

Directory of performance recorded sheep in Wales



The Beef and Sheep Development Centre, run by Hybu Cig Cymru, is managed by the Welsh Assembly Government as part of Farming Connect.



About HCC

Hybu Cig Cymru - Meat Promotion Wales (HCC) is the strategic body responsible for the promotion and development of Welsh red meat and the development of the Welsh red meat industry. Its mission is to develop profitable and sustainable markets for Welsh lamb and Welsh beef for the benefit of all stakeholders in the supply chain.

HCC's five strategic goals are:

- Effective promotion of Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef and red meat products in Wales
- Build strong differentiated products
- Improve quality and cost-effectiveness of primary production
- Strengthen the red meat supply chain
- Effective communication of HCC activities and industry issues

This booklet forms part of a series of publications produced by HCC's Industry Development team.

The Industry Development team deal with a range of issues that include:

- Technology Transfer
- Research and Development
- Market Intelligence
- Training
- Demonstration Farms
- Benchmarking

This booklet was produced as part of the Farming Connect Sheep and Beef Development Programme.

Hybu Cig Cymru - Meat Promotion Wales
PO Box 176
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 2YA

Tel: 01970 625050 Fax: 01970 615148
Email: info@hccmpw.org.uk

www.hccmpw.org.uk

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Contents

1. Financial Impact of Breeding	2
2. Explanation of Estimated Breeding Values EBVs	3
3. Choosing the Index for your Flock	3
4. Directory of Breeders	3
▪ Welsh Index	4
Beulah	
Lleyn	
Welsh Hill Speckled Faced	
Welsh Mountain	
▪ Hill Index	8
North Country Cheviot	
Brecknock Cheviot	
▪ Longwool Index	10
Blue Faced Leicester	
Border Leicester	
▪ Maternal Index	12
Poll Dorset	
Lleyn	
▪ Terminal sire Index	14
Texel	
Suffolk	
Charolais	

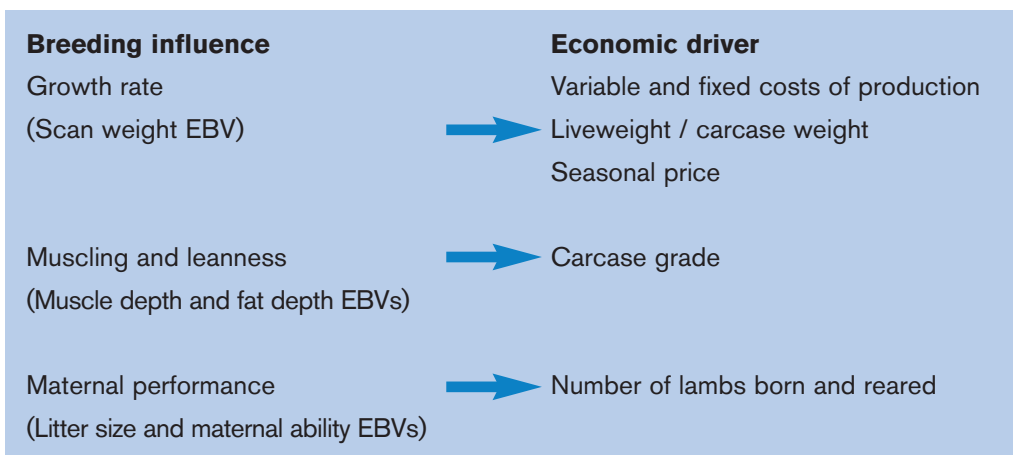
Introduction

Hybu Cig Cymru - Meat Promotion Wales (HCC) was established in April 2003 and is the strategic body for the promotion and development of the Welsh red meat industry. Its mission is to develop profitable and sustainable markets for the benefit of all stakeholders in the supply chain. It brought together the red meat activities of three organisations, namely the Meat and Livestock Commission in Wales (MLC Cymru), Welsh Development Agency and Welsh Lamb and Beef Promotions Ltd. Each organisation was responsible for different aspects of red meat activity, which have now been integrated into HCC's work. HCC is now the sole body for the promotion and development of Welsh red meat.

This booklet forms part of a series of publications produced by HCC's Industry Development Team.

