

Ryeland FBS Summer 2023



Champion, Ayr Show: Ram, exhibited by Andrew Hunter- Blair.

Photo: Douglas Stainton

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Newsletter Printed by Tulleys Print

Editor's Note



Apologies for the late arrival (again!) of your summer edition. My fault entirely - daughter's forthcoming wedding took precedence! All beautifully done and dusted now so I can return to my inbox!!! It's just been one of those years.

It's lovely to see summer show results on Facebook. I try to incorporate as many as possible in the newsletter but any not included will appear in the yearly round up (provided the results are forwarded to ryelandshowresults@gmail.com)! It may not be possible to publish all of the photos because they lose a lot of resolution on Facebook.

There are a couple of really interesting articles so do take the time to read them. Thank you Sophie and Jayne.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Show and Sale at Ludlow.

Deadline for articles for next edition 20 August.

Lin Whittall

Ryeland Editor

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From the Chair

Having just returned from Cheshire Show, where the heavens opened both days with huge thunder downpours I would like to think that that most members have now had rain, which was urgently needed.... Entries seem to have improved at the two shows that I have attended this year so far, which is encouraging news after the slow uptake following the pandemic.

Since the last newsletter the RFBS Council held another council meeting in April at Malvern. The meeting covered a wide range of topics including the review of the two main society sales, the northern sale will be held again in Carlisle on the 16th of September and the main society sale will move back to Ludlow this year after various considerations were discussed by council and will be held on the 19th of August, naturally as always, a debrief will take place in the October meeting. The appointment of the officials for 2022/23 was agreed, Caz Bateman

remained chair, John Donovan remained vice chair, and Jack Williams was welcomed to the position of Deputy Vice Chair. Andy McVicar stepped down as Deputy Vice Chair and I would like to thank him for his support and contribution over the past twelve months.

In April the society held the annual AGM in Hereford organised by the Hereford and the Marches region, many thanks to them, for the venue, catering and displays. The AGM was still a little disappointing in numbers but it was nice to see a wide range of the membership from all over the UK. At the AGM the logo votes were counted by the new President John Reed and the new President elect Robert Morgan and the new society logo was announced. Alun and Eleanor Parry stepped down as Presidents and I would like to thank them for their attendance and participation in numerous events across the country in 2022 and the Presidents dinner they arranged in Anglesey which was enjoyed by all that attended. On the evening of the AGM the new president John Reed held his presidents dinner, a lovely evening with an excellent talk from John, lovely food and an excellent raffle.

It is great news to see that the Young handler competition is being held again this year after the success of this in 2022. New qualifying shows and a new additional age range has been included and it is hoped that the younger membership will participate in this again for the coming year. Keep an eye out on the RFBS website and Facebook page for updates and how to participate.

Council Members

President - John Reed

Vice President - Alun & Eleanor Parry

Chairman - Caz Bateman

CRC Representative

Caz Bateman

Ryeland Committee Representative

Zoe Unwin

Councillors: retire 2024

Joanne Fisher (Northern England)

Stephen Hipps (Yorkshire)

Julie Ellis (Yorkshire)

Pam Bateman (North Wales & Mercia)

Jack Williams- Deputy Vice Chair
(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)

Vacant (South East England)

Gillian Dixon (South West England)

David Mitchell (Scotland)

Regional Representatives:

Retire April 2025

Philippa Atkins (Northern England)

Jill Gray (Yorkshire)

Jane Pinches (North Wales & Mercia)

Jonathan Webb (Hereford' & T Marches)

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

Vacant (Eastern England)

Stephen Ramsden (South West England)

RFBS Office Hours:

Tuesdays - Thursdays

9.30am - 5pm

For those who are showing throughout the summer I wish you much success, and to those who are just enjoying their sheep at home, I hope for no maggots and good grass.

Finally it has come to my attention that there are a number of members who are experiencing significant health issues at this present time, I wish you all the best in your various treatments and I hope your sheep give you enjoyment and positivity, or if as in some cases they require rehoming that some of the membership will help in providing them new loving homes.

Take care and I hope to see you for a laugh and chat at the events through the summer months.

Caz Bateman
Chair

North Wales & Mercia Regional Report

At last we have an event planned which hopefully as many members as possible will be able to attend..... a Butchery day on Sunday September 10th. This will be very kindly hosted by Jayne Carter at Ryecroft Rare Breeds near Wigan, and it will be ideal for anyone who either already produces meat lambs or intends to learn more about producing lamb for themselves or to sell. Full details of the day will be posted on our website www.ryelandnwam.org and on facebook. There will be a barbeque after the butchery demonstration and talks on all aspects of breeding and rearing lambs for meat. It is also hoped to have a talk from Signet regarding performance recording of Ryeland flocks.

The show season is well underway in our region, with Stafford, Royal Cheshire and Derby County all taking place before the end of June. The results from these were posted on Facebook and our website, and they will also be in the show supplements later in the year. Although attendance at these shows was good, there is always room for more – especially anyone new to showing who will receive any help required if you contact one of our Committee members.

