

# Ryeland FBS Spring 2022

Incorporating Coloured Ryeland News

## Robert James Webb (Bob)

Who Passed Away on 14th January 2022  
Aged 93 Years



*You can read about Bob's huge contribution to Ryelands and Coloured Ryelands  
inside.*

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## Editor's Note

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Spring is round the corner as I type this, though by the time this newsletter reaches you, lambing may well be but a distant memory for some of you! I do hope you all had/have a successful and stressless time.

I have included a list of shows for this year and it would appear that most should be taking place, unless we get another Covid strain hit us.

I love to receive suggestions for the newsletter and would ask our regular contributors to let me have their copy by 20 May.

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## Chairman's Report

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As I write we are battling with Storm Eunice... we have secured what we can but we have ended up with a number of fallen trees, flying slates and overturned hay cratches... I hope all members have managed to cope with the storm and have not had significant damage or any livestock losses.

In a more positive light it looks like it will be all systems go for showing this year, how nice will it be to socialise at agricultural shows again, although I'm sure, like me, some may not be so keen on all the preparation, I've kind of got used to not doing any sheep prep...

Many of you will either have finished lambing or are in the middle of your lambing, we started at the end of February and then once we have managed to get them up and running I will, like all those who show, I will be looking for those ideal ones for the show ring.

The January Council meeting was held via zoom due to concerns of the Omicron strain of Covid making a significant advance across the UK. The meeting was well attended and a number of topics of an urgent nature were discussed including the approval to setup an eBay shop on a trial basis for the handling of Society merchandise, agreement to continue the RFBS society virtual on-line craft event and the final judges panel list was approved, based on the feedback received from the judg-

es questionnaire which was sent to all existing judges.

The Ryeland committee and Regional committee members are up for election in April, so if you have a desire to be part of the continual promotion and development of the breed then make sure you get the appropriate nomination forms completed and returned to Dot. Both forms have been posted by Dot and should have been received in the last week. *[by the time this newsletter reaches you the deadline will have passed. Editor]*

January has also sadly seen the passing of two members who I have enjoyed spending time with at various shows and events around the country. Both Bob Webb and Selwyn Evans were part of my early years with the RFBS society and I enjoyed their company, humour and knowledge, like so many other society members I'm sure. Thoughts are with both families at this sad time.

Keep safe and I look forward to seeing many of you with your sheep later on in 2022.

*Caz Bateman*  
Chair

## **Council Members**

**President** - Pam Bateman

**Vice President** - Russell Howell

**Chairman** - Caz Bateman

**CRC Representative**

Caz Bateman

**Ryeland Committee Representative**

**Retire April 2022**

Alison Robinson - Deputy Vice Chair

**Councillors: retire 2024**

Joanne Fisher (Northern England)

Stephen Hipps (Yorkshire)

Matthew Pink (Yorkshire)

Pam Bateman (North Wales & Mercia)

Jack Williams (Hereford' & T. Marches)

Susan Quigley (Hereford' & T. Marches)

John Donovan - Vice Chair, (Mid, W. & S. Wales)

Andy McVicar (Mid, W. & S Wales)

Vacant (Eastern England)

Annette Reid (South East England)

John Mills (South West England)

David Mitchell (Scotland)

**Regional Representatives:**

**Retire April 2022**

Vacant (Northern England)

Jill Gray (Yorkshire)

Jane Pinches (North Wales & Mercia)

Jonathan Webb (Hereford' & T Marches)

Carol Bateman (Mid, W. & S. Wales)

Jenny Hughes (Eastern England)

Tony Moore (South East England)

Margaret Wear (South West England)

**RFBS Office Hours:**

Tuesdays - Thursdays

9.30am - 5pm

## South East England Regional Report

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### Pre-Christmas quiz

On Saturday 4th December we held a pre-Christmas Zoom coffee morning with a sheep-themed quiz. Participants wrestled with questions relating to the breed standard, lamb cuisine, and veterinary knowledge (what *does* that 'P' in Heptavac P stand for?). Fittingly, the victor's crown went to our vice chairman, but we all came away from the exercise more well-informed on ovine trivia, if not wiser.

### Post-Christmas Social

Just when we had publicised a post-Christmas pub lunch for members in January, buoyed up by the success of our relaunch event in October, Covid struck again to blight our plans, this time in the form of the Omicron variant. The committee decided that it would be sensible to postpone the event until March, but in the light of subsequent events (below), it has now been cancelled.

### Tony Moore: a big thank you

The Council meeting in January saw our regional vice-chairman, Tony Moore, making his final appearance as South East regional committee representative. On behalf of the regional committee and all our members, I would like to thank him for carrying out the role of representing our interests at Council and keeping us abreast of Society business. Tony's long and distinguished contribution to the running of the Society, of which many newer members may not be aware, also deserves recognition and thanks. Tony joined Council as one of the representatives to the Central and Southern Region in 2009, in the far off days when there were only four regions. In 2014 he became vice-chairman of the Society, then President in 2017 and chairman from 2017 to 2020, a term which was extended due to the pandemic. Thank you for all that you have done for the RFBS, Tony.

In concluding, I would like to thank the committee members - Tony Moore, Jack Pritty, Hugo Stuttaford, Erin Denness, and Annette Reid - for their stalwart support, enthusiasm and good humour since 2018 in the often challenging task of endeavouring to build an active regional group here in the South East.

*Laura Goldsmith*

**Chairman**

## Eastern England Regional Report.

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Hope everyone is looking forwards to lambing. As I write this storm Eunice is raging outside and we have several ewes due any minute, I'm a little sad the year letter is not "E"!.

