

The Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders' Association

Looking Ahead



2018 - Edition No 40

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Monday 1st October

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Thursday 4th October

Annual Prize Show & Sale of 1,000 Registered Bluefaced Leicester Rams & Females for the Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders' Association. Judging 7.15am. Sale 9am.

Monday 8th October

The Great Annual Special Sale of 5,000 Registered and Unregistered Uncrossed Swaledale Ewes and Gimmer Shearlings. Sale 10am.

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Welcome

To the 2018 edition of the
Looking Ahead Magazine

Editorial

Office News.....	4-5
President's Message.....	6
Importance Of Performance Recording.....	8-9
Benefits Of Using High Index Rams.....	11
Flock Feature - Espley.....	12-13
Flock Feature - Beeches.....	14-15
Flock Feature - Pew Tor.....	16-17
Flock Feature - Woodview Farm.....	18-19
2018 Female Sale Reports.....	20-23
Cheviot Mules Paying Their Way.....	24
Regional News.....	25-26
British Wool Update.....	27

Advertising

AB Europe.....	IFC
AHDB.....	9
Blackface Sheep Breeders' Assoc.	14
British Wool.....	27
Harrison & Hetherington.....	26
Hawes Auction Mart.....	IFC
Hexham and Northern Marts.....	20
Lawrie & Symington Ltd.....	7
M Walton.....	7
North Country Cheviot Sheep Society.....	IFC
North Of England Mule Sheep Assoc.	7
Scotch Mule Assoc.	25
Swaledale Sheep Breeders' Assoc.	15
Welsh Mule Assoc.	5



Front Cover - The Cole Family, Pew Tor flock
with some of their Bluefaced Leicesters.



Chairman's Message

A Breed With Passion

Jim German



Welcome to 2018, and what a welcome we have had, with two storms, land as wet as I've ever seen it, and in a lot of areas a fodder shortage, not to mention the price of straw!

In the Autumn Review I opened with comments about the Summer of 2017 we'd never had. I am almost speechless now at the time of writing this article, we have, nationwide, experienced a severe winter armageddon similar to the one of '63' albeit a shorter version. It has been truly a testing time with large snowfalls, high winds and consequently deep snow drifts blocking roads and filling farm yards and buildings with several feet of snow. Winter time is hard enough without the extra work this brings. I applaud everyone who will have fought on to feed and water livestock, clear roads and check outlying cattle and flocks of sheep. At times there seems no end to it, but we do just get on and 'do it'.

Our member's year traditionally starts with the female sales at Hawes and Carlisle. There has also been an inaugural sale in Scotland at Stirling which is intended to be hopefully a future Association sale. Hawes was almost hampered by a snowfall and maybe affected a few making the journey from Scotland and Wales, however a packed ringside saw a vibrant trade with averages up. Smearsett flock dominated the show and topped the trade with an in lamb ewe at £7000. Midlock braved the elements of a long journey and had a clearance sell. Congratulations to everyone who braved the elements and making it a successful sale. Carlisle followed with it's sale the Monday after Hawes, and it was standing room only to see a cracking entry of sheep sold in both the traditional and crossing types, with averages jumping by £185. Demand for well bred stock is as strong as ever at this time of year. Topping the trade in the crossing type was a gimmer from the Firth flock at 6500 gns, and the champion was an excellent sheep from the Riddings flock. Traditional type champion at 1000 gns came from the Elian flock.

A lot of members will be in the final stages of lambing their Leicesters by now, and will have their eyes on what's the cocky tup lamb or best marked. Thoughts running through our minds and conversations with family as to what might make a show lamb and more importantly make a good sale pen. I've no doubt registrations will be a similar figure to last year, such is the keenness of breeders old and new. As I've said before, when it comes to registrations, be selective for quality, choose good conformation, mouths and size to make yourself to get noticed at sales.

There are many versions of the BFL cross and all do well. Our display board photographs will have this theme this next two years as well as BFL images too. In many ways, it's always a changing market, but we must strive to promote the best elements of our breeding. Longevity, milkiness, wool quality and high bred vigour are paramount. Council are keen to promote high health flock status, so if members have comments or ideas, please contact the office or any council member. Your representatives are in the front of the Association flock book.

Data protection is now a reality, so because we keep records of names and addresses we have to take steps to make all safe. This is affecting everyone who keeps records, and I'm sure Helen will be writing to you all about it. It's very important that you reply. It will involve you simply ticking a box to say you are happy with your personal data being on our system, and included in sale catalogues, sale reports, flock books, magazines, photographic material, and website features. This is simple, but necessary, so I thank you all in advance of this.

I am looking forward to meeting you all this Summer. Have a good show season, and get those lambs in top order for the sales.

Association Contacts - Chairman - Jim German, Caw House Farm, Lancaster Tel: 01524 791463
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Riverside View, Warwick Road, Carlisle CA1 2BS Tel: 01228 598022 / Fax: 01228 598021
Email: info@blueleicester.co.uk / Charity Number: 252714

www.blueleicester.co.uk



News From The Office

2018 Subscriptions / Members Details

The annual subscription for the Association remains at £25, and Southern Ireland members can pay their annual subscription fee by a Euro cheque. If you have not paid your membership, you still have time to do so, but please be aware non paid up members are automatically excluded from our mailing list. If you would like to set up a standing order to make sure your payment is received on time, then please contact the office for an application form. If you move house and/or your contact details change, please notify us as soon as you can, so that we can keep our database as up to date as possible.

Office News Page

The Secretary now has an office news page on the website. This page will be a place where all relevant information for members, including dates of National and regional meetings will be placed. If you would like any regional events advertised on the Secretary's office news page, please e-mail through the details to info@blueleicester.co.uk.

2017 Flock Book

The 2017 flock book was posted to all paid up members on the 10th April. Thank you to all members who sent in their completed forms on time for inclusion in the 2017 edition. If you have not yet returned your 2017 registration form, then please do so, as you will not be able to order tags for 2018 until the form is received. If you have lost your 2017 form and require another copy, please contact the office.

2018 Ear Tags

Members will be supplied again this year with a pair of ear tags. The price of the tags has been held at £7 per pair + VAT. This charge covers the cost of your pair of tags and your registration/administration fee. The tags are made up of a micro yellow electronic button tag, and this year the visual tag is a green button tag. Both tags are marked with your UK flock mark and individual number together with your Bluefaced Leicester pedigree number and individual number. The letter this year is 'L'

Bluefaced Leicester Replacement Tags

If you need to order replacement tags, this must be done through the office and not direct from the tag company. The following details are required: Bluefaced Leicester side of the tag details; UK flock number

with individual number; Your CPH number. If it is a bought in animal and not your own breeding, we require proof of purchase – either by supply of the original tag you are replacing or an Auctioneers invoice (this will be returned to you once the order is placed). If all this information can be supplied at the time of ordering, this will allow us to improve the service to you, the members. There is normally a five day turn around on replacement tag orders from the date of order. There is no charge for supply of replacement Bluefaced Leicester tags for 2018.

Grassroots Online Database

Members have free access to the online database system – **Grassroots**. This can be found through a link at www.blueleicester.co.uk and access is through a unique passcode individual to each member. Once you have gained access to the site you can 'manage' your flock on line.

The following tasks can be done by members:

Lamb registrations. Transfer sheep off your holding which have either been sold, or have died.

The following tasks cannot be done by members:

Animal details cannot be amended. Any additional stock purchased cannot be added to your flock.

For any of these tasks to be done, you will need to contact the office with the details to be added/corrected and the office will make the changes for you. If you have forgotten your Grassroots password, please contact the office and we will be happy to send you a reminder

Export Register

If you would like to be included on the export register, please contact the office with your flock number, prefix and a valid e-mail address, and you will be added to the register. This is when enquiries come in from abroad from people looking to import Bluefaced Leicester Genetics which you will be notified of their request.

Performance Recording

There is an opportunity for members who Performance Record to claim back monies to assist with the costs. If you are a Performance Recording Member and wish to make a claim, please send a copy of your AHDB invoices for membership and scanning (this invoice must

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

This is important information which concerns all members of the Association.

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) come into force on the 25th May 2018. The GDPR is a continuation of the Data protection Act, and is wide ranging and aims to put the rights of individuals at the centre of data protection law. In order to meet the requirements from the GDPR, we need members consent for the Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders' Association to collect, process and hold personal data (including sensitive personal data) that we collect from you in accordance with our privacy policy a copy of which can be viewed on our website or a printed copy can be supplied on request from the Association office. Personal data includes: name, address, postcode, date of birth (if under 18 years of age), telephone contact details including mobile number, e-mail address, UK flock

number, CPH number, business identifier number (Northern Ireland Members Only), membership payments in the form of cheques, tag order payments in the form of cheques, sale entry fees in the form of cheques. Consent will be collected in the use of tick boxes. The Privacy policy sets out in full why we collect members data, how we store it and how and why we use it.

