

JULY 2014

For this year's sales, ewe lambs must be tagged with a yellow electronic tag in the left ear and a

GREEN

coloured tag in the right ear

**2014 SALE DATES:
WELSHPOOL:**

- Wednesday, 10th September (Ewes)
- Thursday, 11th September (Ewe Lambs)
- Thursday 9th October (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

BUILTH WELLS:

- Friday, 12th September (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)
- Tuesday, 14th October (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

RUTHIN:

- Saturday, 13th September (Ewes & Ewe Lambs)

Welsh Mules Sheep Breeders Association Newsletter

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2014 Sales Preparations

The 2014 sales of the association will see entries for 'Performance' Welsh Mules being accepted for the first time.

'Performance' Welsh Mules are ewe lambs that have been sired by a recorded Blue-faced Leicester Ram with an above-average performance according to Signet performance data and therefore in the top 50% of recorded rams in the year of purchase. Rams that were recorded in 2013, for example, would need to have a recorded index score of 98 and above on the Signet Blue-faced Leicester index to qualify to produce 'Performance' Welsh Mule ewe lambs.

The association will be pre-

sent at both the Royal Welsh Show and the NSA's Sheep Event in Malvern on Wednesday, 30th July this year to promote the qualities of the breed. Please call in and visit our stand. Members are always very welcome and you may have the opportunity of meeting with a potential buyer who come and view the Welsh Mule on display prepared by John and Richard Thomas, Tanhouse, Dolau.

These events will be supported by an advertising campaign in the press, both regionally and nationally with the main focus on the Farmers Weekly and Farmers Guardian that will run from early August through

to October.

The NSA Wales' 2015 Open day will be held on the farms of Geraint and Morton Powell in Kerry and the association has agreed to be a main sponsor of the event which will be an important date in the promotional calendar for next year.

The association is grateful to Geraint & Morton and the whole Powell family for agreeing to host the event and the executive committee felt that it was appropriate that it should show its appreciation by becoming one of the event's main sponsors.

Further details will be available shortly



Ewe Lamb

Competitions:

Please remember that the rules for the ewe lamb competitions changed last year. The two classes now are one for white-faced ewe lambs, the other for coloured-faced ones

Grateful if you can submit your entries by 9.00am on the day of sale.

Left: Association sale at Builth, Sept 2013

NSA 2014 Sheep Event

The National Sheep Association will be taking over the Three Counties Showground, at Malvern once more on **Wednesday 30th July** for their ever-popular bi-annual sheep event, NSA Sheep 2014.

The theme this year will be "Securing the future of the UK sheep industry"

There are even more exhibitors entered to attend NSA Sheep 2014 than the 250

that entered the 2012 event with more breed societies, trade stand and industry organisations booked in to display their wares. Visitor numbers are also expected to exceed 11,000.

Visitors can enjoy everything from the technical (workshops, demonstrations and seminars) to the useful (drop-in clinics and sheepdog sale) to the entertaining (Ready Steady Cook competition and NSA video competition).

Entry to the event is just £6 for NSA members (£10 for non-members in advance; £15 on the gate).

If you're not already a NSA member join up by calling them on 01684 892661 or visit

www.nationalsheep.org.uk.

Or you can look out for the NSA's friendly volunteers on the gate and sign on the day of the event.



There will be a free entry into a draw for a 3in1 feeder for all new members who join as well as for those existing members who refer a new member to the NSA.

NSA 2014 will be open from 9.00am and will close at 5.00pm

Sale Entry Forms

Please note that the Sale Entry Forms for the September sales need to be returned to the relevant auctioneers as soon as possible and in any case by the closing date of entry of

Monday 28th July 2013.

We strongly urge all members to submit their application by this date so that arrangements for the sale draw can be completed

on time. The draw needs to take place in the first week of August so that sale catalogues can be prepared on time. Delay can mean that late entries are not included in draws and have to be forward at the end of the sale.

You should also remember also that all ewe lambs have to carry a yellow electronic ear tag in the left ear

and a similarly numbered green management tag in the other ear.

Anyone wishing to market Performance Welsh Mule ewe lambs should add the letters PM onto both the electronic tag and the management tag.

CLOSING DATES FOR

RETURN OF SALE

ENTRY FORMS:

September Sales

Monday 28th July

October Sales

Monday 15th Sept

Inspections and Yearling Ewes

When members enter sheep for sale at association sales, they first of all sign to confirm that they accept the Conditions of Sale Entry.

One of those conditions is that its agreed that all sheep entered for sale can be inspected prior to the sale by an inspector appointed by the executive committee to ensure that standards are maintained: this has been standard practice from the start of the association.

According to those conditions, the decision of such inspectors is final. While vendors and inspectors can ask for guidance from an association referee, the last word rests with the inspectors and while that may appear unduly harsh to many,

that is a condition of sale entry that has been insisted upon since those first sales.

One other issue that has caused problems at association sales in the past is when yearlings, bought as ewe lambs at an association sale are subsequently rejected by inspectors the following year because they are not considered not true to breed type when entered for sale as yearlings.

Some yearlings will develop later that others and characteristics will come to light that would have been difficult to spot when those yearlings were ewe lambs.

Consequently, we have to

re-iterate the association's policy that some yearlings may very well have to be rejected by the inspectors as not true to type if they later develop characteristics that are not those of the Welsh Mule.

This has had to be made clear in the Conditions of Sale Entry (see condition of entry number 4) that all members agree to abide with.