We are planning on a visit to the new event in Bedford "Summer Wool Festival" being held at Redbourne school MK45 2NU. The regional committee plan to make this a bit of a get together and hopefully members may be able to join us to enjoy the event, have a picnic in the sunshine (fingers crossed) and get to meet some new people. The date we plan to attend is the Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July, further details and reminders will be posted on Facebook, emailed and sent by post in due course. It would be great to connect with members who have an interest in Ryeland and Coloured Ryeland fleeces and crafting with them.

We are lucky that it seems our regional shows have been unaffected by the Covid enforced breaks; I have listed the shows below with specific Coloured Ryeland classes, we currently have no Ryeland classes and are desperate for members to attend and show their sheep to secure these classes in the future. The showing members are very friendly and happy to help out or advise, please come along and say hello with or without your sheep.

Suffolk Show 31<sup>st</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June  
Royal Norfolk show 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June  
Tendring show – Essex 9<sup>th</sup> July

*Jenny Hughes*  
Regional Chair

## Herefordshire & The Marches Regional Report

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Via our Zoom meetings we have organised the following events for our members and we are finally going to risk a face to face meeting in March!

For those of you who may not have met us the Committee comprises David Duggan, Chairman, Zoe Unwin, Vice Chairman, Sue Quigley, Treasurer, Jon Webb, Regional Rep and Committee members, Doreen Smillie-Gray, Steve Gray, Viv Gumble, Katie James, Anne Watson and Lin Whittall **(NOTE: this may change in April pending the results of regional committee elections.)**

## **1st MAY**

### Husbandry and Show Preparation Workshop

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NW

#### **Workshops throughout the day -**

- Condition scoring and grading sheep for market
- Trimming and preparation for showing
- Show etiquette & sheep handling
- Setting up electric/battery shears, Dagging/crutching, foot trimming.

Day commences at 10am. Lots of informative goodies to take home with you.

£10 for tickets - to be booked in advance. **To register your interest contact Doreen Smillie-Gray** [dsg.oakberrow@gmail.com](mailto:dsg.oakberrow@gmail.com)/ or 07971675162

## **10th JULY**

### Summer Flock Assessment and Planning Topping Workshop

Stapleton, Shropshire SY5 7EL

#### **Workshops throughout the day**

- Ram & ewe assessment prior to topping
- Pre topping vaccines, treatments & planning for a compact lambing
- Lamb assessment for retention, sale, or market

Day commences at 10am. Informative goodies to take home with you.

£10 for tickets - to be booked in advance.

**To register your interest contact Doreen Smillie-Gray** [dsg.oakberrow@gmail.com](mailto:dsg.oakberrow@gmail.com)/ or 07971675162

## **10th SEPTEMBER**

### **Grand Autumn Lamb Show in conjunction with Kington Show, Kington, Herefordshire**

There will be the normal classes for Kington Show and the Lamb Show judging will take place after the Ryeland judging.

#### **Regional Points Competition – 2022 for wins at shows within our region.**

These comprise Shropshire, Royal Three Counties, Newport, Burwarton, Tenbury, Moreton in Marsh and Kington.

These are events being organised by your Regional Committee and we look forward to seeing you at them. To register your interest contact Doreen Smillie-Gray [dsg.oakberrow@gmail.com](mailto:dsg.oakberrow@gmail.com)

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Bob Webb who died on 14 January.

Bob was well known in the Ryeland world and will be sorely missed. Our sympathies go out to his family - Jonathan, Yvonne and children who have kept the Teme and Ashford flocks going upon Bob's retirement.

He was one of the founder members for registering Coloured Ryelands and without his hard work they wouldn't be recognised.

## **Mid, South & West Wales Regional Report**

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The last 18 months have been an extremely difficult time for us all, with lockdowns and restriction on our life and travel. This has been very much the same for our regional sheep group we have only been able to organise one sheep event, another event had to be cancelled at the last minute because of ill health.

The event took place in the South of the region on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September at the home of Sean and Mandy Tilling at Upper Neeston Farm. There was a good turnout and an enjoyable afternoon was had by all. Members had the chance to catch up and to walk around the farm.

We are all looking forward to 2022 when hopefully we will be able to organise a number of events throughout the region including farm visits, open days in the north and south of the region. We are also planning a regional day, to include demonstrations and competitions for our younger members.

If any regional member would like to help with forthcoming events you would be more than welcome.

*Andy McVicar*  
Regional Chair.

## **North Wales and Mercia Regional Report**

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The weather as I write this report is not looking very 'Spring' like, with gale force winds & driving rain forecast for the next few days and even weeks, but hopefully that will by now have given way to some sunshine for your lambs to get out in the fields and grow as only lambs can.

The year ahead will surely be a much better one, and your committee have already

got several events planned for the region. The first is on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May with a show preparation workshop at my home in Cheshire, with guidance on choosing which sheep to show, a practical trimming session with expert tuition, as well as help with halter training. My vet will give a talk on foot care and mouth conformation and we also hope to have a presentation on record keeping from a fellow RFBS member who runs her flock on a commercial basis. All the topics covered will be useful not only if you are thinking of showing but also if you ever want to enter your sheep in the society sales, or just want to improve your flock generally. Full details should now be available on our own website [www.ryelandnwam.org](http://www.ryelandnwam.org) and the booking form will also be available there.