If members have any questions, comments and requests regarding our privacy policy, then please address them to the office of the

Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders' Association in writing either by post to Riverside View, Warwick Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 2BS or by e-mail to: info@blueleicester.co.uk.

WELSH MULES

2018 OFFICIAL SALES

show the number of Bluefaced Leicester lambs scanned), and the 50% refund will be arranged for you from the office. The monies available are on a 'first come first served' basis.

MV Testing

There is an opportunity for members who MV test their flock to claim back monies to help towards the cost of testing. If you wish to make a claim, please send a copy of your invoice from your vet clearly stating the number of Bluefaced Leicesters tested and the £2 per sheep refund will be arranged for you from the office. The monies available are on a 'first come first served' basis.

Gift Aid

This is of no additional cost to members, and provides a very useful financial input into the Association funds. If you have not already signed up to Gift Aid, or would like more information, please contact us for an application form.

Twitter/Facebook

Find us on Facebook and on twitter @Bluefaced.

And Finally

Wishing everyone a successful lambing and look forward to catching up with you all throughout the Summer shows.



WELSHPOOL

(01938) 553438

12th September (Yearlings)

13th September (Ewe lambs)

11th October (Yearlings & ewe lambs)

BUILT WELLS

(01982) 553614

14th September (Yearlings & ewe lambs)

16th October (Yearlings & ewe lambs)

RUTHIN

(01824) 702025 & (01745) 583260

15th September (Yearlings & ewe lambs)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Welsh Mules Tel: 01970 636688 • Field Officer Tel: 07768 816919 • www.welshmules.co.uk



President's Message

Jim Hunter



As I write this in the last few days of February, it is bitterly cold, and we have seem to have had snow on and off since the end of November, so I am looking forward to some warmer weather!

I have enjoyed my year as President, meeting new people in the breed and catching up with the people I have known for a long time also. There are some tremendous people and characters in the Leicester world.

The Association's move to split the two types, crossing and traditional seems to be working well. I can remember back to my Young Farmer days being told many times by judges at stockjudging events that a good animal was never the wrong colour.

I have enjoyed visiting shows and sales for the first time and seeing some tremendous Leicesters and Mules. We had an open day held by N.E.M.S.A at Riddings with stock second to none, "what a memorable Sunday". All the shows and sales have been well supported and once again a new record price, and we witnessed the first female sale in Scotland at Stirling. This was a small sale, but quite successful, and I'm sure something to build on in the future with 'free catalogues.'

Another first, was a lady taking over the top spot in the NFU, well done to her. Brexit seems to be an ongoing debate, who knows what the outcome will be, but according to the experts the sheep industry is going to take the worst hit.

The hogg trade we are experiencing at the moment is one of the best we have seen for many years, so long may it continue and long may the Mule ewe contribute to that.

With lambing nearly upon us, we look forward to the new sire progeny, and I have no doubt there will be some stunners and some of the other kind too.

Finally, I would like to thank Helen and her team for all the hard work they do for the Association. I hope you have a stress free lambing and I will see you at the show and sales.

Dates For Your Diary

MAY

16 - 19
30

Balmoral Show
NSA Scotsheep
Kings Arms, Ballantrae

JUNE

9
21 - 24

NSBA Event
Cillin Hill, Kilkenny
Royal Highland Show

JULY

10 - 12
18

Great Yorkshire Show
NSA Sheep Event
Three Counties Showground
Northern Ireland Progeny Show
- Limavady Show
Royal Welsh Show
Penrith Progeny Show

AUGUST

4

Scottish Progeny Show
Dumfries Show

SEPTEMBER

14
17
20
21
22
25
26
27

Kelso Ram Sale
Builth Wells Ram Sale
Ruthin Ram Sale
Castle Douglas Ram Sale
Ballymena Ram Sale
Tavistock Ram Sale
Hexham Ram Sale
Welshpool Ram Sale

OCTOBER

4
11
12
13

Hawes Ram Sale
Penrith Ram Sale
Carlisle Ram Sale
Armoy Ram Sale

Lawrie & Symington Limited
Lanark Agricultural Centre



Dates For 2018

Kelso Ram Sales

Friday 14th September

Rams & Females Of All Classes

Wednesday 26th September

Thursday 1st November

For further details please contact
Lawrie & Symington Limited

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The Importance of Performance Recording

Written by Emma Steele, Signet Breeding Services

With performance recording fees becoming cheaper, and methods for submitting data getting easier, there has never been a better time to start recording with Signet.

Signet Breeding Services provide the national genetic evaluation for Bluefaced Leicesters within our Sheepbreeder scheme, giving breeders the tools to select stock on more than just looks alone.

To give breeders the ability to select stock on individual genetic potential, Sheepbreeder uses a series of real data records:

- ✓ **Pedigree information.**
- ✓ **Birth information.**
- ✓ **8 week weights.**
- ✓ **17-21 week weights.**
- ✓ **Ultrasound scanning to measure eye muscle and back fat depth.**

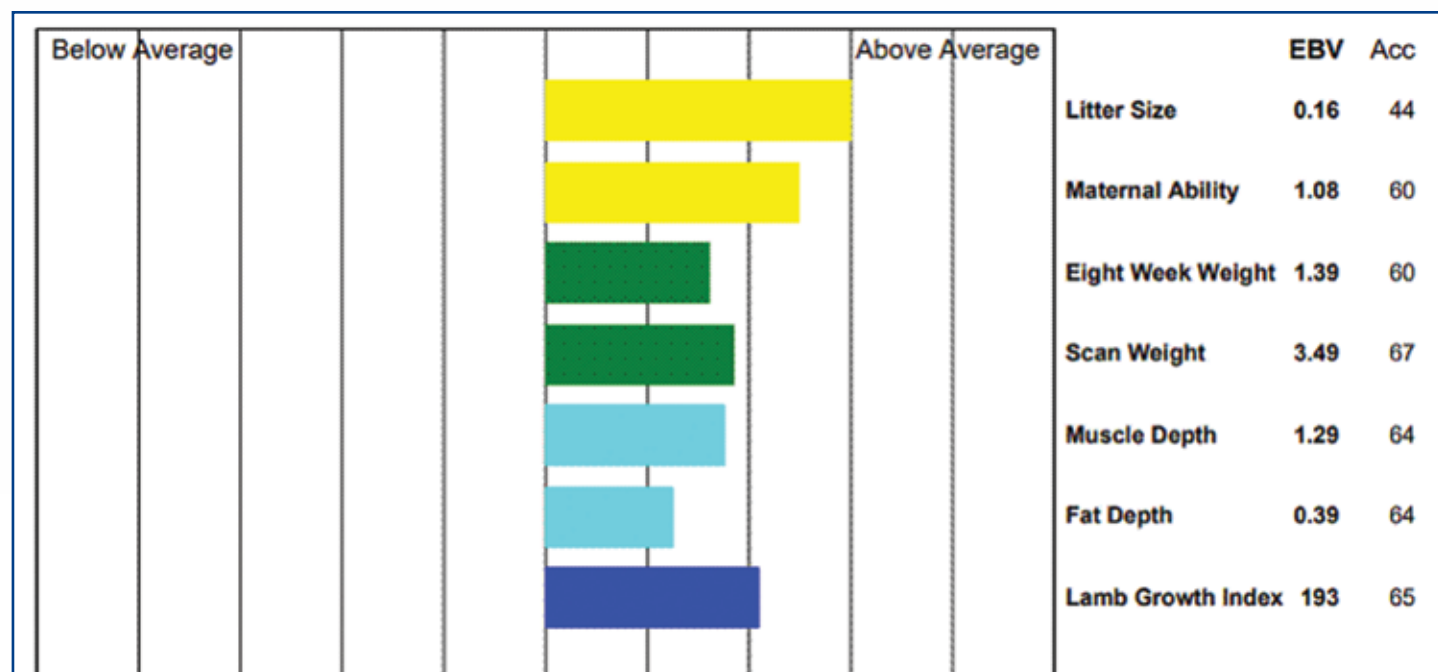
Make Better Breeding Decisions

Each recorded flock individual will benefit from the generation of estimated breeding values (EBVs) for commercially important traits such as maternal ability, early growth rate and loin muscularity. These traits are combined into the Bluefaced Leicester Index which is used to rank stock based on one overall breeding objective. This allows flocks to make better breeding decisions, which are based on more than just physical appearance and aids in the selection of stock when looking to retain genetically superior replacements or purchase a new animal.

