

SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Spring 2022



*Ewe and lamb
from the
Redgate Flock,
Dutlas, Knighton,
Powys.*

PRESIDENT'S SPRING MESSAGE

Welcome to the Spring edition of *ShropTalk!*

I expect most will have finished lambing by now? We are later than most starting on 1st March and the early mornings dragged on until 27th April when number 64 produced a huge ewe lamb by Alderton Mitchell, who had been in with the ewes as sweeper. By that time the April lambing ewes (mostly NZ Romneys) had started and so the 5.30 starts continued.

It has been a peculiar Spring. March and April have been dry and warm and by mid-March we had everyone lambing outdoors, which I am certain is good for both ewes and lambs – and the shepherd. Our Shropshire lambs 8-week weights are promising, best 27.5kg at 55 days, entirely off grass

The 140th anniversary project has revealed that fewer members show their sheep than we perhaps thought. The Shropshire classes throughout The Marches are well supported but elsewhere not so good. I make my annual trip to Usk Show mainly to advertise the breed and there I rub shoulders with "Any Other Lowland Breeds" so quite a selection of sheep and a tough class to judge. If you already show your Shropshires please let me know:

president@shropshire-sheep.co.uk and if you are yet to put your hand up to show this year for the first time, I am also very keen to hear from you.

Your Council has been exceptionally busy for the past few months, and from May on will be meeting monthly via Zoom. This should help continuity with ongoing business and might encourage members

from all areas of the UK to consider joining Council. There is a new scheme to convert more purchasers of Shropshires into members. It is important for the breed that we have a growing and diverse membership base: It helps financially and it is better that pedigree ewes are kept in members' flocks so that their progeny can be registered

This year will see further promotional work on Shropshires for grazing in tree plantations, particularly Christmas trees, but also in vineyards and maybe also in hop-yards. The SSBA's Facebook Tree Club now has 182 members throughout the world. If you haven't looked in yet please do so.



After two years of disappointment, the show circuit is up and running again and we can all look forward to showing and looking at the best stock our members can offer. The SSBA's own Show & Sale is at Shrewsbury on 23rd July and we will also be at NSA Sheep Event at Malvern on 27th. If you have not been to NSA Sheep Event before I heartily recommend it.

2022 is the 140th Anniversary of the formation of our breed society. We will be marking the event by awarding special rosettes to all breeders who show their sheep this year. Please see page 6 for more details. I hope as many as possible will give showing a go this season!

Rob Kerby

SSBA DIARY DATES

National Show and Sale

at Shrewsbury Market

Saturday 23rd July

(see page 3 for more details)

Official Society Sale of Shropshires

at Worcester Market

Saturday October 8th

EVENTS WHERE THE SSBA'S BREED STAND WILL BE EXHIBITED

**The British Christmas Tree Growers'
AGM**

at Scottish Christmas Trees

Dumfries

9th June

NSA Sheep 2022

The Three Counties Showground

Malvern, Worcestershire

27th July

If anyone would like to assist on the SSBA's stand at this event, please contact Sue Farquhar on 01531 670439. Complimentary entry tickets may be available for helpers.

The SSBA's Council would like to send the breed stand to more events, **but we need greater participation from the Breed Society's members** to man the stands etc. If you are willing to get involved please contact:

Breed Stand Officer Barry Hodson (hodsonbarry@btinternet.com) or Publicity Officer, Pippa Geddes (pippa@aldertonfarm.co.uk)

HOW TO AVOID INBREEDING VIA GRASSROOTS

WHEN updating your records on Grassroots, you may have noticed a new menu option under “Manage My Animals”, called “Check Mate”.



This routine will highlight common ancestors in the pedigree of a single potential mating. This mating can be between any registered ram and one of your ewes. The resulting pedigree screen uses a colour code to identify where the risk of inbreeding may occur - if there is a risk.

Of course you can still get a total flock inbreeding analysis ahead of the breeding season by emailing the Registrar at: registrar@shropshire-sheep.co.uk. She will provide you with an inbreeding coefficient between all your ewes and the ram(s) you are planning to use, with guidelines as to what level of inbreeding is considered acceptable.

SIGNET'S INBREEDING CALCULATOR

Signet Recorded flocks have constant access to on-line software that allows breeders to assess the impact of prospective matings on levels of inbreeding within their flocks.