The show season starts at the beginning of June for our region, with Stafford County then Royal Cheshire, and hopefully Nantwich show will also be going ahead this year. Full details of all these shows will be on our website, with links to entry forms and helpful information. If you have not considered showing your sheep before then why not come along to the workshop and see what is involved, and you will always get a warm welcome at the shows even if you just go along to watch.

Later in the year there are some smaller shows with Ryeland classes and 'any other breed' classes which Coloured Ryelands can enter, as well as our lamb show in November.

We are delighted to be hosting the National AGM in our region in April (look out for the details which Dot will be sending to you soon) so do try to attend. All your NWAM committee will be there so please introduce yourselves to us and let us know of anything we can do to improve the region. Do also get in touch if you would be interested in joining the committee yourself as there are a couple of vacancies including the role of secretary.

*Michele Varmen*

Regional Chair.

## **Yorkshire Regional Report**

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Jill and Philippa Gray are hosting a Judging Skills for Stock Selection and Show Preparation workshop on Sunday 24th April at Northedge Farm, Hipperholme, Halifax. We will post more details on our Facebook page and by email to our Yorkshire members.

Or you may contact a member of the Yorkshire Committee, an up to date list of committee members should be available from 1st April after the regional elections.



The Yorkshire region shows and judges can be viewed on the RFBS Yorkshire Region Facebook page. Honley Show is normally at the beginning of June but has been moved to 23rd July. North Yorkshire County Show is on Sunday 11 September, so the region's first show will be Malton Show on Sunday 26 June.

*Judith Heels*

Secretary

## **South West England Region**

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2022 looks like it is going to be a year when hopefully shows get back to normal with more social events. Plans are underway for a show and sale in September. We are this year planning a points cup for members showing sheep; this will start with six shows this year with more added next year. There will also be a points cup for the young handlers.

As many of you would have seen three of our members have been filmed for the Farmer's Showdown aired this year, a good advert for the coloured Ryeland - well done to you all.

Lambing will be by now well under way if not over for many of you. Good luck and hope to see many of you at the shows.

*John Mills*

Regional Chair

## **News from Scotland**

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Those of you who attended the last AGM to be held in Scotland, back in May 2016, will remember that it was held at Moredun, the livestock research institute on the outskirts of Edinburgh. That day, we were privileged to have Beth Wells, Principal Scientist and Knowledge Exchange Specialist at Moredun, address our meeting.

Now Beth has joined the ranks of Ryeland owners, starting her flock last year with stock bought from the Simmons family, Ruthven Farm, Tomintoul, over the hill neighbours to Beth's croft near Grantown on Spey.

Here Beth tells us why she chose the breed and also a little bit about the Moredun and the work she is involved with there:

"I was looking for a sheep breed that would provide a tasty lamb or two for the

freezer, but more importantly, would work well as cross grazers to improve the land



*Above: Beth's fledgling Ryeland flock in blizzard conditions as Storm Eunice hit the Highlands in February.*

on the croft, where I also breed a few Highland ponies.

Coming from a hill sheep farming family of Black-face sheep breeders, I was immediately offered an array of cast hill ewes, that I knew if I let them loose here, I would be lucky if I ever saw them again, never mind catch them!

I then remembered hearing from Janice (Milne) and others, at the AGM

held at Moredun, that Ryelands were a hardy, calm and friendly breed of sheep that were fun to own.

I then got talking to the Simmons family at Ruthven Farm, who happened to have a few females that they were prepared to part with. That was that and a ewe with twin lambs at foot, plus a gimmer, arrived here last spring.

They have been a complete success and hopefully the two females are in lamb to a tup, kindly lent by the Simmons, as we aim to build up our numbers to a dozen or so females. They are such a lovely breed to have about the place and it's such a novelty for me to call them and they come running and stay in a pen without leaping out!

My day job is still at Moredun where I'm a parasitologist to trade and have found this very useful in putting sustainable parasite control measures in place with the flock.

Mindful of the environmental effects of anthelmintics, an area of work being expanded at Moredun, as well as the serious anthelmintic resistance issues we have in the UK flock, I'm concentrating on Test Don't Guess with the wormers.

It's really worth a look at our website as we have a great animation which explains, in an entertaining way, how this can be done (<https://moredun.org.uk/resources/videos/test-dont-guess>).

Moredun remains committed to providing solutions to sheep health and welfare and continues to research into many infectious diseases of livestock. This research is supported by our farmer members (over 12,000 UK wide) so please do consider joining us and benefitting from the many benefits that Moredun members enjoy (<https://moredun.org.uk/membership>).

I hope to meet lots of you once I join the Society and learn more about this fantastic

sheep breed and if you are at the Highland Show this year, please do come and look us up at the Moredun stand."

### **Other news**

Like the rest of the country, we in Scotland are looking forward to hopefully a full show season which will kick off with Ryeland classes at Ayr show on Saturday, May 14.

## **Member Profile: Thomas Atkinson**

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**Flock Name :** Cragg Ryelands - 02115

**Owner:** Thomas Atkinson  
& Kate Mighell

**Location:** Cragg Vale,  
Hebden Bridge,  
West Yorkshire

### **How did I get into Ryelands?**

I always wanted livestock. When I was younger, I was particularly set upon Highland cows. At the time, we had neither the land nor skills to get them. Luckily, after moving house, my parents allowed me to get a small flock of sheep. I searched for a while and eventually decided upon Ryelands. As luck would have it, Jeannie Scott (flock 00808) lived behind my grandparents. I was introduced and spent the summer gaining experience. In the summer of 2016, Jeannie put me in touch with the Hunland Flock where I purchased my



three foundation ewes. I wouldn't have my flock of sheep without her.