Looking further ahead we will be holding our 5th Lamb show at Stafford on 18th & 19th November in conjunction with the English Winter Fair, and that is a great show to attend if you want to learn more about showing sheep and meet some lovely friendly people!

Good luck to everyone for the rest of the season, and hopefully we will see you at one of our Autumn events.

Michele Varmen

Regional Chair

Herefordshire & The Marches Regional Report

The RFBS National Show will be held on 5 August 2023 at Tenbury Show. Do please come along and see a fantastic show and chat Ryelands from morning till dusk. There will be a Hospitality tent with refreshments available and we welcome all new and old breeders to this event.

We are delighted that Kington Show have very kindly agreed for us to hold our Grand Autumn Lamb Show in conjunction with the show on 9th September 2023. We also welcome the South, West and Mid Wales Region who will be hosting this event jointly with us. This is an ideal opportunity for members to show off their 2023 crop of lambs, with many classes to cover all ages and trimmed or untrimmed; also pairs and wool on the hoof. Fantastic sashes and rosettes to be won as well as really good prize money for all champions and reserve champions.

Kington Show itself also schedules classes for both Ryelands and Coloured Ryelands and the Lamb Show will be held at the completion of these.

Two shows in one venue, not to be missed!

Judges for the Grand Autumn Lamb Show –

Ryelands – Mr Steve Rowe and Coloured Ryelands – Mrs Paula Wills

Kington Show are offering an Early Bird Discount until Friday 4th August 2023. Entries close Wednesday 23rd August 2023

Livestock Secretary: Tel: 07747 689215 entries.kingtonshow@gmail.com

30th September 2023 – Butchery Demonstration and talk on Marketing Ryeland Meat from Jayne Carter of Rycroft Rare Breeds will be hosted by Sue Quigley of the Michaelchurch Flock, followed by an afternoon tea and presentation of Regional Points Trophies.

In addition the region will be holding its Flock Competition in the Autumn and details will be sent out shortly.

If you are interested in attending any of the above events, please contact Doreen Smillie-Gray either by email dsg.oakberrow@gmail.com or 07971675162, or myself. We hope that we will see as many members as possible at these events. Please see our website for contact details and information. <https://hmrlyelandgroup.co.uk>

David Duggan

Regional Chair

**Shropshire County Show
Ryeland Results**

Ram shearling and over

4 entries

- 1- I & V Jenkins (Strata)
- 2 - Dinedor Cross Farm (Dinedor)
- 3 - Ellis Davies (Winllan)

Ram lamb

2 entries

- 1 - S & J Wright (Valhalla)
- 2 - Dinedor Cross Farm

Breeding Ewe

3 entries

- 1 - I & V Jenkins
- 2 - Ellis Davies
- 3 - Dinedor Cross Farm

Shearling Ewe

4 entries

- 1 - I & V Jenkins
- 2 - Ellis Davies
- 3 - Ellis Davies

Ewe Lamb

3 entries

- 1 - I & V Jenkins
- 2 - S & J Wright
- 3 - Dinedor Cross Farm

Group of Three

3 entries

- 1- I & V Jenkins
- 2 - Ellis Davies
- 3 - Dinedor Cross Farm

Champion I & V Jenkins ewe lamb

Reserve S & J Wright ram lamb

Eastern England Regional Report

Suffolk show had a good turnout of sheep although we really would love more exhibitors, the Suffolk show caters for MV and NON MV sheep so please get in contact if you would like help and assistance showing next year. We would also love to see some Ryelands out and about!

Royal Norfolk is just on the horizon with Tendring show following closely then Wayland. These all have separate coloured classes and with Tendring and Wayland show still accepting entries it would be great to see some new faces this year.

In relation to crafting a group of us are attending the Summer Wool festival in Bedford - summerwoolfestival.co.uk on the Sunday and would love to meet up with others in the area, it's located quite centrally in the region. The date is Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th July.

As always any help or advice please email jennyec@hotmail.co.uk or text 07590035777

Jenny Hughes

Regional Chair

South, Mid & West Wales Regional Report

The Regional Committee have agreed to hold a joint Grand Autumn Lamb Show in partnership with Hereford and the Marches Region who kindly invited us to join them in the event that they have very successfully held for a number of years.

The Lamb Show is to be held on Saturday 9th September at Kington Show. The lamb show will feature both Ryeland and Coloured Ryeland classes by age of the lamb, trimmed and untrimmed classes. Pairs and wool on the hoof.

We really hope that as many people from both regions will support this wonderful event. Kington Show is on the border of Herefordshire and Powys. You can obtain Entries and Schedules Via <https://Kingtonshow.co.uk/schedules-entry-forms/>

We would like to apologise to those who attended our Christmas lunch last year, the food was cold, meals were late, the staff were thin on the ground and showed zero interest in our gathering. I have made a complaint to the hotel and have since found out that the new owners took over the hotel, two days before our lunch, no consolation to us. Our Regional Group attended the hotel in May and what a difference - lots of staff, hot plates, good food, good menu, on time and very helpful staff. We will visit again in a few months to see how they perform. The Castle Hotel Llandovery is central to our region, hopefully the improvements will continue. Once again, many apologies.

We are hoping to organise further events later in the year.