Financial Impact of Breeding

Sheep producers need to decide their flock breeding objectives in order to work out which EBVs they require when selecting breeding stock. Each of the main economic drivers that determine the financial performance of a sheep enterprise is influenced by the breeding potential of the flock. The key to successful ram selection is to identify the breeding traits that will enhance flock profitability the most.



Trials show that producers can improve the financial performance of their flocks by at least £2 - £2.50 per lamb through the selection of breeding stock with high indexes. A stock ram, working over four years, will probably sire 240 lambs during his lifetime. On this basis, choosing the right ram for your system could be worth an extra £480 - £600 per ram – so it is **well worth investing in the right recorded ram**.

(Further information can be found in HCC's booklet – Practical Sheep Breeding).

Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs)

EBVs predict the superiority (or inferiority) of the genes that an animal possesses for each measured trait. They are expressed in the same units as the recorded traits (eg kg for liveweight) and expressed relative to a common baseline for all animals in the same evaluation.

EBVs predict the breeding potential of the recorded animal. On average each animal only passes half of its genes to the next generation. Consequently their EBVs must be halved in order to estimate how much of its genetic superiority (or inferiority) will be passed on.

EBVs can be calculated on an across-flock basis, enabling animals in the same breed to be directly compared, provided that strong genetic linkage exists between flocks. **EBVs can not be compared across different breeds.**

Breeding Indexes

EBVs are published for every measured trait, which allows breeders that are making selection decisions to decide how much emphasis they wish to place on each trait. EBVs can also be combined into a multi-trait selection index, or 'breeding index', created to meet a specific breeding objective, or set of objectives, and selection can be based on this. It is widely agreed that this is the most efficient way to improve several traits at once. Economic weightings relevant to current market conditions can be used to ensure each trait is given the appropriate amount of emphasis in the index.

Choosing the Index for your Flock

There are five breeding indexes which are widely used in the UK:

- Terminal Sire Index
- Welsh Hill Index
- Maternal Index
- Hill Index
- Longwool Index

Directory of Breeders

The following pages contain contact details of breeders of performance recorded stock.

Welsh Index

The Welsh Index is designed to assist in the selection of hill sheep in order to improve maternal ability, lamb growth rate and carcass value. It was originally developed for Welsh hill breeds.

Using this index as a guide to the selection of stock rams and ewe replacements will produce a flock of ewes that get their lambs off to a good start and that grow on to produce a heavier carcass, with a high proportion of lean meat.

The index takes into account two breeding goals:

1. Maternal ability which is assessed through the performance of a ewe's lambs at 8 weeks of age. The Maternal EBV is a measure of the ewe's genetic merit for milkiness and general mothering ability.
2. The lamb's own potential for growth and carcass composition which is assessed through scanning measurements of fat and muscle depth, together with weight at scanning. This objective aims to identify animals that will produce heavy carcasses, with a high proportion of lean meat.

Breeding Objective	Influential EBVs	Breeds
To enhance maternal ability, growth rate and carcass conformation	Maternal ability Muscle depth Fat depth Scan weight	Hill Speckled Beulah Speckled Face Lleyn



Welsh Mountain Rams

Beulah

Mr Andrew Jones

Felindre Uchaf, Cwmann, Lampeter
Ceredigion SA48 8HT

Phone: 01570 422255

Mr & Mrs B E R & S H Jones

Meinigwynion Mawr, Gorsgoch
Llanybydder, Ceredigion SA40 9TH

Phone: 01545 590236

Ieuan M Joyce

Ochor Fawr, Ystumtuen, Ceredigion SY23 3AF

Phone: 01970 890477

Email: ochrfawr@yahoo.co.uk

John Yeomans

Yeomans & Partners, Llwyn Y Brain, Adfa
Newtown, Powys SY16 3DA

Phone: 01938 810394

Email: yeomans.ranch@btinternet.com

Beulah Group Breeding Scheme

Welsh Inst of Rural Studies, Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3AL

