamworth pigs and did have turkeys so we are at the limit of how many more sheep we can keep for breeding. So we hope to find some more land to buy or rent nearby in order to increase the number in our flock. We also need to look at how to best use the land and will look at re-seeding some of the land with new grass seed and stubble turnips.

Recipe – Lamb and Date Tagine

By Wendy Pettitt

Ingredients

2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 onions peeled and chopped
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground turmeric
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground allspice
1kg/2lb 3oz boneless shoulder of Cotswold lamb, chopped into cubes
250g/9oz soft dried dates, stones removed (or apricots)
250ml/9fl oz pomegranate juice (or apple or cranberry juice)
250ml/9fl oz water
1 tsp salt (optional)

Method

Warm the oil in a wide heavy-based pan with a lid. Add the onions and cook gently over a low heat for ten minutes, or until softened.

Add the ground cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, cumin and allspice and mix well.

Turn up the heat and add the lamb, stirring often, until browned all over.

Add the dates, pomegranate juice, water and salt and bring to the boil. Cover with the lid and turn down the heat to very low to cook for two hours. (You can cook in the oven if you prefer, for two hours at 150C/300F/Gas 2.)

Serve in bowls with couscous (see below).

Recipe – Couscous

Ingredients

200g couscous
50g shelled chopped pistachio nuts (or almonds)
Handful of mint leaves (chopped)
Handful of coriander (chopped)
1 stock cube

Method

Cover couscous with boiling stock as per instructions on packet

Toast the pistachios in hot oven for 5-10 minutes

Stir pistachios and fresh herbs into couscous with a fork

Avoiding the pitfalls to give lambs the best start in life

by Josh Batterham, Fenton Veterinary Practice, South West Wales

(Article kindly supplied by XLVets Livestock Matters)

The strength and viability of a new-born lamb will be determined by the health of the ewe during pregnancy. It is essential that the ewes' nutrition (especially in the latter third of pregnancy) is carefully calculated to provide the adequate energy, protein and trace elements required to support the growing foetus and maintain the ewe in reasonable condition. Scanning ewes to enable managing singles and triplets in separate groups will not only help minimise twin lamb disease but also avoid the overfeeding of singles (and barreners).

The importance of early and adequate colostrum intake should never be underestimated. Every lamb should receive two pints (one litre) of colostrum in the first 18 hours. Half of this (one pint) should be in the first six hours of life, split between two feeds. All navels should be dipped in an iodine based solution as soon as possible after birth, and ideally again at 24-48 hours. Stress also causes a drop in immunity so docking, castration, vaccination and turnout all at the same time should be avoided if possible.

Ewe vaccination with a combination clostridia/pasteurella vaccine four to six weeks prior to lambing will protect the ewe for 12 months and her lambs for 12 weeks from clostridial diseases and four weeks from pasteurella – but only if the lambs receive colostrum from the ewe! It is recommended that the lambs be vaccinated from 12 weeks for continued protection.

Coccidiosis is a significant disease that is often overlooked on smaller sheep units but is well worth considering when dealing with scouring lambs. It is usually seen in four to six-week-old lambs, often in groups of later lambs and particularly if stocking density is high or hygiene in the shed (or around feeders in the field) is poor. Coccidiosis is caused by two specific strains of eimeria species, which are parasites that live inside cells in the lamb's gut. They multiply within the lining of the gut and cause considerable damage to the intestine. This loss of gut lining causes a profuse diarrhoea and affected lambs will often look dull and anorexic, often with abdominal pain and straining. Severely affected cases may have secondary bacterial infection in the intestine and there may be blood in the diarrhoea.

Early lambs will only be exposed to low numbers and will gain strong immunity by eight weeks, however coccidia numbers will multiply up, leaving large numbers on the ground for the naïve later-born lambs, which may succumb to the disease.

Coccidia are resistant to many commercial disinfectants, however there are several effective products available that clearly state suitability for use against coccidia. Prevention involves improving hygiene and reducing stocking density, as well as turning out later born lambs onto ground not previously grazed by early lambs. Anti-coccidia (coccidiostat) medications are available that can be added to creep feed, however they will prevent any natural immunity building up, so that lambs will be fully susceptible as soon as medication is stopped.

THE WINTER SOCIAL

NORTHLEACH, 29th NOVEMBER

Mark Pettitt



More than fifty members attended the Winter Social, bringing between them an impressive selection of meats, cheeses, salads and puddings, to go alongside an impressive 32lb turkey, efficiently carved as usual by Richard Mumford. The evening started off with a glass of mulled wine and a 'Name that Plant' quiz organised by Steve Parkes.

After dinner, Angela Reid (Chairman) thanked everyone for coming, and also all those who had worked so hard organising and setting up the event.

She went on to thank Adrian Loker for his valuable assistance over many years, including stewarding at numerous shows and transporting, erecting and dismantling the Society stand on countless occasions. As a sign of Council's appreciation, she presented Adrian with Life Membership of the Society.

BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Vernon Harwood then gave a most interesting and entertaining talk about the development of farming programmes on the radio, along with anecdotes and memories of working at Radio Gloucestershire.



Judy Wilkie, in her role as President, presented the following prizes:

The Champion Flock Slate (the most points at the Society shows): Davina Stanhope

The Crook (for the Best Home Bred Sheep): Davina Stanhope

The Frank Houlton Trophy – (the most points over eight shows): Davina Stanhope

Judy then went on to present the Frank Williams Trophy to Edna Powell for outstanding service to the Society. Edna had been awarded the trophy for her enthusiastic and tireless support of Cotswold sheep, and her work over many years promoting the breed through her own flock, and through Stroud Show.