Andy McVicar
Chair.

South West England Regional Report

On Wednesday 10th May, the Southwest group took a stand at the regional NSA Sheep Event at Yarcombe near Honiton. If you remember, we had had endless rain during April and early May, such that the ground was somewhat muddy (understatement). On show day we arrived early to set up the Ryeland breed stand to find we were not allowed to drive onto the show field to minimise damage and instead decanted all our belongings onto the back of a UTV which towed it and our small stock trailer down to the marquee. Belongings offloaded and biddable sheep ensconced into their pen, we had to park at the top of the showground to avoid vehicles getting bogged down lower down.

Despite all that, there was a big turnout, primarily of commercial farmers but we caught up with several members and introduced rams Bryn Caffo Xray and Orchard Heights Buster to prospective new members. We had Bettina Addington Smith's crafted and felted items, Gillian Dixon's Coloured Ryeland knitted sweater and Gather Wool's luscious blankets there to promote the uses of Ryeland fleece. The day was packed with demonstrations, seminars, competitions, trade, food and breed stands and even a sale of working sheep dogs (some considerably better than others – say no more...) The two rams were stars of the day when it came to loading, leading on halters to the trailer across the muddy field while most other (wilder) stock had to be dragged or run through races of hurdles back into their trailers at the end of the day.

Now the weather is better, shows are well underway across the region. The main county shows have seen an excellent turn out of both Ryeland and Coloureds; Notable results are at the Bath and West - S&L Rowe Ryeland Champion, Wear family reserve; Thomas Nash took both Champion and reserve in the Coloureds. At the Royal Cornwall relative newcomer Rosie Statton took Champion, the Wear family reserve for the Ryelands, and Thomas Nash both Champion & reserve again with the Coloureds. At the Devon County show, for both the Ryelands and Coloureds, Sonia Smith took Champion female, and Thomas Nash Champion male and overall Champion.

Whilst we are all enjoying the dry weather, we could do with a spot of rain to settle the dust now!

Gillian Dixon

Regional Secretary

Scottish News

RFBS members in Scotland got together at the beginning of May for a show preparation talk/demo and meeting kindly hosted by Janice and Eddie Henderson at Landriggs, near Kinross. The morning session covered all aspects of show preparation culminating in a trimming demonstration by Gary Morrison.

It was an informal day with lots of time for questions and discussions and hopefully gave lots of encouragement for those thinking of showing for the first time. The afternoon meeting provided a discussion forum for a range of topics. The day was very well supported with many new faces attending.

Show season started at Ayr in mid May, followed by Lesmahagow, then Stirling where the first three championships of the season were won by Andrew Hunter Blair, Susan Bryden and Janice Milne respectively.

At the time of writing, exhibitors are busy preparing for the prestigious Royal Highland Show.

Later in the summer, the Scottish National show this year moves north where Turriff Show is kindly hosting the event.

Other Scottish shows which have dedicated Ryeland or Coloured Ryeland classes include Echt, New Deer, Banchory, Wigtown and Dumfries.

Susan Bryden

News From the South East

Unfortunately Cranleigh Show has been cancelled for a fourth year, with the result that Findon Sheep Fair is the only show in our region with Ryeland and Coloured Ryeland classes. It takes place on 9th September and is a lovely day out and an opportunity to meet other members. Please do consider entering your sheep, whether you are an old hand or are thinking of stepping into the show ring for the first time. Members are always happy to help and advise newbies! Entries close on 31st July and entry forms can be found at www.findonsheepfair.co.uk. It would be great to have a really good turnout of Ryelands and CRs.

If you have any sheep or sheep-related items for sale, or are looking to buy, send the information to laura@swaynesfarm.net and it will be included in a regional marketplace email to members. Likewise, please get in touch if you would like to suggest a topic for a regional event. There are a number of us who are keen to organise meetings, both educational and social, for members in the South East.

Laura Goldsmith

Fleece & Yarn Committee Report

Wonderwool Wales, 22 – 23 April 2023.

After a lot of emails flying backwards and forwards and a little bit of panic in the air, the weekend of Wonderwool Wales was upon us. Ann and Brian Davies kindly agreed to bring some Ryeland Sheep (no small undertaking, so thank you very much, we really appreciated the time and effort that it took), and four of us had a plan to spend time on the stand.



The stand gave us lots of space – enough for the ewe and her lamb, banners at the back, a display about the breed and a craft table with items for sale. Lin (Whittall) and Judith (Waldron) arrived on Friday night and made a start setting up and Pam (Bateman) and Liz (Mason) arrived on Saturday morning, with Kathryn (Bradbury) and Liz (Shellard) joining us on Sunday.

The show itself was really busy – Pam sold all her fleeces before the show opened, and we had enquiries all day about where to get them from – April is not quite the right time for having many fleeces. There was a constant stream of people interested in the spinning, the peg looming and the felting we were doing, buying our crafts, and looking at the ewe and her lamb. We spent time talking to interested people about the breed and the fibre (including one commercial yarn spinner who wanted TONS of fleece). Even with all of us there, it was not always easy to get around to look at the show.