### **How would you describe a typical sheep of your flock?**

As most flocks suggest when answering this question, we aim to breed a traditional 'teddy bear' Ryeland. We pay most attention to the sheep's width, bum, and head. All animals should be wide in the shoulders, with this width continuing down to their hips. This width and confirmation should follow through into a full and wide back

end. We try to breed sheep with an alert, high held head with small slate grey ears. Above all else, my sheep must have a woolly head with as small of a nose stripe as possible.

### **What is the size of your flock?**

Unfortunately, due to a lack of land and shed space, I have had to try and keep my flock relatively small. I started in 2016 with 3 Hunland ewe lambs and have built it up in the 5 years since then to 21 ewes and 2-3 rams. My rams are Bryn Caffo Zodiac, Ryeside YoYo, and a homebred ram, Cragg Babylon. My ewes are predominantly Cagedale bred. I have tried to only buy the best. Hopefully, I will have more of my own breeding in the female side of the flock soon.

### **What is your attitude to producing coloured lambs?**

Whilst I have no real objection to coloured lambs, I do not aim to breed them. Any coloured lambs bred will be sold in their year of birth; with all that make the grade going for breeding. I like looking out over a uniform flock of sheep. Coloured lambs mixed in with a flock of white sheep slightly irritates me.

### **When do you usually plan to lamb?**

I am a student attending the University of St Andrews in Fife, Scotland. As such I am mostly limited to university holidays for lambing. This means I aim to lamb from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January each year and hope that all my ewes hold the first or second cycle. This year has been a bit of a disaster. I started lambing on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January but don't expect to finish until the middle of April.

### **Early breeding procedures?**

Because my lambing window is so tight, I use both Cidrs and Regulin. The Regulin brings the ewes forward and the Cidrs make them cycle all at once. In 2020 this combination worked brilliantly, all ewes lambing within an 18-day period. In the 2021 breeding season I passed the deadline for using Regulin and as mentioned above, lambing has not gone to plan.



### **Which shows do we attend and what show prep do we do?**

We have been attending an increasing number of shows each year. In 2022, we are hoping to attend: Royal Welsh Smallholders festival, Royal Highland, Great Yorkshire and, if we can get an isolation unit in time, the Royal Welsh. We may support a few local shows as well.

All of our shearling ewes and rams as well as our aged rams are shorn off at the beginning of January for the show season. They are kept inside for a while and then go out with waterproof rugs on. Feeding for the show season starts gradually and slowly increases, nothing worse than a fat show sheep. In terms of trimming and washing, we normally wash all our show sheep a week before the show.

We use warm water only to ensure that the fleeces aren't too white. Following this all sheep are carded and trimmed several times. If I'm honest I usually forget halter training. It's always my least favourite part of showing.



### **Advice for other breeders?**

I think there is a huge amount of information available in the annual flock books. Despite me starting my flock only 5 years ago, I have got a collection dating back to the middle of the 1990's. I have used these flock books to select the breeding and bloodlines I want in my flock. I look closely at the breeders who consistently turn out quality sheep and then select the bloodlines within their flocks. I would also recommend using Grassroots in the same manner.

Also, I know this has been said before, but cheap sheep aren't good and good sheep aren't cheap!

### **Lambing time feeding routine?**

I begin feeding my ewes 7 weeks off lambing. I split them up into groups based on how many lambs they are scanned as carrying. All my ewes get a special pre-lambing lick bucket and ad lib hay. The feeding amounts increase weekly and continue for several weeks after they have lambed. I do creep feed my lambs. The

feed I use comes from Galloway and Macleod; I would highly recommend it.

### **What help do I have?**

My parents and grandparents (particularly my grandad) help out regularly with the sheep. I also get a lot of help (particularly when I first started with sheep) from Jean-nie Scott who I mentioned earlier. My girlfriend loves the sheep, she now part owns several ewes. I'm incredibly lucky to have all the support I do.

As a student I am away from home often. When I am away, the day-to-day care of my flock is predominantly left with my family. To complicate matters, next year I will be studying abroad as an exchange student in Hong Kong and as such I will need to consider finding a flock manager of some description to manage my flock whilst I am away. If anyone knows of someone who would be interested, please let me know.

## **Watery Mouth Disease in Lambs**

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Watery Mouth Disease (WM) is a common life-threatening condition of new-born lambs. This disease occurs if the lamb swallows E-coli bacteria that is present in the environment before developing sufficient immunity. Lambs are born without immunity to this condition so rely on acquiring protection from the ewe's colostrum. Triplets and twins less than 48 hours old are most commonly affected but cases have been reported up to 72 hours old. Thankfully, the condition is avoidable with strict attention to colostrum management, ewe nutrition, and environmental hygiene.

This subject is especially topical at the moment due to the withdrawal of 'Spectam Scour Halt ©' oral antibiotic product from the UK market. Spectam was the only oral antibiotic licenced for the treatment and prevention of WM in lambs. It is now widely accepted that it is inappropriate to use antibiotics 'just in case' or as a blanket preventative for all lambs. I therefore hope that this article may be a helpful 'action plan' for anyone who finds themselves having to deal with WM, and useful for preventative planning.