Following the presentations, the raffle was drawn. As always there were an amazing number of prizes generously donated by the guests.

It was altogether an excellent and most enjoyable evening, which would not have taken place without the hard work of many members, but the Society was particularly grateful to Margaret Pursch for organising the evening and setting up the hall, Steve Parkes for supplying a whole truckload of greenery, and Lucinda Foster for so efficiently organising her team of ‘washer uppers’.

COUNCIL CORNER

Flock Books - the Society has a problem with the storage of the ever-increasing number of boxes of historic Flock Books. There are now 26 volumes from Vol 1 (1987) - Vol 26 (2012). While all members will continue to receive a new Flock Book each year, access to the 'online flock book' appears to have reduced the need for members to use the paper editions to trace the bloodlines of sheep. Council is aware it is essential that there are complete sets of the books in the Society and County archives. Digital copies of the Flock Books will also be retained. Council have agreed that we should offer the surplus books to members at no cost except for the postage and packing, however donations to the Society will be greatly appreciated. Sending any complete sets will be expensive, so pre-ordered Flock Books will be available for collection at the AGM in July. Supply is obviously limited - so books/sets will be allocated on a 'first come first served' basis. Please contact Angela Reid to order volumes, or for further information, on Mob: 07768 354613.

Non-Society Shows – Council is aware that some members of the Society are not able to show their sheep at Society Shows, but they fly the flag for the breed in Longwool classes all over the country. Showing in these classes is a wonderful way to raise the profile of the breed and we would love to know how you get on. Please do contact Mark Pettitt with any photos, or stories of your exploits, for inclusion in the newsletter.

Council Nomination Forms – are included with this Newsletter. All nominations must be proposed and seconded by members of the Society. The forms must be returned to the Secretary by Wednesday 20th May.

Flock Competition 2015 – Council would like to encourage members to enter this competition - it is wonderful way to get advice and chat about your flock with a 'Cotswold expert'. No flock is too small! Please complete and return the enclosed form to the Secretary by Monday 1st June so that visits can be arranged to suit, and the competition can get under way during July/August.

Young Handler Competition – if any of the younger members of your family would like to have a go at showing sheep, then this competition is designed for them. There are Junior and Senior sections, points are accumulated throughout the showing season, and the winner is announced at the Winter Social. Council would really encourage younger members to enter - they are the flock keepers of the future!

Photo Competition – ‘Cotswolds in Snow or Frost’ - We are searching for the perfect photo for our 2015 Christmas card. So if the opportunity occurs, do get your camera out and take that hopefully prize-winning photo of your flock. Either bring the printed photo along to the AGM, or send it, preferably in high quality digital form, to the Secretary beforehand. Council will decide on the winning photo, which will be announced after the AGM, and will be the Society Christmas card 2015.

Flock Health Plan – The Society now has a basic Flock Health Plan, which we will be including in the New Members’ Packs. If any current member feels that they would also like a copy – please contact the Secretary.

Events:

The 2015 calendar of show dates is included below but please make a special note of the following events:

The Society Show and Annual General Meeting will take place as part of Andoversford Show on **Sunday 19th July**. Please do put this date in your diary - with Novice classes the Society Show is a great place to have a first go at showing, and if you don’t want to take sheep – why not enter the Fleece Competition? The show will take place in the morning and will be followed by a ‘Bring and Share’ lunch, and the AGM will take place in the afternoon.

The Winter Social is another important date for your diary. It will take place on the evening of **Saturday 28th November** at the Westwood Centre, Northleach. It is always an excellent evening, with delicious food, and plenty of time to chat to old friends, or to make new ones.

SHOW DATES FOR 2015 SEASON

| Show | Date | Judge | Contact Tel No | Closing Date |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Three Counties | 12th – 14th June | Caroline Cunningham | 01684 584900 | 12th April |
| Rare Breed Day | 14th June | Davina Stanhope | 01684 584900 | 12th April |
| Stroud Show | 18th July | Robert Boodle | | Not out |
| Society Show Andoversford | 19th July | J Brigg | 0797 4042445 | 10th July |
| Show and Sale Cirencester | 31st July – 1st August | Tim Ward | 01285 869911 Voyce Pullin | Not out |
| Berkeley Show | 31st August | Alan Lyons | 01453 543335 | Not out |
| Monmouth Show | 29th August | Richard Mumford | 01981 580710 | Not out |
| Moreton Show | 5th September | Jonathan King | 0870 8777409 | 25th July |

SHEEP FOR SALE

This is a free service for buyers and sellers. The list is constantly being updated, so please do contact the Secretary, or check the website, if you wish to buy.

FOR SALE: Mr A Porter, Clare Park Farm, Crondall, Hampshire, GU10 5DT
Tel.: 01252 850387

HAS FOR SALE, owing to the unsuitability of some of their grassland for sheep, the following:

6 ewes (in lamb) born in 2012. These were all bought in as ewe lambs from the Tingewick Flock. The sires are Tingewick Titan (C10929), Tingewick Nomad (C10930) and Tingewick Hogan (C8634).

WANTED: None

RAMS FOR HIRE: Mr Steve Parkes, 47 King George's Field, Stow On The Wold, Gloucestershire, Tel. 01451 830461

HIRES OUT RAMS and members should contact him for further details.