All in all it was a really successful (if a bit chilly) weekend, we felt as though we had been ambassadors for the breed and the Society.

Buxton Woolgathering 7 – 8 May 2023

After this event was cancelled in March due the massive amount of snow that hit Buxton, the weather was much improved and much more conducive to crafty people getting out and about. Vicky (Chadwick) and Judith (Waldron) arrived to set up on Saturday afternoon to find our stand in a lovely, light-filled building with high ceilings and lots of windows. Buxton, compared to Wonderwool was a much more intimate affair – really tiny, however to some extent this worked in our favour as people tended to make sure that they saw everything at least twice! We were really pleased with our stand, it looked colourful and interesting and offered very different merchandise to every other stand at the show. We were the only breed stand there!

Again, we had lots of interest in the breed itself, and in where to get whole fleeces from. We met a Welsh weaver who spent a lot of money on yarn, and once he has used that will be looking to source more Coloured Ryeland wool as he was so impressed with the quality.

Both shows have given the Society a public face that has been well received, and collectively we have spoken to many people who may well be swayed in favour of keeping Ryeland or Coloured Ryeland rather than any other breeds because they had a chance to ask questions. The one thing that did arise was that the fleeces are in demand, but it was difficult to give anyone a direction to go in – would it be an idea to have a page on the website where breeders could list fleeces they had for sale

The Tangled Galashiels Fibre Festival was held on the 2nd and 3rd June. This was organised by friends, Samira Hill of Eildon Hills Designs and Naomi Hodgson, who have come together in efforts to celebrate the incredible dyers, spinners and crafters of the Scottish Borders and beyond! A truly community led event, the two-day festival offered an affordable platform for local and independent fibre artists to showcase their products, engage with their supporters and celebrate all things wool! More information at Home | Tangled Galashiels and on Instagram Tangled Galashiels (@tangledgalashiels) • Instagram photos and videos.

Going forward we will once again be having a craft Tent at Tenbury National Show, which will also house the Fleece Competition. Do enter, there are trophies for the winners of the Ryeland and Coloured Ryeland classes.

If you're interested in the wool side Benridge Woolworks are worth following as they are being very proactive in encouraging the sale of British wool in shops.

There are several other sites on Facebook posting what they achieve with their wool, several of them Ryeland members. Well done.

It's great to see this resurgence of interest. We'd love to hear from you with your stories so do get in touch. The sooner wool achieves improved prices the better, and so much better for the environment than using synthetic materials.

DON'T FORGET THE CRAFT COMPETITION

TO be judged on the 4th November

Closing date for entries will be 28th October 2023.

**Hope you'll find some inspiration and will soon start on a
crafty project using the beautiful Ryeland Wool.**

Ricky Smyth

e-mail: chris.rsmyth@yahoo.co.uk

From the Vet

Ewe Preparation for a Successful Breeding Season

Careful planning and preparation is the key to a successful breeding season. The first step is to plan when you want to lamb. The average gestation length for sheep is 147 days, give or take 3-5 days variance. Ryeland lambs should be born from January 1st. Some choose to lamb early in the year to produce bigger lambs for the shows or to hit meat price at its peak. This may mean housing ewes and lambs for longer periods and increased outlay on feed and fodder. Others choose to lamb later in the spring when there is more grass, but lambs may be less competitive until the later shows, and the market price may have fallen by the time they reach finishing weight.

The Ewe MOT

Just as for rams, it is important that ewes are carefully checked for fitness to breed. It is advisable to individually inspect all ewes after weaning, and again at least 4 weeks prior to mating to allow time for adjustments to be made if needed.

Condition: The optimum ewe body condition score (BCS) at weaning is >2.5 (out of 5) for lowland sheep, and BCS 3.5 at mating. Body condition has a direct impact on fertility. Thin ewes are more likely to suffer delayed cycling and lower conception rates. If a large proportion of your ewes are below optimum BCS then looking into health factors, nutrition or earlier weaning may be needed. If thin ewes can be identified early after weaning, investigations into the cause can take place and they can be supplied with increased feed (after their milk has dried up) in good time prior to breeding.

Fat ewes may also display reduced oestrus activity and can struggle to retain early pregnancies, resulting in an increased chance of appearing barren at scanning. It is traditionally thought that ewes benefit from 'flushing', an increased plane of nutrition/protein during the four weeks prior to mating and whilst with the ram to increase ovulation (twinning rates). Flushing has been shown to have greatest affect when the ewe is between BCS 2-4. Action to slim ewes down needs to be achieved well in advance of this period to avoid affecting ovulation. A comprehensive guide on how to body condition score sheep can be found in the 'Managing ewes for Better Returns' document on the AHDB website.

Teeth: Older ewes may start to lose some of their front incisors, and this often correlates with further issues with the back molars that cannot easily be seen. A ewe with a broken mouth is sadly unlikely to be able to maintain weight during later pregnancy and lactation. This is not to be confused with younger ewes who may still be changing to their adult teeth. Also check ewes for correct mouth conformation, that the lower incisor teeth do not appear overshot or undershot compared to the upper dental pad. These conformational faults may be passed to their offspring and in severe cases can affect the ewe's ability to maintain condition.