Each EBV is also accompanied by an accuracy value accounting for the heritability of the trait, how the trait is correlated to others and the depth of performance data we have on the individual, its relatives and its peers. Animals with high accuracy values reduce the risk of breeding decisions in your flock. You can be more certain that an animal is going to perform as expected if it has an accuracy value of 90% rather than 45%.

A Tool for Marketing

Any person that has access to the internet has access to the Signet evaluation database. This means that prospective ram buyers can look up the genetic merit of any recorded individual on the BASCO website (www.basco.org) at the click of a button. Top stock lists are also



	Paper	Online	Electronic
Flock Fee	£120.00	£95.00	£95.00
	Additional £/ewe		
First 50 ewes	£3.00	£2.50	£2.50
51-150 ewes	£3.00	£2.00	£2.00
151-400 ewes*	£3.00	£1.00	£1.00

publically available on the Signet website (www.signetfbc.co.uk) ranking the best recorded stock rams and ram lambs in the country. Free access to this information is giving recorded flocks the edge as we see increasing demand for stock with figures at many ram sales nationwide. Signet Sheepbreeder members can also print charts at any time from BASCO to be displayed at sales. The visual bar charts give prospective buyers the ability to quickly assess the genetic merit of an animal at a glance and help you stand out against the crowd. Bars to the right indicate genetically superior animals, those to the left show animals with genetic merit below breed average.

Can you afford not to?

Signet have recently undergone a fee structure change where flocks that choose to provide data electronically (Excel spreadsheet/farm software output) or online are rewarded with cheaper fees making performance recording even more cost effective.

If you want more information on becoming a Signet member or anything in this article, contact Emma at:

emma.steele@ahdb.org.uk or alternatively have a look at our website www.signetfbc.co.uk.

Recording your sheep is now cheaper and easier

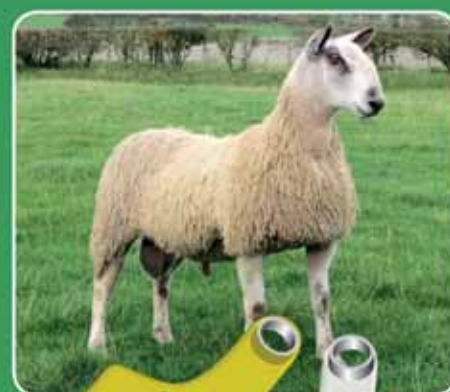
Why record with Signet?

- The most accurate assessment of genetic potential
- Access to promotional reports, charts and marketing material
- Breeders can now scan more lambs prior to slaughter
- Free inbreeding software
- Recorded rams are in demand. Premiums are paid for high EBV stock

Recording has never been better value with reduced fees for clients submitting data online or via electronic files.

Contact Emma Steele
Signet Specialist Breeding Adviser, for a quote.

Tel: 0247 647 8826
Email: emma.steele@ahdb.org.uk



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B

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C

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Benefits Of Using High Index Rams

Written by Elfyn Owen
and Helen Carr-Smith

Have you ever asked yourself what is a Performance Mule? If you have, and you are still not sure, then the man to ask is Gareth Jones, Ty Nant. Ty Nant is a cattle and sheep farm, which sits in the quiet village of Eglwysbach, just six miles inland from the busy coastal town of Colwyn Bay, on the North coast of Wales looking towards the mountains of Snowdonia.

Gareth is married to his wife Ann and they have three married sons. Aled is the oldest, a deputy headmaster at a school in Oldham, Tegid is the youngest, a deputy manager at a local supermarket and Eryl is the middle son, and works for an agricultural building contractor and on the farm during busy times and every Saturday. Eryl will be taking over the farm when Gareth retires.

Gareth farms 51 hectares in total in three locations - 36 hectares at Ty Nant, 10 hectares at Gyffylog which is two miles away from the main steading, with another five hectares at Tan Lan. This is a nine mile journey near to the market town of Llanrwst. Within these areas, the land rises steeply from 200 to 900 feet, very awkward shaped fields to negotiate. He is a second generation farmer at Ty Nant following in the footsteps of his late father who started producing cross-bred breeding sheep in 1967 with Welsh Halfbreds. The production of Welsh Mules was added in 1993, and the flock now consists of 260 Welsh Ewes, 160 of these go to the Bluefaced Leicester and 100 to the Border Leicester. 70 – 80 Welsh Mules are sold as lambs and 45-55 are run on, and sold as yearlings the following year. Annually Gareth will buy in 60 – 65 three-four year old Welsh draft ewes in the Autumn from the same vendors. The farm also has 25-30 cross bred ewes put to the Suffolk tup and these are run on the lowland at Tan Lan near Llanrwst.

The flock lambs outdoors in the middle of March, and all the male lambs are castrated at a day old with a rubber ring. Gareth doesn't have the ewes scanned prior to lambing, but does normally have 145 – 150% live lambs per 100 ewes put to the ram.

Male lambs are sold live weight through Llanrwst Market, starting at the end of June. The aim is to produce a lamb with a weight of 42 kilos before weaning early August, and for 45 kilo lambs from September onwards. No ewe lambs are culled, those that are not sold as lambs are run on, and sold as yearlings and no sheep are sent out for wintering. No lambs are creep fed and the aim is to finish the lambs off on permanent pasture. The Jones' also run a small herd of Welsh Black cattle.

Gareth and Eryl took the decision in 2014 to buy their first performance recorded Bluefaced Leicester, with the hope to produce performance Mules at no extra cost, and with nothing to lose they took the plunge purchasing a ram lamb from John Armstrong, Lay's flock. This was John's homebred G5 which was in the top 5% for that year. Since the family have started using high index rams, they have seen a significant increase in the size of their lambs, with some of the strongest lambs in their top pen for the sales in 2017 weighing in at 56 kilos. Bluefaced Leicesters fit the farming structure at Ty Nant, as they have the ability to produce a high value product from a Welsh Ewe, with saleable ewe lambs and good weights in the male lambs. The longevity of the rams are proven, with lifespan reaching nine and some into ten years on the farm.

Gareth has found since buying high index recorded rams, the improvement in the ram lambs - they don't 'melt away', but grow on and fill out with no special treatment. The rams are selected purely on their



Gareth and Eryl receiving the rosette for the best entry of Whitefaced ewe lambs at our 2015 sale in Ruthin from Welsh Mule Association chairman, Kevin Parry.

index, selecting at 150 or above which is higher than the qualifying level for producing Performance Mules. When selecting a ram, Gareth looks for a ram that will work with his type of Welsh ewe, looking for a good mouth, sound feet, a bit of length in the body, stretch in the neck and a tight skin. Muscle depth, length of body and weight gain are some of the traits that Gareth is hoping the Bluefaced Leicester passes on to his performance Mules. In 2016, Gareth bought Cernyw J15 bred by Elfyn Owen, out of the Association sale at Ruthin, and was very impressed with the muscle development in the progeny of this ram.

Show success has come for the family at two of the local shows, Eglwysbach and Llanrwst with Mules bred from J15 Cernyw winning Overall Champion Mule in strong classes at both shows.

Another bonus that Gareth has found with using high index rams is the genetic ability to improve, and out perform on grass. In 2017, Gareth sold his first draw of twins at the end of July off grass at 44.5 kgs.

The Jones' sell their performance Mules at Ruthin, and have seen the Whitefaced Mules increase in popularity in recent years. Taking the lambs to Ruthin has always been a challenge for the family, as lorries can't get into the farm yard for loading, so the lambs are walked, usually in the dark, the half mile to a neighbouring farm to meet the lorry.

2017 was the first year all the Mule lambs were sold as performance Mules, with certificates for the rams on display on the sale pens. This helped to generate a lot of interest pre sale, and the Jones' were not disappointed with their trade on the day, with a top price of £110 and averaging £106 for 70 sold. 66 yearlings were sold (not all performance Mules) to an average of just over £140.

Gareth's goals are from the knowledge he has gained, and having seen the benefits of using high index rams, gaining a better understanding of how the index works, and following the bloodlines that are doing the job, to continue to produce a quality Mule lamb with the ability to feed, grow and thrive on grass.

Supplying Top Quality Rams

For the Pedigree and Commerical Markets

Near the bustling town of Morpeth in the picturesque county of Northumberland, you will find the Espley flock of Bluefaced Leicesters established in 2004 by Mick and Nicky Gray.

Mick and Nicky live at Low Espley Farm with their daughter Alix and son Matthew.

A keen interest in sheep farming runs in the family, with Alix who when she is not working at her full time job as a sales representative for a local animal feed company, runs her own flock of Bluefaced Leicesters with five breeding ewes in her flock and Matthew who has a pedigree Texel flock of 15 ewes. Matthew works full time for himself doing several lambing jobs around the county in the spring. In the summer, you will find him shearing sheep working as part of a three man team and through the winter working for several farmers around Northumberland.