Phone: 01970 622575

Lleyn

Arfon & Sian Hughes

Ty Cerrig, Garndolbenmaen, Gwynedd LL51 9PJ

Phone: 01248 670142

Mobile: 01766 530694

Email: ARFONSIANHI@aol.com

Bryan Williams

Plas onn, Pentrecelyn, Ruthin
Denbighshire LL15 2HU

Phone: 01978 790464

Dewi Wyn Ellis

Cernioge Bach, Pentrefoelas
Betws y Coed, Conwy LL24 0TR

Phone: 01690 770220

Mobile: 07800 804390

Email: ellis@cernioge-bach.fsnet.co.uk

Eifion & Ann Ellis

Cernioge Bach, Pentrefoelas
Betws y Coed, Conwy LL24 0TR

Phone: 01690 770220

Mobile: 07989 057801

Email: ellis@cernioge-bach.fsnet.co.uk

ELI & JM Williams

Pentre Farm, Rhuddlan, Denbighshire LL18 6HY

Phone: 01745 590219

I O & A L Jones

Pen-Y-Bryn, Betws Yn Rhos
Abergele, Denbighshire LL22 8YL

Phone: 01492 680223

Welsh Inst of Rural Studies

Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3AL

Phone: 01970 622575

Rhys Davies

Pen Y Bwlch, Groes, Dinbych, Conwy LL16 5RU

Phone: 01745 550 313

Email: rhyspenbwlch@hotmail.com

Welsh Hill Speckled Face

ADAS Pwllpeiran Research Centre

Pwllpeiran, Cwmystwyth, Aberystwyth
Ceredigion SY23 4AB

Phone: 01974 282229

J H & L E Griffiths

Pantmawr, Pisgah, Capel Seion
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 4NF