Feet: Examine feet for any issues that could cause lameness in the upcoming weeks. Lameness is likely to cause pain and stress to the ewe, which can impact on fertility. An embryo in early pregnancy is very susceptible to being reabsorbed due to any kind of stress, so try to avoid needing to catch and tip ewes until at least three weeks after mating. Individuals who are recurrently lame with foot rot should not be bred from, as they may have a genetic susceptibility to the infection.

Udder: The udder of breeding ewes should be carefully examined after weaning, and again in advance of mating. Both sides of the udder should be felt for signs of chronic mastitis, which will feel like a lump(s) within the bag. Hard and large lumps are usually due to abscess formation which unfortunately will not respond to treatment. Depending on size and location this will likely impact on the ewe's ability to produce milk in one or both sides of the udder at her next lambing.

*NB Always clean your hands after inspecting teeth and feet, prior to touching the udder.

Age

If fit and healthy, many ewes can continue to breed until an impressive age, but research has shown that overall productivity (of commercial ewes) is reduced after 6 years old. Most Ryeland breeders choose to first breed their ewes as a shearling (approx. 18 months old). Other breeds and crossbreeds may lamb from a ewe-lamb (mated in the same year of birth) which is acceptable as long as the sheep is at least 60% of adult body weight at the time of mating. Lambing ewe-lambs can hasten genetic advancement, but they require more attention at lambing, often have reduced maternal instincts, and it may impact on their growth/size as an adult ewe.

Record Keeping: Beneficial traits to monitor for your ewes include conception rate, number of lambs born, lambing ease, maternal behaviour (lamb survival), and maternal ability (milkiness, influencing lamb growth rates until weaning). Conditions such as ring womb and prolapse are likely to recur in subsequent years. Close in-breeding may reduce fertility.

Ewe health: Performing checks well in advance of breeding will allow you to detect and treat any health issues that could impact on ewe fertility. Healthy adult sheep should have good immunity to worms so do not require routine worming. Exceptions include ewes who are immunosuppressed with other illness, or if there is a known issue with *Haemonchus* ('Barber's Pole worm') on your holding. All ages of sheep are susceptible to the parasite liver fluke, so should be tested prior to breeding, as chronic fluke infection will affect ewe (and ram) fertility. Grazing wet, poorly draining pasture is of highest risk. Fluke eggs or DNA (copro-antigen test) can be detected in sheep faeces but will not show on a usual worm egg count. Take a fresh pooled (from multiple ewes) faecal sample to your vets. Signs of ill-health such as pneumonia should be treated promptly, as it's likely to reduce fertility. Some diseases are less obvious to detect such as the 'ice-berg diseases', known to be endemic in the UK sheep population (MV, OPA, Johnes). These diseases have a direct impact on conception rates and the condition of ewes in infected flocks. The initial impact may only be at a low level, so the disease may go undetected for many years. Steps such as quarantine and blood testing of newly purchased animals are advisable to protect the health of your breeding flock.

Vaccination: If you choose to vaccinate your ewes against toxoplasmosis and/or enzootic abortion (EAE – chlamydial abortion) then ewes will require vaccination at least 4 weeks prior to mating. These infections are spread by cats (*Toxoplasma*) and from buying infected ewes (EAE). Symptoms include high number of abortions in later pregnancy, or abortions in early pregnancy so that multiple ewes may appear barren. Vaccines can be ordered from your vets but allow extra time as they can be in short supply.

Minerals: Deficiencies in copper, cobalt and selenium can impact on fertility and lamb health. Trace element levels can be tested by blood sampling breeding ewes. Without results it is impossible to know whether supplementation is actually necessary, but many choose a belt-and-braces approach by bolusing or drenching ewes

prior to mating. Excessive amounts of vitamins and minerals (especially copper in sheep) can be just as harmful as deficiencies.

Synchronisation: Extra planning with timings is needed if you wish to manipulate your ewes' breeding cycle, to increase ovulation early in the season and/or attempt to condense lambing dates. Synchronisation can be achieved prior to mating by using intravaginal progesterone sponges or CIDRS (+/- PMSG injection to increase ovulation). In this instance a ram to ewe ratio of <1:10 is advisable. Melatonin implants are another option for stimulating/increasing ovulation in the early breeding season but will not provide synchronisation. A more natural approach is to use a 'teaser' (infertile vasectomised ram) with the ewes for 14 days prior to introducing the breeding ram. This can help to synchronise ewes and stimulate ovulation earlier in the season. There is only a beneficial effect if the ewes can be kept at least one mile away from the nearest male for at least 6 weeks prior to mating.

Sophie Gumble MRCVS

News from Ryecroft

Watching grass grow

Land management is a big part of livestock farming. After all if you don't grow enough grass, your animals won't have enough to eat.

Our land is quite frankly...rubbish!! In the past it has been open cast several times and has been left with little top soil, messed up sub soil, heavy compacted clay mixed with massive boulders. Previous tenants have also abused it by piling masses of artificial fertiliser on it and very little else purely to get a mono-species hay or silage crop. Keeping our livestock on it has been problematic to say the least, especially these past few years with our ever changing climate; rising temperatures, long dry periods, never ending rain and late cold springs. With our native breed of sheep that takes that little bit longer to finish anyway, we have struggled to get our lambs to weight in time to be off by September; the time of year we really need to start downsizing our stocking density in preparation for the winter.