Mick and Nicky also run a flock of 230 Beltex cross to produce fat lambs, they also run about 60 Blackface ewes and in a new venture for 2017 they have invested in some North Country Cheviots to produce Cheviot Mule ewe lambs to sell as breeding sheep in the Autumn. Mick also does some contract shepherding and lambings.

The Gray's rent approximately 80 acres of land from their landlord Mr Paul Bell at Lough House, and have another rented area of 50 acres away from the main holding.

The Espley flock consists of 30 – 35 breeding ewes to produce shearlings to be sold at the annual Kelso Ram sales in September. Surplus females are sold at the Association sales.

The flock was first established in 2004 with females from the Wrangham flock belonging to Mr Stuart Hyslop. Mick and Nicky have only bought in a few top selected females since then.

Some of the most influential sires used within the flock are Mossvale W002, Barlaes Y033, Grugoer G01. Last, but not least to mention, is Ashes F002 who has added great strength and correctness throughout.



● Alix, Mick & Nicky (above)

● Champion from Builth Wells NSA Ram Sales 2017 sold for 9500 gns – Espley K002 (right)



His daughters are big powerful females full of character, and his sons have been at the top end in the show and sale ring. His progeny are always consistent year on year.

In the last few years, the Grays took the decision to take the long journey South to the NSA Wales and Border Ram Sales at Builth Wells to sell one or two of their best ram lambs, and this gamble has paid off in leaps and bounds with success a plenty.

With their first visit to the ram sales in 2015, their homebred H001 ram lamb took the overall champion at the pre sale show selling for 3000 gns. This was followed by more success in 2016, this time taking the breed top price on the day selling their J001 lamb for 7800 gns, and his twin brother for 2600 gns. Both of these lambs were bought by fellow North of England breeders going to the Smith family's West Bolton flock and Graham Dixon's Alwinton flock respectively.

The success continued in 2017, with their homebred K002 ram lamb who was one of quads taking the overall championship at the pre sale



● **In-lamb ewes and gimmers – in lamb to Ashes F2 and Kirkstead K1 which is owned in partnership with Miss Alix Gray**

show, and he was cashed in for a sale topping price of 9500 gns which was top price on the day of all the breeds forward for sale. The ram was out of F2 Ashes, and a dam out of C15 Grugoer, and was sold to fellow breeders the Ingram's from the Logie Durno flock.

This was the same dam and sire combination that achieved the top price the previous year.

The family love to spend some of the summer showing their sheep and have for the last two years entered for the Royal Highland Show. They also support their local shows in and around the County winning rosettes and silverware along the way. The family also support the Bluefaced Leicester progeny shows at Peebles and Penrith. Attending shows is a great window to showcase their stock to perspective buyers and a great way to meet fellow breeders.

Mick & Nicky's future goals are that they would like to continue the improvements that they have made to the flock, and they are always



looking to supply top quality rams that can go on and work and produce quality lambs for both the pedigree sector and for the commercial market. Also to continue to provide sheep that satisfy varied customer requirements which include the North Country Cheviot, the Blackface flocks and now Texels.

The Gray's would like to congratulate other Bluefaced Leicester breeders on the improvements made within the breed, and hope this continues long into the future as the Bluefaced Leicester has so much to offer in the future for the modern sheep industry.

Finlay's Enthusiasm For The Bluefaced Leicester

On one of the coldest days of winter so far (- 8 Celsius), I ventured up to Scotland to visit young breeder, 15 year old Finlay Robertson from the Beeches flock.

Finlay lives with Dad John, Mum Caroline and older brother Sam. Dad, John is shepherd on Crosswoodhill Farm where Finlay runs his sheep. The farm is 1,800 acres ranging from 1,000 feet to 1,800 feet and is situated in the beautiful Pentland Hills about 15 miles from Edinburgh. The farm has 1,000 Blackface breeding ewes, 160 of which are run with Bluefaced Leicester tups and the remainder are put to the Blackface to keep them pure. The farm also runs 120 suckler cows, the calves are sold as stores at one year old.

The Beeches flock of Bluefaced Leicesters were first registered in 2010, although Finlay's association with the breed began a few years earlier to this in 2006 when he was just three years old. He and his brother were given as a present a gimmer each from Neil Laing, Garscube flock and she became the foundation of the Beeches flock. Over the last few years the flock has expanded with the purchase of additional females from Midlock, Cottage and Garscube flocks. Flushing a couple of the flocks best ewes has also been an option tried over the last couple of years.

There are currently 20 Bluefaced Leicester ewes in the flock, and ram lambs are kept until they are shearlings. Every year 5 or 6 shearlings are sold at the Kelso ram sales with the rest being sold through United



● Finlay Robertson and Roy.

Auctions at Stirling. Finlay first sold shearlings at Kelso at the age of 8 and has not missed a year since. One of the sale highlights for the flock was at the 2017 Kelso ram sales when he sold his homebred J7 ram for £2500 which was out of a Garscube Ewe. The ram was purchased by Malcolm Coubrough, Hartside Farm. The Beeches pen of 5 shearling rams at Kelso in 2017 averaged £950.

For the first time in 2017 Finlay decided to take a couple of his best ram lambs and a couple of shearling rams to the Association sale in Hawes. This was done to give himself a new challenge and try and get the flock

seen in a different market place. The gamble paid off, and the sheep were cashed at reasonable money considering it was the first time selling at the sale. Finlay likes to produce tups with good body and good conformation.

Two stock tups have had a major impact on the development and improvement of the Beeches flock over the past couple of years. They are 3320/E008 Tanhouse Farm which was bought as a lamb out of Castle Douglas and 1538/G084 Midlock who was bought out of the Kelso ram sales. G84 Midlock sired the £2500 shearling which was sold at Kelso in 2017. Both of these stock rams have left very good Mule ewe lambs as well as Bluefaced Leicesters.

If a new stock tup is required to run with the Bluefaced Leicester

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Sale dates, sale reports & news updates are available to view on our website and facebook.

Contact:

Aileen McFadzean

07768 820405

www.scottish-blackface.co.uk



Image by Catherine MacGregor





9 Ewes are in lamb to Midlock J014 and Midlock K004

ewes, the first thing Finlay looks for is good crossing bloodlines, as he sees this as the first step to improving the flock. On sale day, Finlay with the help of Dad, will look through pens looking for good bodied sheep with good locomotion, very good mouth and good white hair and Finlay will always try and buy the best ram he can with the budget available.

The Bluefaced Leicester suits the farm requirements with the homebred tup lambs running every year with the Blackface ewes to breed the 120 Mule ewe lambs which are sold through United Auctions at Stirling.

Ewe lambs are kept until they are gimmers and sold at the Association female sale in Carlisle, and this year Finlay is supporting a new sale of females at United Auctions in Stirling. Finlay wants to sell females this year to give existing members the opportunity to introduce some new bloodlines into their flocks, and also to give new members the chance to buy registered females to start off new flocks.


Finlay spends some of his summertime supporting local shows at Carnwath and Campsie showing both Bluefaced Leicesters and Mule ewe lambs and coming away with various coloured rosettes and champion rosettes in both sections. At Campsie show in 2017, Finlay took the overall champion in the Mule section, then going on to take the Overall Sheep Interbreed Championship with a Mule Ewe Lamb bred by his homebred tup J5 Beeches which was sold for £1000 at Kelso in 2017.

Finlay's future goals for his own flock are to keep breeding good crossing Bluefaced Leicesters and Mule lambs with exceptional carcasses and skins. Since he began breeding Bluefaced Leicesters, Finlay has always put back into the flock any profit he has made from his sheep with the exception of a couple of years ago when he bought his own sheep dog Roy who has become an integral part of farm life.


With Finlay's enthusiasm for the Bluefaced Leicester and the Mule, I think it is safe to say the Beeches flock will be around for a long time to come.




Finlay as a three year old with his first Bluefaced Leicester a Gimmer called Lucy



The Swaledale Sheep Breeders' Association





For further information and sale dates please contact the secretary John Stephenson

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Pew Tor Flock

Is A Family Affair



● Neil and Anna, with their daughters Ida (to the Rt) and youngest Liv in the middle with her puppy 'Red'.

In the heart of the Dartmoor National Park, a landscape characterised by rough grazing land, wooded valleys, stark beautiful moors and distinctive granite tors, you will find enthusiastic Bluefaced Leicester breeder Neil Cole and his family.