### **What to look for**

Early signs of watery mouth disease may be subtle but if untreated the lamb will deteriorate rapidly. Subtle signs include a lack of energy and refusing to suckle. Although the lamb may still position itself under the ewe, and even mouth the teat, they will not suckle, despite looking 'hollow' at the flanks (empty stomach). Later cases will develop excessive salivation (the lamb's mouth and chin will be wet), the lamb will be weak, with a bloated abdomen. Occasionally the lamb will have watery scour but more commonly they will become constipated, causing abdominal pain and straining. Eventually the lamb will collapse due to endotoxic shock.





### Watery Mouth Disease Action Plan:

There is always an underlying reason to why watery mouth cases occur. Even those who have lambed sheep for many years are constantly learning, reassessing, and adapting for the better each year.

- **Colostrum (quality, quantity, quickly)** – It is critical that lambs get sufficient **quantity of quality** colostrum as soon as possible. This is needed for the transfer of antibody protection

from the ewe. The magic requirement numbers are 50ml/kg within 4-6 hours of birth, and 200ml/kg within 24 hours. A 5kg lamb should drink 1L of colostrum in its first day. Invest time into ensuring the lamb is drinking enough during the first 24 hours of life. There is a fine line between helping and over-interfering, but if there is a risk of watery mouth it is advisable to physically aid the lamb to suckle by holding it to the teat ASAP after birth and repeat this frequently until the lamb is seen to be sufficiently/frequently nursing without assistance. Triplets, overly-small lambs or weak lambs are at risk of not receiving enough colostrum naturally and need extra attention. The ewe's udder should be checked after lambing for the presence of colostrum. Some ewes are slow to 'let their milk down', (especially after a difficult lambing) or may have subclinical mastitis (non-productive teat) from the previous lambing season. Good quality

colostrum should be more yellow in colour and thicker than normal milk. Colostrum from unwell ewes, shearlings or very old ewes may be below average quality. If there is any doubt whether the lamb is getting sufficient colostrum naturally it should be supplemented by bottle or stomach tube.



In this instance, every effort should be made to use ewe colostrum rather than using synthetic powdered colostrum. Powdered colostrum is a useful emergency feed source, but all are very low in antibodies compared to the real thing, so it is not a reasonable substitute for protection. A store of ewe colostrum (taken in the first few hours from a ewe nursing a single) can be stored in the freezer and thawed when needed. Avoid painful procedures such as tail docking and castration in the first 48 hours after birth as this may decrease nursing.

- **Ewe body condition (BCS) and nutrition** – The target ewe BCS at lambing is 3-3.5. Check ewes regularly with a ‘hands on approach’, it is surprising what a thick winter fleece will cover up! Ewes in inadequate body condition will have reduced udder development and insufficient colostrum. During the last few weeks before lambing the ewe has an increased demand for protein, needed for composition of quality colostrum, lamb birth weight, and lamb brown fat development (preventing hypothermia). It is important to split ewes depending on their body condition and pregnancy scanning results, then feed accordingly during the last 4-6 weeks before lambing. **Protein** deficiency and negative **energy** balance in the ewe will affect both lamb mortality in the first 24 hours and growth rates until weaning. Forage choice and quality will also influence the need for additional feed. Ewes can be blood sampled at 3 weeks prior to lambing to check B-hydroxybutyrate levels (BHB). This timing allows for dietary adjustments in the last few weeks of pregnancy if needed. High BHB levels show that ewes are in negative energy balance and indicate insufficient feeding. Ewes with high BHB levels are 5 times more likely to have poor antibody levels in their colostrum. For further information on how to BCS sheep and for feeding advice see AHDB ‘Better Returns – Feeding the Ewe’ and ‘Managing Ewes for Better Returns’ online booklets.

#### Score 3

The spinous processes are smooth and rounded; the bone is only felt with pressure. The transverse processes are also smooth and well-covered; hard pressure is required with the fingers to find the ends. The loin muscle is full and with moderate fat cover.



#### Score 4

The spinous processes are only detectable as a line. The ends of the transverse processes cannot be felt. The loin muscles are full and rounded and have a thick covering of fat.



- **Environmental hygiene (reduce the bugs!):**
  - ◇ **Disinfect lambing pens** - Individual lambing/nursing pens should be mucked out and disinfected between occupants. Vircon S® is a good disinfectant that can be purchased from most agricultural suppliers. Hydrated lime can also be spread before straw is laid for added bacterial control.



- ◇ **Straw daily** – Spread fresh dry straw in the lambing shed and individual pens daily as damp bedding will grow infection. Spread bedding lime and straw after each lambing.
- ◇ **Remove and dispose of afterbirths from pens promptly.**
- ◇ **Lamb outside (if sensible)** – Outdoor lambing on clean pasture greatly reduces (but does not eliminate) WM cases. Otherwise, aim to turn out strong lambs as soon as possible.
- ◇ **Clean equipment** – Clean and sterilise all lambing equipment thoroughly between uses. Have separate stomach tubes and bottles for healthy and unwell lambs.
- ◇ **Dag or winter shear ewes** – Trimming fleece from the ewe's backend will improve hygiene, young lamb will often suckle on soiled fleece whilst attempting to find the teat. Care should be taken not to stress the ewe in late stages of pregnancy (not <6weeks before lambing).
- ◇ **Clean hands (nag your lambing partner!)** – Muck and bacteria can be carried on our hands. It's always useful to keep hand sanitiser in the lambing shed and near individual pens. Hands should be washed on EVERY occasion, or wear disposable gloves, before handling the ewe's udder or helping new-born lambs to suckle.
- ◇ **Isolation pen** – Keep and isolation pen to move any sick lambs (and the ewe) to if they are unwell. Keep sick lambs away from contact of other new-borns to prevent spread of WM.