Phone: 01970 880484

M & H Lewis

Cwmerfyn Farm, Cwmerfyn, Aberystwyth
Ceredigion SY23 3JD

Phone: 01970 828595

Mr Nigel Elgar

Cannon Farm, Llanerfyl, Welshpool, Powys SY21 0JJ

Phone: 01938 820251

Email: nigel@cannonfarm.co.uk

Web: www.cannonfarm.co.uk

W & C W Owen

Rhiwfelen, Foel, Welshpool, Powys SY21 0NZ

Phone: 01938 820434

Email: chriswowen@hotmail.com

Mr Wynn Roberts

Glyn Teg, Llanerfyl, Welshpool, Powys SY21 0EY

Phone: 01938 820600

Mobile: 07799 497979

Email: wynnroberts@speckles.orangehome.co.uk

Llandovery White Face

Mr Garry Williams

Blaencennen, Gwynfe, Llangadog
Carmarthenshire SA19 9RT

Phone: 01550 740230

Email: blaencennen@gjwilliams.plus.com

R T & I T Rickman

Gurnos Farm, Bethlehem, Llandeilo
Carmarthenshire SA19 9DT

Phone: 01558 823359

Welsh Mountain CAMP

ADAS Holdings

Pwllpeiran, Cwmystwyth, Aberystwyth
Ceredigion SY23 4AB

Phone: 01974 282229

E C & E D Evans

Tynant, Talybont, Ceredigion SY24 5DN

Phone: 01970 832257

E W & M M Jenkins

Tynygraig, Talybont, Ceredigion SY24 5HJ

Phone: 01970 832707

G R & E G Rowlands

Frondeg, Penrhyncoch, Aberystwyth,
Ceredigion SY23 3EF

Phone: 01970 828267

Simon Lloyd-Williams

Moel Golomen, Talybont, Ceredigion SY24 5DW

Phone: 01970 832362

Capt N M Archdale

Penbedw Farms, Nannerch, Mold
Flintshire CH7 5QT

Phone: 01352 83237

Eryri

B & H Jones

Gwastadanas, Nantgwynant, Gwynedd LL55 4NW

Phone: 01766 890290

Mobile: 07801 355447

Dafydd Pritchard

Fron, Nant Peris, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 4UN

Phone: 01286 870494

CAMDA

Camda Cynwyd Ltd

Cernioge Mawr, Pentrefoelas
Betws Y Coed, Conwy LL24 0TR

Phone: 01690 770209

Email: DavidStagecoach@aol.com

Elan Valley

C R & J E Evans

Ciloerwynt, Claeuwen Valley, Rhayader, Powys LD6 5HF

Phone: 01597 810171

Derek Morgan

Safn Y Coed, Llangurig, Llanidloes.
Powys SY18 6RY

Phone: 01686 440650

Mobile: 07989 485604

Email: derek@safn.freereserve.co.uk

E L & K E Wozencraft

Penyrochr, Llangurig, Llanidloes. Powys, SY18 6RY

Phone: 01686 440297

W G & V M Lewis

Tynpistyll, Rhayader, Powys LD6 5EY

Phone: 01597 810398

Mobile: 07719 754267

Llysfasi

J T Jones

Llwyngwern, Llanuwchllyn, Bala,
Gwynedd LL23 7UH

Phone: 01678 540260

W T Roberts A'I Gwmni

Henllys Farn, Llechwedd, Conwy, Gwynedd LL32 8DJ

Phone: 01492 593269

South Wales Mountain

Mrs Catherine Roberts

Penrhiwgwaith Farm, Holly Bush, Blackwood
Gwent NP12 0ST

Phone: 01495 225778

Mr & Mrs E & O B Williams

Castell Llwyd Farm, Nelson, Treharris
Caerffili CF46 6PW

Phone: 01443 812427

Huw Thomas

Pentre Farm, Aberarth, Aberaeron. Ceredigion SA46 0JU

Phone: 01545 570581

Mobile: 07765 478823

Williams Partners

Pant y Cornant Farm, Blackmill, Bridgend CF35 6EL

Phone: 01656 840427

Tregaron Welsh

Mr I Jones

Buarth-Yr-Oen, Ffarmers, Llanwrda
Ceredigion SA19 8PQ

Phone: 01558 650535

Email: irweljones@btinternet.com

Aled Hopkins

Brynwichell, Blaenpenal, Aberystwyth,
Ceredigion SY23 4TT

Phone: 01974 251258

Irwel Jones

Aberbranddu, Pumpsaint, Llanwrda
Ceredigion SA19 8YE

Phone: 01558 680361

Email: IRWELORCWRT@Hotmail.com

J D & S I Thomas

Frongoch, Pumpsaint, Llanwrda Ceredigion SA19 8YD

Phone: 01558 650257

J M Lewis

Pentwyn, Pumpsaint, Llanwrda, Ceredigion SA19 8YG

Phone: 01558 650203

Hill Index

The most important attributes of a hill ewe are those that make her a 'good mother'. She must be able to survive, conceive, give birth to and raise her lambs in environmental conditions that are often harsh. However, increasing pressure on all sectors of the sheep industry to improve carcase quality means that hill sheep must also produce lambs that grow well and meet market specifications.

This presents a challenge to hill sheep breeders, who need to select breeding stock to improve both maternal and carcase characteristics.

The most effective way to simultaneously improve this diverse range of traits is through index selection. The hill index takes into account this wide range of breeding goals in order to enhance the overall productivity of the hill ewe.

Breeding Objective

To enhance the productivity of

Influential EBVs

Eight week weight
Scan weight
the hill ewe Mature size
Litter size
Maternal ability

Breeds

North Country Cheviot
Brecknock Cheviot



Cheviot

North Country Cheviot

D Pittendrigh

Plas Villa
Llanllwni
Pencader
Carmarthenshire
SA39 9DU

Phone: 01559 395372

Mobile: 07866 759882

Gwynne Davies

Maesyronnen
Llanddewi Brefi
Tregaron
Ceredigion
SY25 6UU

Phone: 01974 298205

Email: carylhafbrefi@hotmail.com

Brecknock Cheviot

I W Pugh

Caer Llwyn
Trecastle
Brecon
Powys
LD3 8YD

Phone: 01874 638158

Longwool Index

The Longwool Index was created to assist breeders with the selection of rams that are to be used as crossing sires, when mated to hill ewes.

Selection using this index will improve the financial productivity of the longwool breeds. In purebred flocks, carcass conformation will be enhanced and growth rate will increase, but the rate of increase has been controlled so that the mature size of crossbred ewes does not become excessive.

Commercial producers using this index to select stock rams to breed female replacements, will produce a flock of crossbred ewes whose lambs will have better quality carcasses, with a high yield of lean meat.