So what do we do??

Two things. We have to look after and improve our soil, and get creative with what we grow. Mono species grass leys just don't work anymore.

So over the past couple of years we have begun to change things. We started by carrying out a soil analysis to find out the health of the soil. This showed that our

soil was pretty much dead. Barely any microbes, worms looked to be extinct! And our pH levels were way off. That was the first thing we corrected, slowly over a two year period. Next we invested in electric fencing to begin a proper strip grazing regime with our sheep. This allows us to use the sheep to fertilise the ground naturally, adding much needed organic matter. In the first winter we also bale grazed the flock. This is a method of feeding hay to the flock by dumping hay in different locations within the field each day instead of using a ring feeder. At first you might think this method is a waste of hay, as the animals often stand on it, urinate and defecate on it and only end up eating half of it. But this is exactly the point! By doing these things the animals are actually adding the hay back to the soil, thus increasing its organic matter content over time. And not only does the hay act as a barrier between the sheep's feet and the soil preventing poaching, it also offers some insulating properties to the soil beneath allowing it to warm up faster come spring.

Once we had the soil in a better chemical shape we started to overseed with a multispecies grass, clover, and herbal ley. The roots of these different plants vary in depth. The longer ones will break up our sub soil and heavy clay creating better drainage, meaning less flooding and soil erosion. The deeper roots also allow the plant to access locked in nutrients from the clay and it means the plants are more tolerant to drought. The clover in the mix locks nitrogen into the soil meaning the fertiliser the sheep lay down will have a greater effect of growing the plants themselves, and it is also high in protein which will help the lambs grow and finish quicker.

The fields we overseeding in spring 2021 and 2022 have absolutely thrived. Last year when many around the country were struggling in the long hot dry summer, we still had growing pasture. This was due to the deeper roots but also because the soil was well sheltered under the different broad leafed plants, it was cooler and the leaves prevented moisture from evaporating off into the atmosphere. We continued to strip graze our animals, moving them to the next section well before they had eaten the grasses too low, so that the pasture they moved off still had enough 'green' to allow photosynthesis to occur enabling the plants grow back very quickly.

We have definitely seen the benefits already. Last year our lambs finished on average 4 weeks sooner with better carcass composition despite the harsh summer, in winter/spring the fields weren't as wet as previous seasons, and our soil now has earth worms in it!!!! The new pastures will also be much healthier for our livestock with many of the herbs having healing and antiworming properties.

Our soil hasn't healed overnight, and it will continue to be a work in progress for several years to come. We are dedicated to making these changes though and we

have just finished overseeding another two of our fields, a little late in the season due to my tractor breaking down (!) but I'm hoping that they will be flourishing soon, ready for autumn.

All the best
Jayne Carter

Stafford County Show

A great turn out of Ryelands at Stafford show today & congratulations to everyone who made it a great competition. Thank you to Phillipa Gray for judging!

Shearling ram

1. J. Williams & D Dickson
2. T&G Glover
3. M. Varmen
4. EJ Pinches

Aged ram:

1. M. Whitehurst & S Briggs
2. E.J Pinches
3. K. Edgecombe
4. Good life Ryelands

Shearling ewe:

1. S & Z Unwin
2. S. Quigley
3. N. Webb
4. S&Z Unwin

Ewe with lambs at foot:

1. M. Whitehurst & S. Briggs
2. C. Fleet
3. J. McGuire
4. C. Fleet

*Left: **Champion:** A G Anslow ram lamb, homebred by Mossley Woodstock out of homebred (Chase) ewe Y205 Also champion lamb.*

***Reserve:** S & Z Unwin shearling ewe, homebred (Fairfax) by Cagedale Xbox out of Garddwr ewe*

Ewe lamb:

1. S.Quigley
2. J. Williams & D. Dickson
3. K Edgecombe
4. M. Whitehurst & S Briggs

Ram lamb:

1. A G Anslow
2. S&Z Unwin
- 3 J Williams & D Dickson
4. C. Fleet

Group of 3:

1. J Williams & D Dickson
- 2.M Whitehurst & S Briggs
3. E J Pinches
4. H Deakins



Wool on the Hoof:

1. T & G Glover
2. M. Varmen
3. M. Whitehurst & S. Briggs

Gill & Tim Glover not only won both the wool on the hoof breed classes but then went on to take the overall supreme wool on the hoof championship with their homebred shearing ram Sproxton Charlie.