### **Treatment of a sick lamb with Watery Mouth Disease**

Sadly, the recorded mortality rate associated with WM is high. But please be reassured that even a very sick lamb has the potential to be saved with the upmost effort and care. Time is of the essence! Detecting and treating cases early gives better chances of recovery. A successful treatment plan involves intensive support until the lamb improves, plus the use of an effective antibiotic.

- Firstly, check the lamb for concurrent hypothermia (39-40C/ 102-104F is the normal). See Hypothermia article RFBS winter newsletter 2020/2021 and treat as appropriate. Sick and underfed lambs are prone to becoming cold, provide a heat lamp where possible.
- The lamb is unlikely to have a suck reflex, so will need to be stomach tubed until it begins to nurse well again (usually 24-48 hours later). Some of the literature advises stomach tubing with water and glucose only, but it is also recognised that nutrition (milk) is critically important for gut health in young neonates. I would personally advise stomach tubing with colostrum (ideally from the ewe) every 2-4 hours, with the addition of oral electrolytes (for example Rehydion Gel ©, available from vets and feed suppliers).
- A severely affected lamb may benefit from intravenous fluids although this is rarely done because of cost and practicality.

- Affected lambs will often be constipated due to reduced gut movement. Unless there is evidence that the lamb is regularly passing faeces, a rectal enema should be performed. The procedure is performed by syringing 10-20 ml of tepid soapy water into the lamb's rectum.
- Lambs with WM require antibiotic treatment. The Sheep Veterinary Society suggests that injectable amoxicillin may be an appropriate choice (inject for at least 3 days) based on resistance profile studies. Antibiotic resistance will vary from farm to farm. If you are in doubt about what to administer then contact your own vet although prescribing preferences will vary. In an outbreak situation (where many lambs are affected), it may be appropriate to temporarily use targeted antibiotic control measures for 'at risk' lambs under veterinary guidance. It is no longer appropriate for large numbers of lambs to be dosed routinely.



### Antibiotics

The advice and attitude towards the blanket use of prophylactic antibiotics given to large numbers of lambs has changed drastically in recent years. There is now overwhelming evidence that blanket antibiotic use rapidly hastens the development of resistance, and recent reports of high mortality rates is attributed to antibiotic resistant bacteria. Despite this, 5.8 million doses of oral antibiotic was administered in 2021, predominantly for the attempted prevention and treatment of WM. In 2016 the SRUC found that a third of E-coli samples submitted from new-born lambs were resistant to spectinomycin (Spectam). Likewise, a study by the APHA found that 25 out of 36 farms had WM bacteria with some form of antibiotic resistance. Tetracycline (Oxytetracyclin® /Alamycin LA®) resistance was the most common, followed by ampicillin, spectinomycin (Spectam) and streptomycin (PenStrep®) respectively. Multidrug resistance (resistance to three or more antibiotics) was present on 18 of the farms.

There will be some who currently feel reliant on administering antibiotics to every new-born lamb. An initial compromise could be to reduce your usage by adopting a targeted approach. Administer antibiotics to lambs that are at an increased risk until husbandry changes can be made and confidence is built without it. Many commercial farms who once felt the same way have managed to step away from prophylactic antibiotic use. Investing the time in improving husbandry and ensuring the lamb's needs are met will avoid reaching for the perceived protection of antibiotics.

*Sophie Gumble*

BVSc MRCVS

## Fleece & Yarn Report

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The revitalised Fleece and Yarn group met via Zoom on 31 January. It was great to see new volunteers for this group and lots of ideas were discussed.

At the moment the group is informal as we await confirmation of acceptance of our members by Council.

Sadly we were unable to get sufficient volunteers to help man a stand at Wonderwool Wales. However, if anyone is interested in crafting I would recommend attending this show which takes place on 23/24 April at Bulth Wells.

Our group is keen to promote and advertise our wool, and now is a good time in view of climate change and the push for sustainability. If anyone has their wool spun commercially we would love to hear from you. We would also like to hear from anyone who has their fleeces made into sheepskins.

Claire Weedall is putting together a list of members who sell Ryeland and Coloured Ryeland woolly items so if you sell craft items or your own processed wool she would like to hear from you, including details of your website, etsy or ebay shop. Claire's email address is [claireweedall095@btinternet.com](mailto:claireweedall095@btinternet.com).

We will have our next Zoom meeting in March and if you would like to join us please get in touch with me.

*Lin Whittall*

07760 669177

[lin.whittall@gmail.com](mailto:lin.whittall@gmail.com)



The idea of a British Heritage Sheep scheme - actively promoting the diversity of meat from our native breeds - started back in 2018. As time has gone on and our

plans have progressed, the real need for such an initiative has become increasingly apparent and indeed essential to the survival of our sheep industry as it currently exists.

The UK surely needs now, more than ever, a standard-bearer for our rich and diverse range of sheep meat. Such differences in flavour have, until now, been considered to be a problem, rather than a unique and priceless asset which should be celebrated.

BHS will help differentiate and celebrate the diversity of breeds, ages, and provenance of sheep meat from the UK, and could be an important part of the drive for new export markets. The unique nature of the UK's diverse and historic sheep industry, reflected in BHS, is a key element in the industry's long-term survival.