It's easy to run an inbreeding report for your whole flock, or a group of ewes, with up to five different rams at a time. Inbreeding levels between any Signet recorded ram and any live ewe in the flock can also be checked.



NEW ARRANGEMENTS WITH SELL MY LIVESTOCK

MANY Shropshire breeders have successfully advertised and sold their stock via the website www.sellmylivestock.co.uk. Until this year, it was completely free to buyers and sellers, however there has been a change in policy and charges now apply. The SSBA's Sales Officer, Claire Jakeman, provides some guidance for Shropshire breeders.

I have had extensive meetings with SML on the changes they made with no thought for the smaller breeders.

I'm happy to say they listened to some of the suggestions and have made some more updates to their membership plans which are summarised below (see chart).

Only the Bronze plan offers free access - but as you can see it is limited to just one advert a year which is live for only four weeks.

SHROPSHIRE PORTAL

Many of you already take advantage of our portal on the Sell My Livestock site and have had really good results selling your sheep that way. The breed society continues to pay for this facility, so that pedigree Shropshires belonging to current breed society members can be advertised in one place on the SML website under the Society “banner”.

There is still a direct link to the portal that is accessed using the “Sheep For Sale” button on the SSBA's website.

My advice is always that your photo will sell your sheep, so you must take time to prepare your stock and get some good shots to show them off to their best advantage.

Society rules state that all ewes *must* be registered before or at the point of sale - and ewe lambs over four months old at the time of sale must also be registered.

Please make sure you adhere to this and include in your advert “REGISTERED” as this shows prospective purchasers that everything is in order.

On this point, I want to let you know that before I allow the Society's logo to be used on any advert, I check on Grassroots that the records are all up-to-date, and animals have been birth notified and are therefore eligible for registration, or are already registered.

The Society also advises prospective buyers to ask to see pedigree paperwork for all animals *prior to purchase* to make sure they are properly registered.

I will contact sellers if I see any irregularities or if I think there are improvements you can make to your adverts that I feel will help you to sell your sheep.

As always, I am here to help you or point you in the right direction, so please don't hesitate to contact me for a chat: 07766 238346 or salesofficer@shropshire-sheep.co.uk.

Claire Jakeman

SELL MY LIVESTOCK'S NEW MEMBERSHIP PLANS

	YOUR PLAN	MOST POPULAR	
	Bronze FREE limited access	Gold £79 annually or £7.99 monthly*	Silver £49 annually or £4.99 monthly*
		Upgrade	Upgrade
Listings to buy and sell	1 per year	Unlimited	Unlimited
See listing farm details	✗	✓	✗
Enquiries ⓘ	2 listings per year	Unlimited	Unlimited
See & contact new listings ⓘ	72 hour delay	Immediate	48 hour delay
Farming discounts & offers	✗	✓	✓
List with 'Price on application' (POA) ⓘ	✗	✓	✗
Sell faster with a listing quality review ⓘ	✗	✓	✗
Listings live on site ⓘ	Live for 4 weeks	Live for 8 weeks	Live for 4 weeks
*All prices exclude VAT			



NATIONAL SHOW AND SALE 2022

THE Society's National Show and Sale will take place at Shrewsbury Market on Saturday 23rd July. This is one of the highlights of the Shropshire Sheep calendar, and we hope that as many SSBA Members as possible will participate.

As 2022 is the SSBA's 140th Anniversary, all breeders that enter sheep will receive a special rosette (one per exhibitor/vendor). There is also a prize fund of £100 for Class Winners, which has been generously donated by SSBA Member Steve Dewey (Kingfisher Flock). The Schedule for the event will be available mid-May from Halls and also the SSBA's Secretary. It contains all the rules that entrants will be required to follow. Here are some of the main points:

Entry Fees for livestock have been held at 2021 levels (£9 /head to enter Shropshires).
The Closing Date for entries is 24th June.

Upset Prices for Shropshires have been set by Council as follows:
Ewe lambs - 130gns
Ram lambs - 160gns
Shearling ewes - 180gns
Shearling rams - 200gns
Vendors may set higher reserve prices for their animals if they wish.

Minimum Weights for Shropshires were agreed by Council as follows:
Ewe lambs: 35kg
Ram lambs: 45kg
Shearling ewes: 55kg
All lambs will be weighed on arrival.