Breeding Objective

To enhance carcass characteristics, without detriment to the maternal performance of the crossbred ewe

Influential EBVs

Muscle depth
Scan weight
Maternal ability

Breeds

Blue Faced Leicester
Border Leicester



Blue Faced Leicester

Blue Faced Leicester

Penglais BFL Group Breeding Scheme

Welsh Institute of Rural Studies
Llanbadarn Fawr
Ceredigion
SY23 3AL

Phone: 01970 622575

A Jones

Meddiant Isaf
TalyCafn
Conwy
Gwynedd
LL28 5RY

Phone: 01492 641773

Email: aledjones@btconnect.com

Dewi Jones

Plas Pigot
Llansannan
Conwy
Gwynedd
LL16 5NG

Phone: 01745 870246

Email: dewijones@btinternet.com

Joe Binns

Great Llwygy Farm
Lower Cwmyoy
Abergavenny
Monmouthshire
NP7 7NY

Phone: 01873 890395

Mobile: JBINNS8992@AOL.COM

Myrfyn Roberts

Myfyrian Isaf
Gaerwen
Anglesey
LL60 6NW

Phone: 01248 421234

Email: jayne@myfyrian234.fsnet.co.uk

V F Williams-Wynne

Peniarth
Llanegryn
Tywyn
Gwynedd
LL36 9UD

Phone: 01654 710101

Border Leicester

Glynllifon Border Leicesters

Glynllifon College
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL54 5TG

Phone: 01286 830261

Maternal Index

The maternal index was created to enhance the productivity of the lowland ewe, bearing in mind that two of the main factors influencing flock profitability are the number and weight of lambs, reared per ewe, to slaughter.

Ram buyers looking to buy a ram to breed female replacements should use this index to identify a stock ram that will produce productive female progeny. The weightings placed upon the individual EBVs will vary depending on the breeding objectives of the breed.

Breeding Objective	Influential EBVs	Breeds
To increase the productivity of maternal breeds of lowland ewe	Eight week weight Maternal ability Mature size Litter size	Lleyn Polled Dorset



Lleyn

Poll Dorset

Mr Rowland Davies

Dolclettwr Hall
Taliesin
Machynlleth
Powys
SY20 8PN

Phone: 01970 832614

Email: rolbeth2000@yahoo.co.uk

Lleyn (Maternal)

Joel Durrell

Lower Porthamel,
Talgarth
Brecon
Powys
LD3 0DL

Mobile: 077522 36773

Email: joeldurrell@yahoo.com

E L I & J M Williams

Pentre Farm
Rhuddlan
Denbighshire
LL18 6HY

Phone: 01745 590219

Terminal Sire Index

The Terminal Sire Index has been successfully used in the UK for over 15 years. Its use has greatly enhanced the growth potential and carcass attributes of all the main terminal sire breeds, producing a population of recorded rams whose progeny are more valuable to the commercial producer.

Breeding Objective

To increase the yield of lean meat in the carcass whilst minimising any associated rise in carcass fatness.

Influential EBVs

Scan weight
Muscle depth
Fat depth
Carcass lean weight (CT scanning breeds)
Carcass fat weight (CT scanning breeds)

Breeds

Texel
Suffolk
Charolais

Charolais

British Charollais Sheep Society

www.charollais sheep.com

N Sheldon

Wrenvale Nurseries, 85 Heol Cae Gurwen
Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Ammanford
Carmarthenshire SA18 1HG

Phone: 01269 826700

MA and S Evans

Tan y Accar, Llanrhaeadr, Denbigh LL16 4PH

Phone: 01745 890 232

Suffolk

Suffolk Sheep Society

www.suffolksheep.org

Bridfa

Welsh Inst of Rural Studies, Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3AL

Phone: 01970 622575

MA and S Evans

Tan y Accar, Llanrhaeadr, Denbigh LL16 4PH

Phone: 01745 890 232

Texel

Mr Alwyn Phillips

Pengelli, Bethel Road, Caernarfon
Gwynedd LL55 1UH

Phone: 01286 673519

Email: alwyn.phillips@btconnect.com

E L I & J M Williams

Pentre Farm, Rhuddlan, Denbighshire LL18 6HY

Phone: 01745 590219

Gail H & M Brownsett

Blaencronafon, Dolgran, Pencader
Carmarthenshire SA39 9BY

Email: mbrownsett@aol.com

Antur Flock

Welsh Inst of Rural Studies, Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3AL

Phone: 01970 622575

MA and S Evans

Tan y Accar, Llanrhaeadr, Denbigh LL16 4PH

Phone: 01745 890 232