So where are we with this initiative? -

- We have established a company 'British Heritage Sheep', which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Sheep Association (NSA).
- We have developed a modest website <http://www.heritagesheep.org> - which is now live, and offers a brief introduction to the scheme.
- We have taken every opportunity available to promote the concept of BHS and the value of our sheep heritage, to the farming media, policy makers, our levy bodies, and wider audiences whenever the opportunity has arisen.
- We have established a relationship with a professional fundraiser and have been exploring options for taking advantage of current funding streams.

### **Funding**

Launching this initiative will cost money, as will its ongoing operation once up and running. Accessing funds has proved difficult in the current turbulent and uncertain environment, and has delayed implementation of the scheme. However new and seemingly appropriate funding streams are now emerging and we are currently developing a consortium of the NSA, a farmers' marketing group, and processors, to apply to Government funding streams in a few week's time. We will let you know how this progresses and I hope, when we have funding in place.

### **Further Information about BHS**

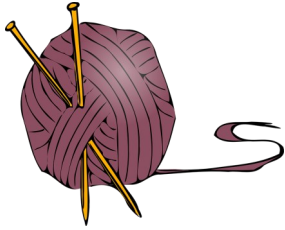
A video and other information is available on the BHS website, as are copies of the full BHS feasibility study and a summary are also available to download from the website.

To contact BHS please email me at [bobk@nationalsheep.org.uk](mailto:bobk@nationalsheep.org.uk).

With best regards,

*Bob Kennard*

## RFBS ANNUAL HANDICRAFT SHOW



NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup> 2022  
ENTRIES CLOSE  
NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> 2022  
JUDGE DEE TIPPETT



Entries. 1 entry per person per class, maximum of 2 good, clear photos per item please.

Photographs to be emailed no later than 12<sup>th</sup> November to,  
[claireweedall095@btinternet.com](mailto:claireweedall095@btinternet.com)

**ALL HANDICRAFT ITEMS MADE FROM  
RYELAND OR COLOURED RYELAND WOOL ONLY.**

Class 1. Any knitted item

Class 2. Any needle felted item

Class 3. Any wet felted item

Class 4. Any woven item

Class 5. Any other woolly crafted item not listed above

Class 6. Under 16's (please include age)

Class 7. Any sheep related DIY creation ( just for fun)

**ALL EXHIBITS MUST BE EXHIBITORS OWN WORK AND  
NOT PREVIOUSLY ENTERED IN COMPETITION.**

## 2022 Shows

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(Please use as a guide only)

### May:

RWAS Spring Festival - 21st & 22nd  
Shropshire - 28th  
Suffolk 31st - 1st June

### June:

Staffordshire - 1st & 2nd  
Royal Bath and West - 2nd - 4th  
Royal Cornwall - 9th - 11th  
Cumberland County - 11th  
Three Counties - 17th - 19th  
Royal Cheshire - 21st & 22nd  
Royal Highland - 23rd - 26th  
Malton - 26th  
Royal Norfolk - 29th & 30th  
Devon County - 30th - 2nd July

### July:

Huby and Sutton - 3rd  
Tivyside - 9th  
Newport - 9th  
Liskeard - 9th  
Tendring - 9th  
Great Yorkshire - 12th - 15th  
Royal Welsh - 18th - 21st  
Mid Devon - 23rd  
Aldborough and B'bridge - 24th  
Ryedale - 26th  
Nantwich - 27th  
Cardigan County - 30th  
Gower - 31st

### August:

Burwarton - 4th  
Honiton - 4th  
Tenbury (National Show) - 6th  
Brecon - 6th  
Dumfries - 6th

### August - cont'd

Emley - 6th  
Tockwith - 7th  
Anglesey - 9th & 10th  
Vale of Glamorgan - 10th  
Nevern - 10th  
Okehampton - 11th  
Halifax - 13th  
Kinross - 13th  
Trawden - 14th  
Ripley - 14th  
Pembrokeshire - 17th  
G'ham and Shaftesbury - 17th  
Llyswen - 20th  
Ashbourne - 20th

### September:

Moreton in Marsh - 3rd  
Dorset County - 3rd  
Sennybridge - 3rd  
Westmorland - 7th & 8th  
Findon Sheep Fair - 10th  
Kington - 10th  
Penistone - 10th  
Henley - 10th  
North Yorkshire County - 11th  
Nidderdale - 19th  
Masham Sheep Fair - 24th & 25th

Monmouthshire - cancelled  
Cranleigh - cancelled  
Mottram - unknown  
Martletwy - unknown

### November:

RWAS Winter Fair - 28th & 29th

# Coloured Ryeland News

Welcome to the spring edition of Coloured Ryeland News. What a whirlwind of weather we have had lately. I hope you have all managed to get through this bout of storms with as little damage to yourselves, your flocks and your infrastructure as possible. I know many of you were lambing during the atrocious weather and some of you lost power. It has been a worrying time and a reminder of the havoc that Mother Nature can inflict upon us. Here's hoping for some better weather in the weeks and months ahead.

If you are currently lambing, then I wish you every success and as little stress as possible. Conversely, if you have now finished your lambing period – well done! Hurrah, you did it! Enjoy the extra sleep!

The photo on the right shows our first 2022 lamb, here at Hollyheath – Coco!

I'd just like to put out another plea to members for articles for inclusion in the newsletter. Would you like to feature in a member's profile? Have you created something fabulous with your CR fleeces? ...If so, I'd love to hear from you (contact details below). Please be aware that the deadline for submissions for the next edition will be 24/05 /2022.