Shropshire Sheep Inspections

All sheep will be inspected by a Society Inspector shortly after arrival at the market. Any that fail the inspection will be marked with a red spot on the back and moved from the sale pens to a separate area of the market. Rejected sheep are prohibited from being sold at the venue on the day.

Substitutions

New rules about the substitution of entries have been introduced this year:

Substitutes are allowed at all official sales. These must be made to the SSBA Sale Secretary a minimum of 72 hours before the date and time entrants are allowed to arrive. Substitutes must be from the same vendor and in the same age and sex category as the original entry.

A maximum of two substitutions is allowed per vendor.

The information must be emailed to the Sale Secretary (not phoned).

If vendors appear at the sale with an animal that does not correspond to the entry (original or substitute) then those animals will be rejected.

A separate catalogue listing these animals will be available on sale day.

Any such sheep will be marked with a green dot in the middle of the back.

Movement of Animals Not in the Sale

It was brought to Halls' attention last year that a few animals not entered in the sale were moved between trailers in the carpark. This is potentially a breach of the APHA movement regulations and therefore illegal. Members should not break APHA rules.

Social Evening the night before the Show and Sale

There will be a Social Evening for SSBA members with food and a bar at Shrewsbury Market on Friday 22nd July. Tickets cost £12/person and must be purchased in advance.

All are welcome, and the evening is a good opportunity for buyers and sellers to meet before the event. Livestock will also be at the market and available to view.

Invitations and more details will be sent to members in due course.

Recent Breed Champions at the National Show and Sale



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT: ROTATIONAL GRAZING

With concentrate and fertiliser prices going through the roof there has never been a better time to focus on getting the most out of your grass – which is, after all, what sheep should eat. Ewes and lambs offered enough grass of the right quality, and fresh water, need nothing else, except minerals.

Rotational grazing isn't compatible with every flock's circumstances but when it is suitable there are big advantages to be gained.



- Grazed grass is by far the cheapest feed for your sheep;

- Whether you are on new leys, or on old permanent pasture in an orchard, rotational grazing will help you get more out of your grass, and will help you to extend your grazing season;

- You will grow more grass, because "grazed grass grows grass" (your lawn proves this) and it will be utilised better because the sheep clear a paddock before moving on;

- Your sheep are the "golden hoof" you just need to direct them better. They will improve the grass as they go;

- Rotational grazing requires some additional infrastructure, ideally to create 7-8 roughly equal sized paddocks (which can include orchards) each with a water supply. Semi-permanent electric fencing will work for this;

- The key is that the sheep spend a few days "on" a paddock and then move to the next leaving the

previous paddock "off" for 21 to 28 days' rest, until you return to it;

- Ideally the sheep will go into a paddock when the grass is 8-10cm (height of a coke can) and out at 4-6cm (golf ball). You need to leave the 4cm residual to drive re-growth;

- You can measure your grass with a sward stick (AHDB give them away) or you could invest in a rising plate meter;

- If you establish a routine of movements the sheep soon learn, and will move as soon as you open the gate. If you leave them too long they will move anyway, and probably wreck your fencing;

- Running a rotational system like this can reduce the requirement for supplementary feeding or allow you to keep more ewes and lambs in the same area;

- Rotational grazing will help with management of roundworms but after about 3 circuits (when lambs should be ready to wean) you need to move lambs on to fresh "clean" grazing, if possible;

- The principle of rotation works the same in the Winter but with much slower grass growth fewer animals can be sustained. If you are not getting the re-growth you need then supplementary feeding with conserved forage is the answer;

- If you can move away from concentrates and on to grass you need to be sure that there are no trace element deficiencies particularly Copper, Cobalt, Selenium and Iodine. Your vet will be able to deduce what is needed from blood samples and recommend any supplements, perhaps by mineral drenches or longer-acting boluses;

- A useful resource for this is from QMS Scotland, available as a free download: www.qmscotland.co.uk/sites/default/files/qm3199_better_grazing_08.20_2.pdf

JUNIOR MEMBERS

Our Young Members' Coordinator, Rosie Lee, is drawing up a programme of events for junior members. These will include farm visits and a "Sheep Camp".

If you would like to join in or just want more information at this stage, please contact Rosie by email: 01606301503@talktalk.net.

