



Texel breeders respond to commercial demands with massive jump in performance recording

Texel breeders have responded to commercial farmers' desire for performance recorded tups with a 27% increase in the number of flocks performance recording, says British Texel Sheep Society chief executive John Yates.

"Our breeders know that commercial sheep farmers are their bread and butter and have responded to the increasing demand for performance recorded accordingly.

"The modern sheep industry is all about being customer focussed and as the leading terminal sire breed in the UK our breeders know that more than most."

While as an industry there is no doubt still more work to be done to ensure best use is made of performance recording as a management tool, the 27% rise in Texel flocks recording is a massive step forward for both the breed and the sheep industry, says Mr Yates.

"There hasn't been any incentive offered by the Society to encourage this growth, although best practice is always promoted to the membership, this growth has been commercially driven. This is perhaps a realisation by many members that if you don't measure it you can't manage it, backed by an increase in the value paid for recorded stock between breeders and demand from commercial buyers adding more confidence."

And breeders and commercial producers looking for performance recorded tups will be spoilt for choice at next week's Scottish National Sale, Lanark, where nearly 70% of the recorded sheep on offer will be in the top 10% of the breed, adds Signet breeding services manager Sam Boon.

"Texel breeders are clearly being selective in taking high performing breeding lines to the sale. This is great in the short term for the commercial ram buyer heading to the sale and bodes equally well for the future where these sires head into pedigree flocks.

"It also shows that the first draw of lambs in many flocks are those with the better figures - indicating that selecting for performance recording doesn't mean breeders have to compromise on other breed traits."

This shows that performance recording is paying and the breed is on track from the flagship sale right through to the larger shearing sales on offer later in the year, explains Mr Yates.

“And adding increased accuracy to these performance recording figures is the 231% increase in the number of Texel lambs being CT scanned this year, with the Texels representing the largest number of lambs from any single pure breed population CT scanned in any given year.”

Data taken from the most recent Texel evaluations shows that although there are vastly more lambs in the 2010 analysis compared to 1992, the average breeding value for growth to 21 weeks of age is over 5kg higher, he says. “This is a massive shift in the genetic potential of a population – in a relatively short period of time.

“But while lamb growth rate is important – it must be accompanied by high levels of muscling. In the Texel breed selection for growth rate has improved muscling across the loin, indicating an increase in total carcass muscling.”

Adding the recent Birth Weight and Lambing ease EBVs in 2010 to the portfolio, ensures breeders are focusing on providing the right genetics for efficient lamb production, concludes Mr Yates.

Farmers seeking performance recorded Texel sires will be able to find an excellent choice at each of the national Texel sales in the next fortnight, with The Scottish Premier Sale at Lanark on 24 and 25 August, the Welsh Premier Sale at Welshpool on 26 and 27 August and the English National Sale at Worcester on 29 and 30 August.

A large number of Society regional club sales throughout September and October will also offer farmers a chance to source high quality performance recorded rams too.

Notes to Editors

Press release issued on behalf of the Texel Sheep Society by Mooandbaa.com for more press information contact Jonathan Long on 01233 749177 or 07974 303306 or email jonathan@mooandbaa.com

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