## Coloured Ryeland Committee

### Chairman

Carol Bateman 01874 636549

### Committee Members

Steve Bradbury 01437 563312

Joanne Fisher 07899 076651

Val Howells 01268 961260

Jenny Hughes 01245 223288

### Coloured Ryeland Newsletter Editor

Holly Price 07543424805

### Vice Chairman

Andy McVicar 01686 621977

S McVicar (Treasurer) 01686 621977

Jordan Stone 01953 851943

Claire Weedall 07539 195580

Paula Wills 01736 786173

hollyprice127@gmail.com

## **The Farmer's Country Showdown**

You will spot some familiar faces in a couple of the episodes from Series 6 of The Farmers' Country Showdown.

This show is available to watch on catch-up via the BBC iPlayer. Well done to everyone who got involved, I found it a really great watch, and also a bit emotional at times!

Photos courtesy of the BBC



## **A Celebration of Bob Webb**

In January, the sad news was shared that Bob Webb had passed away. Many of our members will be familiar with Bob and all that he did for Coloured Ryelands, as well as his legacy that remains. With thanks to Marian Thornett and Carol Bateman for assisting with the following wording...





Prior to about 1985, Coloured Ryelands were few but Bob Webb, alongside a handful of other members, was instrumental in helping set up the foundations via the formation of the Coloured Ryeland group which secured getting Coloured Ryelands recognised within the RFBS society. At first, registrations for Coloured Ryelands were only on a loose sheet inside the Flock Book, and it wasn't until around 1989 that they began to be included in the Flock Book itself.

Bob's flock (S1C) was the first Coloured Ryeland flock, and at this time there were only about half a dozen Coloured Ryeland breeders. When the Coloured Ryeland Group Committee was formed, Bob and his wife, Angela, were some of the first members on it, alongside Olwen Veevers and George Yeats. There is a firm belief among those who were involved in Coloured Ryelands at this time, that if it hadn't been for Bob continually pushing his enthusiasm of the Coloured Ryelands to society members, there wouldn't be the Coloured Ryelands we have today. Marian Thornett believes 'we owe it all to Bob' and said that in the beginning, there were very few pedigrees which weren't full of Teme sheep!

And what a legacy Bob leaves, with his Teme Coloured Ryeland Flock (and Ashford Ryeland Flock) continuing to this day under the care of his son, Jonathan, and grandson, Nick. There is also the Bob Webb Points Trophy, where points are awarded for placings at Monmouth, Sennybridge, Kington, the Smallholders, Stafford, Three Counties (main show and RBST), Royal Welsh, Burwarton, Tenbury and Llyswnen.



Photo courtesy of Philippa Gray

Bob will be missed by many, and I'm sure everyone will join us sending our deepest sympathies and condolences to the Webb family.

## **Young Handlers Competition**

This year the Coloured Ryeland Committee are delighted to announce that there will be a Young Handlers Competition. Further details will be sent to each of the regional committees in due course and members who wish to participate will need to notify the regional committees (after the re-elections in April).

The photo below is courtesy of Sharon Westwood and shows her grandchildren, Jack, Grace and Amelia expertly showing their Coloured Ryelands. Fab job, gang!





### **RFBS MERCHANDISE**

Trailer stickers £5

Beanie hats £5

Ties £10

Mugs £8

#### **Also available**

Pins £10

Notelets £2.50

Photocards £6

Tote bags £5



Contact Jenny Hughes for further details: [jennyec@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jennyec@hotmail.co.uk)

New eBay shop in the pipeline to facilitate easier buying

## RFBS Notices

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- **2022 Subscriptions:** Annual fees for 2022 fell due on the 1st January. Membership benefits will cease on the 31st March if you have not paid your subscription by that date. If you're not sure if your subs have been paid, please contact the office to double check.
- **Year Letters:** Please note that the year letter for lambs born in 2022 will be C. This needs to be included on pedigree ear tags and must also form the first letter of ram's names. The letter for 2021 born animals was B
- **2022 Sheep Survey:** The 2022 Sheep Survey can now be completed online and will be available until the 30th April 2022. Please take the time to complete the survey, especially if you did not do so last year as the whole process of online registrations is much easier if your flock lists are reasonably up to date. If you are a relatively new member, you may find that you have no sheep listed under your flock. If this is the case, please send an email to the office listing the details of the animals you own so your list can be updated.
- **Annual Flock Books:** Work on compiling the next volume of the RFBS flock books is nearing completion. Hopefully the publications should arrive with members during April.
- **Sheep Registrations:** It is compulsory to submit sheep registrations online. A number of members around the country have offered to assist those that have genuine difficulty in using the online flock book. If you fall into this group, please contact either the office or your regional group to be put in touch with someone who can assist. Please take care to provide all the information requested and try to ensure it is correct. If you can provide the right information, you will receive your certificates much more quickly. Most queries arise due to incorrect or incomplete ear tag details being provided so please take care to get this right.
- **Annual General Meeting 2022:** RFBS is hopeful that the AGM will be able to take place for the first time since 2019. The meeting will take place on 30th April and will be held at Staffordshire County Showground. The event will begin in the morning with a guest speaker, followed by a light lunch. The formal business will take place in the afternoon. We hope to be able to welcome as many of you as possible. Further details will be circulated in due course.
- **Council Meeting:** The next meeting of the RFBS Council takes place on 23rd April. If you have any items for consideration, please contact the office by 7th April.
- **Sale Dates 2022:** The RFBS sale at Worcester will take place on 20th August. The Carlisle sale will be held on the third Saturday in September, the 17th. Entry forms will be circulated with the June newsletter.