FLOCK BOOK 2021

On behalf of all breed society members, the Council would like to thank the Registrar, Alison Schofield, for producing the latest Flock Book. Volume 121 is another bumper edition with 292 pages - an invaluable resource for all Shropshire breeders.

Alison has also handled our pedigree registrations for a couple of months while our new Registrations Clerk was appointed.

DON'T FORGET TO BIRTH NOTIFY YOUR LAMBS!

It is essential that you Birth Notify your lambs with the breed society before 30th June. There is no cost involved if you Birth Notify by this date.

Late Birth Notifications made between 1st July and 31st December for this year's lamb crop will be charged for at £6/head.

Very late BNs applied for after 31st December of the year in which lambs were born will be permitted only at the Registrar's discretion. Each case will be considered individually and, if allowed, BNs will be charged at £20/head.

Remember, only sheep that have been Birth Notified can be fully pedigree registered with the Society.

SHROPSHIRE SHEEP ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



NEW!

The SSBA is now on Instagram:
[@shropshiresheep](https://www.instagram.com/shropshiresheep)



The Society has two Facebook pages:
Friends of Shropshire Sheep (A community page for Shropshire breeders worldwide) &
Shropshire Sheep Tree Club
(A discussion forum for questions and answers about keeping sheep in tree plantations)

SSBA PUBLICATIONS

Free to Society Members

Did you know that the Breed Society has a number of useful publications that can help you promote your pedigree stock and your butcher's lambs? Most of these leaflets and booklets can be downloaded from the "Publications and Forms" page of www.shropshire-sheep.co.uk. Printed copies can also be requested from our Secretary, Simon Mackay, if you would like to promote our breed at shows or events. Here's a selection of what's available.

The Breed Leaflet

An introduction to Shropshire sheep covering briefly the history of the breed, since the establishment of the SSBA in 1882, plus the main attributes of Shropshires including excellent quality meat, good wool and the breed's unique ability to graze safely in tree plantations. This leaflet is currently available only from Simon.



Two Crops From One Acre

This is a comprehensive 46-page guide to the management of Shropshire sheep in tree plantations (conifers and deciduous).

If you are approached by anyone wanting to buy Shropshires for use in plantations, please make sure they read this booklet. It is very important that tree growers understand the management system required to ensure success. A digital copy of this booklet can be downloaded free of charge from the SSBA's website.

Butchers' Leaflet and Lamb "Point of Sale" Flier

Two leaflets to help you sell your finished lamb to butchers and lamb box customers.

Both these are available from the website. They were written for the Society by Richard Lutwyche of the RBST's Traditional Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme.

Shropshire Lamb, Something truly special!

Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

The meat from Shropshire breed sheep - not to be confused with other sheep raised in the country of Shropshire - is something to be sought out and treasured!

Shropshires are the oldest pedigree breed of sheep in the UK and they produce the finest eating quality meat being succulent, tender and full of flavour. It grows naturally on grass and the Shropshire meat you buy has been farmed locally with low Food Miles and total traceability! The perfect all round package for a wonderful meal.

Insist on the best - ask for Shropshire lamb by name!

Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association
 100, The Old Rectory, Church St, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 1JH
 Tel: 01743 251111 Fax: 01743 251112
 Email: shopshire_sheep@shropshire-sheep.co.uk
www.shropshire-sheep.co.uk

Something special, raised naturally!

There's lamb...

Then there's Prime Shropshire Lamb...

And there's more.....

Critical Selection of Shropshire Sheep

A booklet that helps you to understand the breed standard and what to consider to ensure you select the best stock. Available from the website.

Getting Started With Shropshire Sheep

A very handy guide for any purchasers who have not kept sheep before. Available from the website.

NEW ORGANISATION NOW HANDLES SHEEP MOVEMENT REPORTING

THE newly launched Livestock Information Service (LIS) has taken over from ARAMS as the body that deals with the reporting of sheep movements in England.

LIS has a new website (see below) for movement reporting, but continues to support paper movements and through software used by markets, abattoirs and some farmers. Initial changes are said to be relatively minor:

- You still need to provide the information to LIS as you have previously done to ARAMS, with paper movement documents still accompanying animal movements.
- The law and guidance around sheep ID, record keeping and movement reporting is not changing. For more information visit the GOV.UK pages.
- If you have been using the ARAMS website, you will now need to create an account with LIS.
- If you currently report using paper movement documents, you can continue to do so with no change.
- Markets will still be required to report movements onto their premises and off their premises digitally.
- Abattoirs will still be required to confirm movements onto their premises digitally.
- If you report using farm management software, you will need to create a new account with LIS and continue using software as before.