Left: Ian Brooksbanks, chief grader at the British Wool Board) presenting the supreme championship to Gill Glover & Sproxton Charlie



Devon County Show

Aged Ram

- 1 Ms Sonia Smith
- 2 Mr H J Mills
- 3 Mrs Paula Wills

Shearling Ram

- 1 Mr H J Mills
- 2 Mr H J Mills

Ram Lamb

- 1 Master T Nash
- 2 Ms Sonia Smith
- 3 Mrs Paula Wills

Breeding Ewe

- 1 Master T Nash
- 2 Ms Sonia Smith
- 3 Mrs Paula Wills

Shearling Ewe

- 1 Mr H J Mills
- 2 Mr H J Mills

Ewe Lamb

- 1 Ms Sonia Smith
- 2 Mrs Paula Mills
- 3 Mrs Paula Wills

Breed Champion

Master T Nash

Reserve

Ms Sonia Smith



Near Left: Devon County Show Champion, Capland Dave, bred and exhibited by Thomas Nash. .

Far left: Reserve Champion, Kestrel ewe lamb, bred and exhibited by Adam Retter & Sonia Smith. With judge, John Reed in the centre.

Cumberland County Show

Judge - Mr J Arthur

Aged ram

- 1 A+D Mitchell (Wellhill)
- 2 A. Robinson (Hawthorns)
- 3 T. Harrington (Tee Jay)

Shearling Ram

- 1 A. Robinson
- 2 A. Burton (Ryeside)
- 3 A+D Mitchell

Ram Lamb

- 1 E. Redmayne (Red Sewell)
- 2 A. Robinson
- 3 T. Harrington

Ewe

- 1 A Robinson
- 2 E Redmayne
- 3 E Redmayne

Shearling Ewe

- 1 A Burton
- 2 A. Robinson
- 3 S. Bryden

Ewe lamb

- 1 A. Robinson
- 2 E. Redmayne
- 3 S. Bryden

Group of 3

- 1 E. Redmayne
- 2 A. Robinson
- 3 S. Bryden

Champion

E. Redmayne- Ram Lamb

Reserve Champion

A. Burton - Shearling Ewe

Royal Cornwall

Judge: Jack Williams

Aged Ram

- 1 R Statton
- 2 H J Mills
- 3 P Wills

Shearling ram

- 1 S & C Rennie
- 2 H J Mills
- 3 H J Mills

Aged ewe

- 1 P Wills
- 2 S & C Rennie
- 3 R Statton

Shearling ewe

- 1 R Statton
- 2 H J Mills
- 3 S & C Rennie

Ram lamb

- 1 T Nash
- 2 R Statton
- 3 P Wills

Ewe lamb

- 1 Wear Family
- 2 R Statton
- 3 R Statton

Group of 3

- 1 S & C Rennie
- 2 R Statton
- 3 P Wills

Male Champion:

S & C Rennie - Shearling Ram

Reserve Champion

T Nash - ram lamb

Female Champion:

R Statton - Shearling ewe

Reserve Champion:

Wear Family - ewe lamb

Breed Champion:

R Statton - Shearling ewe

Reserve Champion:

Wear Family - ewe lamb

Right to left: Royal Cornwall Breed Champion, Shearling ewe bred and exhibited by R Statton, judge, Jack Williams, Reserve Champion, ewe lamb bred and exhibited by the Wear Family.



Royal Bath & West

Judge: John Mills

Ram 2 Shear & Over

- 1 S & L Rowe
- 2 N. Rowlands
- 3 C. Preece

Shearling Ram

- 1 S. Rennie
- 2 N. Rowlands
- 3 J. Warman

Ram Lamb

- 1 T. Nash
- 2 S & L Rowe
- 3 Wear Family

Ewe 2 Shear & Over

- 1 T. Nash
- 2 Wear Family
- 3 S. Rennie

Shearling Ewe

- 1 Wear Family
- 2 Wear Family
- 3 L. Tite-Cross

Ewe Lamb

- 1 Wear Family
- 2 L. Tite-Cross
- 3 S & L Rowe

Pair of Sheep

- 1 Wear Family
- 2 N. Rowlands
- 3 S. Rennie

Breed Champion

S & L Rowe Ebor Aragorn (Senior Ram)

Reserve Champion

Wear Family (Home Bred Shearling Ewe)



Left: Royal Bath & West, Breed Champion: Aged Ram, Ebor Aragorn, bred by A & G Pink and exhibited by Steve & Liz Rowe.

Judge John Mills in the background.



Royal Welsh Spring Festival Champions :

Ryeland Champion, ewe lamb from Jack Williams and Dominic Dickson, and reserve, shearling ewe, also from Jack and Dom. With Judge Simon Gilbert.

Coloured Ryeland Champion, Breeding ewe exhibited by Joanne Fisher



Coloured Ryeland News

Welcome to the summer edition of Coloured Ryeland News. It's been wonderful to see all your show photos and results appearing online. I wish you all a successful showing season – fingers crossed for sunshine, happy days and lots of memory making with flocks from across the Ryeland Flock Book Society.

And for those you don't show, or aren't showing this season, I hope you enjoy time with you flocks in the sunshine. Ours were shorn in May, and it's always such a relief when they become fleece-free! We gave away bags of skirted fleece to local gardeners, which has seemed to work well.

I would like to put out another plea to members for articles for inclusion in the newsletter. If you would like to feature in one in the future, please let me know. Have you created something fabulous with your Coloured Ryeland fleeces? ...If so, I would love to hear from you (contact details below). Please be aware that the deadline for submissions for the next edition will be 25/-8/2023.