Neil lives in the picturesque setting of Pew Tor Farm, with his wife Anna and two daughters. Ida (16) is currently studying at Bicton College doing

a level two in Agriculture, and Liv (13) loves the farming life, especially lambing the Bluefaced Leicesters due to their fantastic temperaments. Liv's greatest love is however her treasured spaniel puppy 'Red' who goes everywhere with her. Pew Tor is a 120-acre new build farm that was twelve years in the making, on what was originally a greenfield site. This they were told is the first farm of its kind, with sheds and house to be granted permission at the same time, to be built in the country.



● 2017 crop of ram lambs – sired by 3419/D002 Wellan, 2690/G003 S P Dalpeddar and 3037/H002 Brindifield



2018 Crop of In-lamb ewes – in-lamb to 752/J40 Riddings, 4265/K5 Culdoach and 2690/G3 S P Dalpeddar

The Cole family farms in partnership with Neil's brother, who farms Greenwell Farm in neighbouring Yelverton. In addition, they rent 1600 acres at the Old Prison Farm in Princetown, farming a total of 2000 acres. The family also hold common grazing rights on Dartmoor where they graze sheep, cattle and run 40 Dartmoor Hill ponies and some pedigree Dartmoor ponies. Neil sits on the Commoners Council and is a Quartermaster for the South Quarter, as well as a committee member of the Southwest NSA.

He is very keen to promote the Mule, and at the last South West NSA event Neil supplied sheep for both the Mule and BFL stands. The family also hosted an NSA farm walk, and a Bluefaced Leicester Association open day at the Old Prison Farm.

The South West Mule Group was formed in 2001 after foot and mouth, by Neil and a few local farmers who were keen to set up a sale of Mule ewe lambs to sell to farmers in the area. Local Auction companies were contacted, and the group was formed with 250 lambs traded at the first sale, and this has now grown to three sales a year trading over 2000 lambs. Following on from this success, Neil assisted in the set-up of the Bluefaced Leicester Association sale also at Tavistock.

To celebrate the 50th year of the Bluefaced Leicester Association in 2012, the South West Bluefaced Leicester members held a flock competition and Neil and the family were delighted to be awarded third prize in the large flock section and were commended by the judge on the quality of the sheep after grazing them at 1400 feet.

In total they have 2300 breeding ewes, where 2000 of them are Blackface and Swaledale and 250 Whitefaced Dartmoor ewes. Some of which are run pure to breed their own replacements, the rest are run with the Bluefaced Leicester to produce 700 Mule ewe lambs a year. These are sold in the Autumn sales at Tavistock under the banner of the South West Mule Group. The Mule ewe lambs are bred on peat ground at the Prison farm which sits at 1400 feet above sea level. All fat lambs are finished on grass with a few concentrates at the end. The finished lambs are then sold direct to Jaspers, their local slaughterhouse, and a few are sold fat at Exeter Livestock Market. The farms also run 250 suckler cows, these consist of pedigree Galloways, pedigree South Devon cows, and a

few SD X Galloway. Most of the calves are finished on the farm and are sold to local butchers.

Neil established the Greenwell Farm flock of Bluefaced Leicesters fourteen years ago, in 2004, with the purchase of five ewe lambs from Geoffrey Cox, Cannington Flock. After the move to Pew Tor Farm in 2014, the prefix and flock number were changed to mirror the name of the farm. The flock is now a closed flock of 50 crossing type ewes, with new bloodlines introduced through the sires. Influential sires which have had an impact within the flock are 4059/Z1 Grofft, 3331/B8 Cottage, 2070/D3 Old Hemley and 2690/G3 SP Dalpeddar. When choosing his new stock ram Neil will look for the right bloodlines, exceptionally good mouths, good bodied sheep with good feet and conformation. Stock sires purchased in 2017 were the 752/J40 Riddings and 4265/K5 Culdoach. As many will know Neil, Anna and the girls are more than happy to travel the length and breadth of the country in search of the right sire for their flock. Their eldest daughter Ida has developed a keen interest in the breeding of the sheep as well, especially the Bluefaced Leicester, and has already got several Leicesters of her own. She is hoping next year to go to Newton Rigg, where Neil went many moons ago, having already secured a place, to do the level three in Agriculture.

Neil is a very keen supporter of local auction marts and local farmers. He has been a regular consignor at the Association sale at Tavistock, successfully winning the 1st prize shearling ram class four years in a row. He has also found that the use of social media has proved a valuable selling tool for his bloodlines. Through advertising on 'Mulebook', he achieved a sale of nine ram lambs to Scottish member Drew Coulter, Deanhead. Neil feels 'Mulebook' is a great platform for the members in the South West, as it hits a different market place as not everyone is on 'Facebook'.

To conclude, Neil hopes to continue promoting the benefits of the Mule and the simplicity of the breeding structure required. Whilst maintaining good teeth for longevity, a good carcass for the value of the old ewe with good mothering and milking ability, he hopes to continue selling top quality Bluefaced Leicesters and Mule ewe lambs to both local farmers and breeders at home and further afield.

Woodview Farm

Bluefaced Leicesters & Mules

Along the fringe of the Atlantic Ocean lies the West Coast of Ireland and the County of Mayo where the home of the Morahan family is located near the village of Kilmaine. Woodview Farm is run by Frank and Breege Morahan along with their son John. The farm is located on excellent quality agricultural land and boasts of outstanding views. It nestles close to the beautiful countryside of nearby Ashford Castle as well as the village of Cong where the renowned film "The Quiet Man" was made. It also lies near to the Connemara village of Leenane where the film "The Field" was shot, a location overshadowed by the wet and misty mountains of Connemara and Mayo. There are quite a number of Archaeological Monuments and Castles nearby with the most notable being Rausakeera Ringfort, which was once an inauguration site for local rulers.

The farm supports a suckler, beef and sheep enterprise. The cattle side of the farm is Dad Frank's favourite who runs a suckler herd mainly made up of "R" grade continental type cows which are crossed primarily with Charolais bulls for Spring calving. All calves are finished and sold direct to the factory. In addition to this, the Morahan's run a year round beef fattening unit.

Young John invests much of his time to the sheep side of the farm working long hours, fuelled by his enthusiasm for sheep breeding and always striving for excellence in all that he does. They currently run 550 Lanark ewes, 420 of which are crossed with Bluefaced Leicester rams, mostly home bred, with the remaining 130 run pure to produce replacement females for the farm, thereby running a closed flock with only a few sheep bought into improve breed traits. Approximately 10 to 12 Lanark tup lambs are retained each year on the farm and sold as shearlings. In 2017 some of these shearlings were sold at the inaugural sale of the West of Ireland Lanark Sheep Breeders of which John is a founder member.

Woodview Farm Mule ewe lambs and hogget ewes are sold annually through the Mule sales in Ballinrobe which has long been the primary source of Mule sheep in Southern Ireland and also sell Mule females direct off the farm to farmers from different counties in Ireland. Their Mules are recognised as amongst the best in the country and regularly receive the overall champion in both the ewe lamb and hogget ewe classes held at the primary sale of the Mayo Mule Group in Ballinrobe which has been the venue for the groups sales since its formation in



● Breege, John and Frank Morahan

the 1980s. John insists on excellent skins and good head colours in his Mules, with a regular comment from those attending the sales being "how well grown John's sheep are", they do seem to be bigger than most of their counterparts, not just those at Ballinrobe. In 2017 John had the champion pen of Mule hoggets at the primary sale which went on to sell for 255 Euros and his top pen of Mule ewe lambs, also getting first prize on the day selling at 198 Euros. About 50% of the Mule ewe lambs reared annually are sold with the remaining kept on farm. 30% of those kept are put to the ram and are sold the following year as sucked hoggets. A total of 450 ewe lambs are retained yearly, primarily made up of Mules with some Suffolk cross Mules also being retained.

John's current flock of eight Bluefaced Leicester ewes was established in 2009. In recent years, he has utilised embryo transfer within his pedigree flock to hasten advancement of the proven bloodlines of his very best females. All of his current flock go back to one ewe which has delivered not only excellent pure bred offspring, but whose sons have went on to breed many of his top Mule pens over the last few years. His current



stock ram is Glenshane J001, who is sired by Firth G4 an E1 Hewgill son. Other noted sires used effectively in his breeding programme are - Z4 Orravale, C17 Wellan, C2 Orravale and H2 Slievegallion Blues. John initially started his Bluefaced Leicester flock to breed homebred Leicester tups for using on his own farm, but has now moved to selling some of his stock at the annual South of Ireland Bluefaced Leicester Club Sale. John is a founder member of the Club and presently holds the position of Treasurer.