The ambition of the Livestock Information Service is to enable a more competitive and sustainable meat and livestock sector. The LIS will eventually replace all the three existing livestock movement services. ARAMS for sheep, goats and deer has now moved to LIS, with cattle (BCMS) and pigs (eAML2) following. The aim is to create a single, modern, efficient Livestock Information Service for all species.

In time, the Livestock Information Service aims to become an important national tool that enables industry and government to:

- Better control chronic endemic livestock diseases;
- Terminate exotic disease outbreaks quickly and effectively;
- Drive positive changes in productivity and sustainability;
- Develop a competitive trade advantage by building trade partner and consumer confidence in the provenance of British meat and livestock products.

"Online reporting using LIS will make a dramatic difference to the availability of quality data and the speed in which it can be made available. This is imperative for better livestock disease control. Working with our stakeholders we will move to encourage the industry to adopt LIS as the digital platform for movement reporting over time," said a LIS spokesperson.

For more information, visit:

www.livestockinformation.org.uk

INTRODUCING OUR NEW REGISTRATIONS CLERK

FOLLOWING the retirement of Ruth Mawer at the end of January, our Breed Society now has a new Registrations Clerk: Gail Beattie

After a round of interviews, Gail was appointed to the role by Council. She received training from Grassroots Systems and our Registrar, before taking over her new duties in early March. Gail handles all the day-to-day sheep registration tasks - such as helping breeders to Birth Notify, Register and Transfer their stock, and issuing pedigree certificates. She will also help Alison with compiling the annual flock book towards the end of the year. Her remit covers the newly-formed ESSBA, as well as the SSBA.

NEW CHALLENGE

Gail previously worked for her local police force. Having completed 30 years' service in a number of front line roles in the local community, Gail was looking for a new challenge.

She is no stranger to Shropshire sheep, as her father-in-law established a flock in 2012. The foundation stock for the Gagie flock (letters YP) came from the Hilltop Flock of Anne Tordoff and the Morley Flock of Claire Jakeman, and now numbers around 35



Gail pictured with the family farm in the background.

females. The sheep were purchased mainly to graze an area of woodland, including holly and deciduous trees, on the family farm.

Gail and her husband Graham are now managing this 100-acre holding near Broughty Ferry, Angus, where the main enterprise is barley production, and they also run a horse livery business.

The Shropshires lamb in the spring, starting in April. They are doing a great job in the trees, and surplus lambs are butchered at a local abattoir and sold through farmers' markets at Montrose and Forfar.

Gail reports that customers are very enthusiastic, with some describing their Shropshire lamb as "the best they've ever tasted".

Alongside her new role with the SSBA, Gail is taking over the farm accounts for Beattie Farmers Ltd. The farm has been in the family for three generations. Gail and Graham have two grown-up sons, Stephen who works on another local farm, and Ewan who is just about to leave university.

Gail is a keen photographer and also enjoys dog walking and bee keeping. She is looking forward to meeting SSBA members and already has a few new ideas to help us get to grips with managing our flock records

to grips with on-line.



"This is a bottle fed lamb, that I saved on two separate occasions, and planned to get a selfie with - just before she decked me unceremoniously!"

THE SSBA'S 140TH ANNIVERSARY

This year we are celebrating the 140th anniversary of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association.

To mark the occasion, the President and Council would like to encourage as many breeders as possible to exhibit their sheep at their local shows, now that most of these have restarted after the pandemic.

As encouragement, EVERY breeder who exhibits sheep this season will be eligible for a special commemorative rosette. All you need to do to claim yours is to send in a photo of you and your sheep at a show, with details of when and where the event took place. Pictures and info should be emailed to our Secretary, Simon Mackay, secretary@shropshire-sheep.co.uk.

In addition, all members of the breed society will receive with this newsletter a special celebratory poster that can be displayed on sheep pens at shows, or used in any other (legal!) way breeders can think of to help promote Shropshire sheep.



SHROPTALK

is edited by Pippa Geddes
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Check out our Facebook pages:
Friends of Shropshire Sheep
&
Shropshire Sheep Tree Club



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