Holly Price

Coloured Ryeland Sub Committee			
Chairperson		Vice Chairman	
Carol Bateman	01874 636549	Andy McVicar	01686 621977
Committee Members			
Steve Bradbury	01437 563312	Sue McVicar	01686 621977
Joanne Fisher	07899 076651	Jordan Stone	01953 851943
Val Howells	01268 961260	Claire Weedall	07539 195580
Jenny Hughes	01245 223288	Paula Wills	01736 786173
Coloured Ryeland Newsletter Editor			
Holly Price	07543424805	hollyprice127@gmail.com	

It's Showtime!

Here is a list of 2023 shows and their judges. **PLEASE NOTE**, the judges are subject to change without prior approval. Please contact Caz Bateman for any Coloured Ryeland judging queries.

Royal Lancashire	D Smillie-Gray	Westmorland	C Bateman
Mid Devon	J Mills	Carlisle Sale	R Howell
Royal Welsh	W Laurie	Cranleigh	A Watson
Ryedale	J Webb	Ludlow Sale Rams	S Hipps
Nantwich	D Smillie-Gray	Ludlow Sale Ewes	L Howell
Burwarton	A McVicar	Suffolk	S Bryden
Honiton	A Howell	Tendring	J Webb
Dumfries	B Aitken	Newport	J Pinches
Tenbury (National)	J Donovan	Nevern	S Gray
Okehampton	R Morgan	Findon	J Reed
Ripley	S Gilbert	Stafford Winter Fair	TBC
Anglesey	Z Unwin	Martletwy	S Unwin
Pembrokeshire	C Bateman	Scottish National	A Hunter-Blair
Llyswen	TBC	Sennybridge	J Williams
Mid Somerset	D Duggan	Wayland	TBC
Dorset County	J Donovan	Honley	R Bate
Kington	T Evans		

**** IMPORTANT ****

The Coloured Ryeland and Ryeland committees have now created a helpful means of channelling show results to be included in their respective Show Supplements. There are two dedicated email addresses to send the details to:

**For all coloured Ryeland results please send to
colouredryelandresults@gmail.com**

- There is no predefined format, but ideally the results should include placings for rosettes in each class, and if possible, a count of the number entered in each class.
- Champions and Reserves for male, female, and overall where possible.
- A photograph of at least the champions and reserve if possible please, with the name of the breeder and the judge.

- Any significant CR results in the interbreed classes, Wool on the Hoof, Fleece competitions, or Young Handlers would also be appreciated.
- All photos and results are appreciated, better to have duplications than no results for a particular show.

2023 RFBS CRAFT COMPETITION



When: 4th November 2023



Closing Date for Entries: 28th October 2023



Judge: Claire Weedall



Organiser: Ricky Smyth

Congratulations to all who are awarded trophies during this show season!

Please ensure trophies are returned in a clean, tidy condition. We ask that you take pride in the trophies that have been provided by the RFBS, so that they can continue to be used across generations.



The Bob Webb Trophy

The Bob Webb Trophy is presented to the exhibitor gaining the most points across the following shows:

Kington	Three Counties (Main & RBST)	National Show (Tenbury)
Sennybridge	Royal Welsh	
Spring Festival	Burwarton	
Stafford		

Points are awarded as follows:

1st – 4 points

2nd – 3 points

3rd – 2 points

4th – 1 point

Champion – 4 points (National Show – 8 points)

Reserve Champion – 2 points (National Show – 4 points)

This trophy, which was purchased by the Coloured Ryeland Group, came about in support of the first shows to support Coloured Ryeland classes. It was named in recognition of Bob Webb's significant contribution to the establishment of Coloured Ryelands.

The Derwen Trophy

The Coloured Ryeland Committee are delighted to announce that a new trophy has been purchased to support CR classes, and to offer CR members across *all* regions the opportunity to participate.

This is to be named the **Derwen Trophy**, in honour of Marian Thornett and all that she has done for Coloured Ryelands and the Committee over many years.

Qualifying shows are still in the process of being confirmed but so far include:

RWAS		
Ryedale	Kington	Okehampton
Ripley	Dumfries	Westmorland
Stafford	Scottish National	Royal Lancashire
Royal Cheshire	Show	Aberystwyth
Burwarton	Honiton	Ceredigion County

** Please note, the above are not the final list of shows **
Both trophies will be presented at the annual society show and sale.

Young Handler Competition

Building on the great success of last year's young handler competition, we are pleased to announce that the RFBS National Young Handlers Competition is back for 2023!

More information to come, but please register your interest as detailed in the advert.

Junior Shepherd
New age groups are
3-6 years,
7-11 years
and
12-16 years

Regional Qualifying Shows
TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON!

2023 RFBS National
Young Handlers Competition

Points awarded
from
Qualifying Shows
REGISTER NOW TO LEARN MORE!

To register email entrants name and age to
Justine Williams for Ryelands (justinewilliams16@gmail.com)
and Joanne Fisher for Coloured Ryelands (je.fisher@aol.com)
adding the subject heading 'RFBS 2023 YH Entrant'