2016 was the first year that Bluefaced Leicesters were shown at the Tullamore Show, Co. Offaly, Ireland's largest one day Agricultural Show where approximately 80,000 patrons attend to see the very best of sheep and cattle exhibited from the farms of Southern Ireland. John has had the Overall Champion at Tullamore in 2016 and 2017, with a ram lamb coming to the fore on each of the years. Last year's was by his current stock ram, Glenshane J001, and a home bred ewe, it went on to be Champion at the South of Ireland Bluefaced Leicester Club sale in Ballinrobe in 2017 and sold for 2500 Euros. John also had the first prize in all, but one of the Bluefaced Leicester classes in 2017, as well as first in the Mule ewe lamb and hogget ewe class. This was a great achievement for John and an acknowledgement of his commitment to the Bluefaced Leicester and their Mule offspring. John's attention to detail and excellent ability to bring out sheep to their very best is testament to his passion and enthusiasm for his sheep.

As to the future, John intends to continue aiming high and competing at all levels with his sheep encompassing fully the ethos of advancing Bluefaced Leicester sheep in Southern Ireland. He has been nominated as one of the top 30 young farmers under 30 years old, in Southern Ireland by the National farming paper, the Irish Farmers Journal, and there is little doubt, but that this is an accolade well deserved by John who with the support of his parents will continue to represent the sheep industry into the future. But for now, John looks forward to another lambing and with the help of his mother Breege who assists greatly at lambing time, perhaps there will be another few Champions born for showing in 2018.

- Above
2016 & 2017 Tullamore Show Champions
- Below
2018 Bluefaced Leicester lambs



Smearsett

Report and photos by
Wayne Hutchinson

Takes Championship & Top Price At Hawes



It was a chilly day at the Hawes in lamb sale, as the wintery conditions curtailed some of the usual Scottish visitors, but that didn't dampen the trade as there was a cracking trade, with averages up nearly £300 in the gimmer shearing section to £1630 and just a slight dip of £8 in the lambs to £1188. Still a very healthy return.

Topping the day's trade was a gimmer shearing from Robin Booth from the noted Smearsett flock, with J50 Smearsett. She stood 3rd in the pre-sale show. She is by the homebred G11 Smearsett "Ted" and full sister to the £24,000 lamb they sold last autumn, and out of a ewe by the old S1 Lunesdale. She was carrying twins to the H14 Highberries and was bought after some fast bid taking by Raymond Lund, who dropped his hammer at £7000 to M/s Pye, Abbeystead. The Smearsett pen attracted a lot of attention and the quality of the

combination of bloodlines and the reputation of the flock ensured the bids kept coming in. They had the first prize gimmer hogg which went on to take the champion ticket. This smart lamb was by the F3 Hundith they share with Gordon Rawsthorne, and out of a ewe by D17 Smearsett, Yellow Tag, just the same way as their successful stock ram, Ted. She was purchased by M/s E Harkin and J McGrenaghan, Co. Tyrone for £5000. Not content with just the champion ticket they also landed the reserve champion with their first prize gimmer shearing. This one had a bit of different bloodlines in, sired by H1 Garscube and bought out of Hawes for £1100, which was out of a ewe they had sold for £10,000 a few years previous, and out of a ewe by the legend which is Z4



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Hundith. She was carrying three to the H3 Riddings, and sold for £3000 to G Richmond, Preston. They completed the day's sale with a pair of embryos, both selling to Ashley Caton. The first was carrying twins by Black Tag and the second a pair to Ted, both out of full sisters to D15 Smearsett. They sold for £3800 and £2800 respectively, completing a good day at the office for the flock.

The Hewgill flock are always noted for bringing some quality sheep to this sale and once again they didn't disappoint. Their pen leader, a gimmer hogg by H45 Hewgill and out of a ewe by the E47 Hewgill which is the full sister to G1 Hewgill being used at Redgate, was full of style and power. It caught the eye of several breeders and the eventual purchaser was M McKenna, Co. Derry, who forked out £4400 to secure her. They also sold another hogg the M W Skidmore for £2000, again by the H45 Hewgill.

It was a debut to remember for the Red Howe flock from Jack Cartmel and Rachel Scrimgeour when they sold their gimmer hogg for £2200. This smart lamb was by G2 Highberries and out of a ewe by good old Z4 Hundith went back to her bloodline source as Neil Marston dug deep into his pocket.

Leading Prices:

Ewes

W A & A Booth, £2500. R & P E Hargreaves, £1500, £600. P Ayrton, £700.

Gimmer Shearling

W A & A Booth, £7000, £3000, £2200, £1600, £1000. J Wight & Sons, £1800, £1600, £1400, £1200, £1000. J Cartmel, £1000.

Gimmer Hogs

W A & A Booth, £5000, £900, £800. M/s Lord, £4400, £2000, £1000. J Cartmel, £2200. W C Porter & Son, £1100. W & C W Dent, £1000. G & H R Shields, £1000. R & P E Hargreaves, £900. C T & J E Willoughby, £900.

Auctioneer: Hawes Auction Mart



6500 Gns For Firth

At Carlisle Female Sale

Report and photos by
Wayne Hutchinson

It was standing room around the ring as a cracking entry of sheep went under the hammer at Borderway Mart, with some great sheep and bloodlines on offer over the course of the sale. A total of 157 sheep were sold with the average jumping on the year to £185, with a massive jump in the gimmer shearlings of over £300, showing the demand for the breed is as strong as ever, if not more so. Trade started strong and held up to the very end, with the traditional champion fourth into the ring from Dewi Williams, Elian making 1000 gns.

Topping the day's trade, late in the sale was a monster of a gimmer from Derek Hall, Firth. This corker is by the £6000 G37 Midlock which has done exceptionally well within the flock, both on the pures and has bred some exceptional Mule lambs too. She was out of a good breeding ewe by the B4 Tanhouse Farm which has done very well over the years, both for Firth and also notably for the Midlock too.



J73 Firth - 6500 gns

She was carrying twins to the £34,000 H1 Kirkby Redgate which has been proving to be a good line since they bought him a couple of years back. The bids fairly fizzed in and the hammer fell at 6500 gns in a two-way split to Amy and Colin Campbell for their Glenrath and Easter Happrew flocks. Firth's first gimmer into the ring, again full of power and conformation sold for 4500 gns, carrying triplets to the H1 Kirkby Redgate again. This one was by G1 Nunsleugh that they bought for £3200 at Hawes and out of a ewe by E1 Hewgill, which goes back to some powerful Midlock bloodlines. She was snapped up by Alistair Christie, Ballymoney.

Midlock have gained a strong following at this sale over the years by bringing forward some cracking gimmer shearlings which have not only sold well, but gone on to deliver the goods, with one sold last year going on to breed a 15,000 gns tup lamb at the Ballymena sale. Not surprisingly that buyer, Dominic McCrystal was looking to tap into that vein again, and he picked out the first prize gimmer, Midlock's second through the ring. This long, stretchy sheep was by the £23,000 Carry House and out of a ewe by E1 Barf House, which goes back to a great breeding ewe who is consistent in breeding hard, clean colours. She was carrying three to the H1 Kirkby Redgate again, and it took a bid of 5500 gns to secure her trip back over the water to Maghera. Midlock also took the 2nd prize in the gimmers and she was first into the ring. This was by the H1 Kirkby Redgate out of a really strong family which has taken championships and bred tups to £8500, with its mother a full sister to Midlock Gmac. This was carrying a pair to K57 Midlock to a bit of an exclusive line, the only one to be offered in lamb to him. He is out of the same ewe as the record breaking £37,000 Midlock lamb

sold last autumn at Hawes. She was knocked down at 3500 gns to L Harden, Enniskillen. A brace of gimmer hogs made 5000 gns, with the first coming early in the sale from Richard Hutchinson, Kirkby Redgate who had a cracking sale right through. His first lamb was a bit special, a real modern type. By the £3000 J1 Sealhouses which has bred tups to £15,000, this is the first female offered for sale by him, and out of a ewe by the G1 Hewgill which has done really well for them, with four Mule lambs in their top pen at Kirkby Stephen last year. His lambs have won at The Yorkshire and Smithfield. She sold to Lee Beacom, Co. Tyrone. Richard's next lamb just fell shy of 5000 gns, with the bidding stopping at 4800 gns. This smart, well-bred lamb was by the G17 Marriforth, sire to the aforementioned H1 Kirkby Redgate, and out of a ewe by G1 Hewgill again, which is full sister to the 11,000 gns hogg they sold for in 2016. She was bought by A & J Riley, Roweltown. Kirkby Redgate also saw a daughter of the G1 Hewgill, H3 Kirkby Redgate sell for 3800 gns in lamb to the G17 Marriforth, to P Davies, Hilltop Farm, Durham, after it took the Reserve on the day, as well as another pair for 3000 gns, so all in all quite a good day at the office for Richard. Not all the money Richard made went straight home however, when later in the sale he swapped his 5000 gns sale for an investment of the same amount into a sharp gimmer hogg from M/s Lord's Hewgill flock. This lamb stood second to the day's champion, and was the same way bred as the hogg at Hawes just a few days earlier, by the H45 Hewgill and out of a ewe by E47 Hewgill. The crossing champion of the day, judged by Chris Pye, Abbeystead, came from the noted Riddings flock, which over the years has had a massive influence on the breed. The Champion is by the Carry House Jackpot which was the sire to the Champion and the £23,000 tup lambs at Hawes



last year and is proving to be quite a breeder and out of a ewe by the F3 Sorrowmanick which has proved himself within the flock over the years. She sold for 4200 gns, the highest price for the Riddings flock within the females, to M/s Bennett, Hollins Farm, Penrith. They have retained her full sister as they think so much of these bloodlines. Riddings also sold a daughter of the Riddings Domino, and out of a Midlock Badger for 3800 gns to M Wright, Ballymena.

Alec and Anders Brown, Macqueston enjoyed a great day at the sale. They presented some of the best turned out sheep on the day and their pen leader was a real eye catcher. She is by the G19 Highberries which was bought with Midlock and Cottage and out of a ewe by C13 Firth. It is the full sister to a lamb they sold for £2500 at Kirkby Stephen last year. They sold to their best yet for a female to Midlock for 4000 gns. The Pedley family, Yore House enjoyed a successful day, and managed to cash in on a very special ewe lamb, which had been successfully shown last year, winning Interbreed Champion at the Moorcock Show, following in the footsteps of its full sister who did the same, as well as Champion at Kilnsey Show and Reserve at Penrith. This cocky lamb is by the H2 Drimsynie, and out of a ewe by B2 Duhonw, which has done very well within the flock. It was bid to 3800 gns and sold to Lee Beacom.

Averages: 28 Ewes £626.63 (minus £63.37), 66 Ewe Lambs £1484.64 (plus £255.71), 63 Gimmers £1515.50 (plus £303.53), 157 Overall Average £1344.00 (plus £185.08)



Cheviot Mules

Paying Their Way For A Young Couple

Report by Stephen Crozier and
photos by Ross Pattinson and
Naomi House Photography

Nestled on the Cumberland, Northumberland border, Ross and Elaine Pattinson farm with their children Lexi (6), Pheobe (4) and Seth (2). Temon Farm consists of 460 acre upland farm with some marginal land. Ross and Elaine took on the tenancy of the farm back in February 2012 at the age of 29 and 24 respectively.

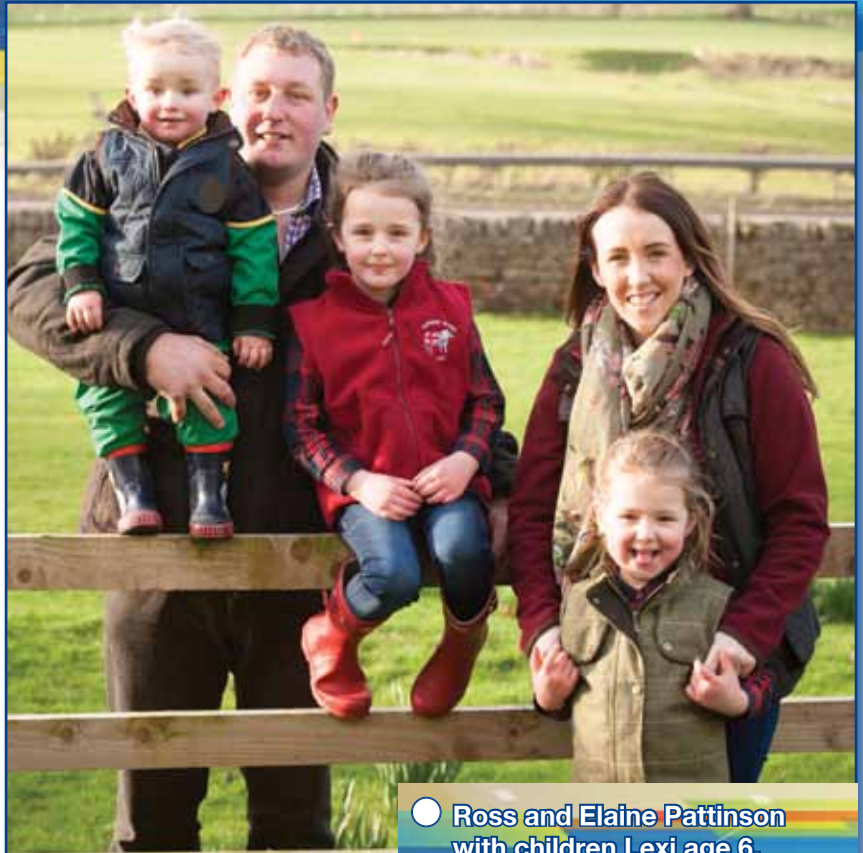
The current stock on the farm is 700 Hill North Country Cheviots which are bred to traditional Bluefaced Leicesters to breed the Cheviot Mule. Replacement Cheviots are purchased as 4 and 5 year old ewes from Lockerbie Mart and Dingwall Mart. The farm is also home to the Topside British Blue herd, a total of 50 cattle that includes pedigrees, recipients and young stock. The family have had great success in the show ring with the British Blue cattle, and they recently took overall champion for the second year running at Carlisle bull sales. They also have 200 dairy heifers kept on the farm for bed and breakfast.

Before taking on the tenancy of Temon, Ross and Elaine kept Cheviot ewes to breed prime lambs. The decision was then made after getting the tenancy to specialise in breeding the increasingly popular Cheviot Mule. The Cheviot ewes are lambed from the 25th of March with the twin ewes lambed outside. Triplet and single bearing ewes housed for ease of management.

In 2017 300 Cheviot Mule ewe lambs were sold to a regular customer on the Isle of White. Over the last three years, this customer has gradually increased the number of Cheviot Mules he buys, moving away from the Masham. The remainder of the Cheviot Mule ewe lambs are sold through Longtown Mart again to regular buyers each year, with none of the ewe lambs receiving any concentrate.

For two years, Ross took the decision to experiment with a maternal hybrid ram to compare against the traditional Bluefaced Leicester. The results showed the ewe lambs harder to market on average making £15 a head less than the Cheviot Mule lambs, with very little demand for smaller running lambs. There was just a select number of customers for the lambs, where as the Cheviot Mule demand has been growing every year. Wether lambs from the hybrid ram also proved to be harder to finish resulting in them being on the farm longer. After the second year, Ross acted on the results of his trial and took the decision and put the maternal hybrid ram to slaughter. From then on, all Cheviots at the Temon have been put to the traditional Bluefaced Leicester ram first and second cycles, with third cycle to Cheviot ram.

All the wether Cheviot Mule lambs are sold dead weight through St Merryn Foods 2 Sister Food Group, with the first draw of lambs going away at 14 weeks. All lambs are away by December and are all fed on grass alone. The lambs average 20 kgs, with three quarters grading as R grades and the remainder grading as U grades.



● **Ross and Elaine Pattinson**
with children Lexi age 6,
Pheobe age 4 and Seth age 2

The traditional Bluefaced Leicester rams are purchased from Association run sales either at the Hexham Mart ring at Kelso or at Carlisle. When purchasing rams, Ross is looking for sheep with plenty of breed character, size and width from front to back. The ram must have a fine skin, good mouth and sound on his legs with no brown hair on the face or legs. The reason for this, it is harder to market ewe lambs with colour on them, and the Cheviot Mule must have good white hair.

After the results from selling all the Cheviot Mule ewe lambs in 2017, Ross and Elaine have made the decision to carry on breeding the Cheviot Mules for the foreseeable future. With demand for the Cheviot Mule getting greater year on year.



2017 Cheviot Mule Ewe Lambs

News From Your Bluefaced Leicester Regions

North East

Just the one sale to report on so far this year, the Hawes female sale which had a packed ring all day despite the snowy conditions. The judge arrived bang on time, but it seemed sensible to delay the judging for 15 minutes to give people more time to navigate the icy approach roads and unload safely.

The Booth family repeated their Champion performance of last year by once again producing the Champion on the day. A gimmer hogg selling for £5,000 to M/s Harkin and McGrenaghan of County Tyrone. J C Walker & Son provided the champion ewe selling for £700.

The Smearsett flock had a good day selling their 1st prize shearling for £3,000 to G Richard, Preston, and their 3rd prize shearling (a full sister to the £24,000 tup lamb) to A C & K Pye for £7,000. The 2nd prize shearling from R & P E Hargreaves made £700. Other good prices were obtained by the Hewgill flock with three gimmer hoggs making £4,400; £2,000 and £1,000 and the Midlock flock also realised £1800; £1600; £1400 & £1200.

The overall average for the shearlings was £1630. This was £297 up on the previous year average. I'm not sure any other breed can provide


that level of consistent pricing for quality stock. Well done everyone for getting through the snowy roads, and providing another excellent showcase of sheep and sale prices to be proud of.

Laurence Allison - Chairman

North West

What a difference a week makes!! The clocks have changed and the sun has finally started to shine. The year started with the Bluefaced Leicester female sale at Harrison and Hetherington, Carlisle. The sale saw 157 females sold and up £180 on the sale year. The champion crossing Leicester came from the Porter family with a gimmer hogg, Riddings K37. With the traditional Leicester from Dewi Williams with a ewe, Elian G116. Top price on the day was a gimmer shearling from Derek Hall, Firth making 6500 gns. All the sheep on display at the sale were real credit to our breed, and it shows what a good standard we are setting. The pre-sale show was a pleasure to watch.

The Progeny Show will be held at Penrith Show on the 28th July 2018 and I look forward to meeting up with old and new friends and hopefully we will have a good turnout of sheep.



Scotch Mules

EASY managed EASY lambed. With lambs EASY reared and EASY finished.




Photo taken by
Eilidh MacPherson

Scotch Mule Association Contact George Allan - Tel: 01290 702964 / 07840 537811
Email: scotchmule.association@yahoo.co.uk / Web: www.scotchmule.co.uk

Our North West regional meeting date will be announced shortly, and as chairman, I urge members to attend and have some input to keep us moving forward. I hope the rest of lambing goes well for everyone, and the sun stays out and I look forward to seeing you all at this year's shows and sales. **Scott Thomason - Chairman**

Northern Ireland

Since the November meeting, it has been relatively quiet in Northern Ireland. We held our female sale on the 15th January and again this was for sheep eligible for export and was a great success. A Northern Ireland record of 3000 gns was achieved by William Adams, Holmview flock for the Champion, a ewe lamb bought by Hugh Henry, Starbog flock. Out of 32 sheep sold, 19 sheep were exported.

We recently had our AGM which saw Hugh Henry, Chairman and Eoin Loughran, Vice Chairman re-elected for another term in office.

Our next event will be Balmoral Show in May where we will have a breed stand in the NSA marquee. The progeny show for 2018 will take place at Limavady Show on the 21st July.

The Association Sale dates for 2018 are: The Premier Sale is to be held at Ballymena Mart on Saturday 22nd September, and the second sale is to be held on Saturday 13th October in Armoy. Wishing everyone a successful lambing. **Hugh Henry - Chairman**

Scotland

As I sit down to write my report, I am looking out at snow again!!!! March has certainly arrived like a lion, so let's hope it's not too long before we get some heat and the grass begins to grow. I have never seen the countryside so bare.

At the in-lamb sale at Carlisle in January, there was a great turn out of sheep with Scottish Breeders again leaving their mark in the sale ring. United Auctions at Stirling held their inaugural show and sale of Bluefaced Leicester females on 24th January. This sale was well attended and I look forward to same sale next year.

The AGM was held on 6th February where Hazel Brown and Rodney Blackhall were re-elected and John Dykes proposed and seconded to the council. We have a good council covering the region.

Dates to look forward to this year are:-

Scotsheep - 30th May 2018 at Kings Arm Farm Ballantrae, Ayrshire. This is a great opportunity for us to promote our breed. Please come and visit the stand.

Royal Highland Show 21st -24th June 2018 - The Bluefaced Leicester judging starts at 9 am on the Friday morning. The members' social event starts at 5 pm in the NSA tent where it is hoped that you will come and join us. Tickets for this event will be available from the BFL stand in the NSA tent on the Thursday.

Progeny Show - 4th August 2018 at Dumfries Show - Dumfries Show is a very well supported livestock show, and I look forward to seeing a great turnout of Bluefaced Leicesters on this day.

As this is the end of my term as Chairman, I would like to thank my regional committee for their advice and support that they have given me. 2017 has probably been one of the best years for Scottish Leicester Breeders, with many Leicesters winning interbreed championships at shows and a new record price of £37,000 being paid for a lamb from A Wight - Midlock.

I would like to welcome our incoming chairman Hazel Brown from the Leadburnlea flock to her new role and wish her every success. My thanks must also go to Helen and Rachael in the office for all their help. Finally here's to a successful lambing for everyone, and a good year for the shows and sales. **Kate Smith - Chairman**

Wales

Lambing is now well under way and after having to deal with some atrocious weather conditions over the winter and early spring, hopefully everything is settling down now, and there are plenty of lambs on the ground.

The Welsh Region Annual General Meeting will be held in May, and the agenda will be posted out to all paid up members, and a notice of the date and venue will be posted on the Association website. All members are welcome to attend.



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Annual noted shows and sales of 2000 BLUEFACED LEICESTER SHEEP

CARLISLE Friday 12th October 2018 Autumn show and sale of registered rams and females Monday 22nd October 2018 Sale for all classes of rams and females Monday 21st January 2019 Show and Sale of in-lamb registered females	KIRKBY STEPHEN Saturday 6th October 2018 Show and Sale of rams and females LAZONBY Saturday 13th October 2018 Show and Sale of rams and females
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For all other up to date sales and information visit our website - harrisonandhetherington.co.uk



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harrisonandhetherington.co.uk
Borderway Mart, Carlisle CA1 2RS



The NSA Event at Malvern is to be held on Wednesday 18th July 2018. The Association will be in attendance at this event with sheep on the stand supplied by members from the Welsh Region. This is one of the major events on the calendar, and all members are welcome to come along on the day. The Association stand will also be in the NSA building during the Royal Welsh Show again this year, with refreshments available after judging for all members to attend.

The Annual Progeny Show will be held in August this year, and the date and venue will be confirmed shortly - please check the Association website for further details. Looking forward to an improvement in the weather for the Summer.

Stephen Abberley - Chairman

British Wool Update

Written by Gareth W Jones, Producer Communications Manager

As we head towards the start of the shearing season, British Wool continues to support the UK wool sector at every stage of the supply chain.

As a producer organisation working together with wool producers, shearers and industry partners, having a collective strength during these challenging times for the agricultural industry is vital in ensuring the sheep & wool sectors are better placed to face the challenges of the future.

British Wool's network of UK depots have had a strong performance over the last 12 months, all focussed on continuously striving to improve the service offered to producers, handling their wool cost effectively and efficiently, and maintaining the highest quality control standards at all times. The depot review programme has delivered a number of productivity improvements, with all depots exceeding the previous year's performance and achieving cost savings.

Promoting a high standard of wool presentation is key in maximising the value of wool to the producer. We will continue to work collaboratively with the industry, raising awareness of this through our wool handling training courses and once again this year, hosting the National Golden Fleece competition.

This nationwide competition, searching for the best fleece in the UK, is open to all producers via our depot network or by entering a fleece competition at a number of regional agricultural shows. With over 12 million fleeces being presented at British Wool depots every year, it will be a real challenge and achievement producing the winning fleece with a Bluefaced Leicester fleece winning back in 2016. If you are interested in entering, more information is available at your local depot or on the British Wool website -

www.britishwool.org.uk

A number of exciting initiatives are also taking place to engage with manufacturers, retailers and consumers on the benefits of British wool as a quality fibre. Supporting our consumer campaign is Richard Wilson,

a farmer and shearer from North Yorkshire. Richard is helping us raise awareness about our incredibly versatile fibre, which has many uses in both the fashion and home furnishing industries. This is key in increasing both interest and demand for British wool.

To keep up to date on British Wool's activity, please follow @BritishWoolFarm on social media.

To those of you participating in competitions during the summer, I wish you the best of luck and look forward to a successful show season.



BECOME THE NEXT SHEARING CHAMPION.





Matt Smith
Nine Hour Ewe World Shearing Record Holder
and British Wool training advisor

British Wool trained shearers are recognised internationally for their good quality workmanship and win many awards and accolades as a result.

That's great for the industry but even better for producers as it means their fleeces will be the best prepared and presented, helping achieve a maximum return. Whether you're a beginner, want a refresher course, or fancy becoming an advanced shearing champion, we have a training course suitable for you.

Book your place now and learn from the best. Call us on **01274 688666**
or visit our website at **britishwool.org.uk**


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Move to a Mule



✓ Too Many Mothering Problems?



Move to a Mule



✓ Too Many Feet Problems?



Move to a Mule



✓ Too Many Ewes on their backs?



Move to a Mule



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Bluefaced Leicesters - Sire of the UK Mule

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