We fully appreciate that this will be hard on some who have bought sheep in good faith but the association's executive committee felt that it was the only course of action that they could take in order to maintain buyer confidence.



Daisy Williams, youngest ever winner of an ewe lamb competition at an association sale. Pictured here in Welshpool last year with parents Lisa & Marcus, the Association's Field Officer

For your information - Last year's sale results

Welshpool	2013		2012	
	Nos	Av Price	Nos	Av Price
September:				
Yearlings	8033	130.69	7197	152.43
Ewe lambs	6491	97.62	6637	106.07
October:				
Yearlings	1461	110.15	1377	133.89
Ewe lambs	6019	81.98	6649	91.34
Builth Wells				
September:				
Yearlings	3280	123.88	3238	156.36
Ewe lambs	7138	95.34	7357	107.31
October:				
Yearlings:	458	125.10	270	127.81
Ewe lambs	8049	82.11	8523	92.06
Ruthin				
Yearlings	2766	108.20	2584	140.59
Ewe lambs	3188	80.39	3581	98.08



John Brereton kicks off the 2013 sales in Ruthin with a pen of yearlings from JC & M Jones, Cilgoed, Derwen, Corwen.

Ringworm in Sheep

The Welsh Mule Sheep Breeders Association's sales have been thankfully free of ringworm and it's important that the situation is maintained. However, cases do appear from time to time and we would be grateful if members maintained their customary vigilance.

Ringworm in sheep is due to skin infection by the fungus *Trichophyton verrucosum*.

Ringworm in sheep is characterised by clearly demarcated, 1 - 10 cm² areas of hair loss, covered by dry wart-like crusts on the ears, face and wool-less parts of the neck.

Affected animals do not excessively rub or scrape at the lesions. Where the disease has been seen in shearing animals, it has been characterised by raised 4 - 6 cm diameter scabs over the wool-covered parts of the body. When the matted wool covering the lesions is removed, the underlying skin appears inflamed and bleeds readily. Lesions in shearing rams have appeared about 6 weeks after shearing and in

some cases the disease has persisted for 6 months.

Ringworm can cause unpleasant skin disease in humans, so care should be taken when handling affected animals.

The treatment of ringworm outbreaks in sheep is problematic. Topical ringworm treatments may reduce the duration of lesions on the face, but appear to be ineffective for the treatment of body lesions, possibly because the exudate-matted fleece prevents contact between the drug and fungus.

Management of outbreaks of ringworm, therefore, depends on prompt recognition of the clinical signs, isolation of affected animals and treatment of troughs and barriers with a suitable disinfectant. Precautions are required at shearing to avoid spread of infection from lesions on the face to the body of sheep. Your vet can provide further advice about the diagnosis and management of ringworm in your sheep flock.

The information about ringworm has been provided by NADIS who have a very useful website on animal disease in general and sheep disease in particular: their parasite forecast for example is very useful. Their web address is

www.nadis.org.uk

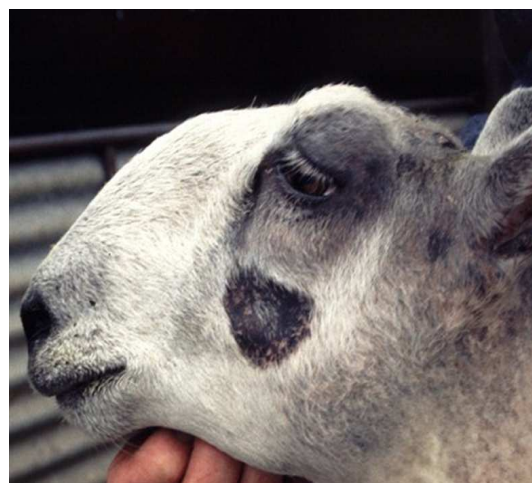


Photo by kind permission of NADIS & Phil Scott: An example of ringworm. Article based on a NADIS pamphlet



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YOUR CONTACTS WITH THE WELSH MULES

The association's Field Officer, Marcus Williams has many roles to play from promoting the Welsh Mules at shows and events to following up queries after sales. He is on hand to help both vendors and buyers and can be contacted on 07768 816919.

The association's official auctioneers can be contacted at:

For the Welshpool sale:

Welshpool Livestock Sales; Buttington Cross, Welshpool, SY21 8SR
(01938) 553438

For the Builth Wells sale:

Brightwells; 33 High Street, Builth Wells, LD2 3DL (01982) 553614

For the Ruthin sale:

Vale of Clwyd Livestock Market; Plas Glastir, Ruthin LL15 1PB(01824) 702025
Jones Peckover; 1 The Roe, St Asaph, (01745) 583260

A customer's very positive experience of the Welsh Mule

Dan Hutchings farms 130 acres at Stogumber near Taunton in Somerset. In the autumn of 2012, he bought 95 ewe lambs at the Welsh Mules' sales at Builth Wells. At scanning, just 6 were not in-lamb while 30% had twins with the rest singles. Dan returned to Builth in 2013 to buy a further 114 ewe lambs: these performed just as well if not better. 11 were not in-lamb while 50% were in-lamb with twins.

The policy is to buy ewe-lambs at the first association sale where experience has shown that it's possible

to find an excellent selection of good sized ewe lambs. Ewe-lambs are shorn the week after they arrive, allowing them to settle.

Teasers are used to encourage the sheep to come into the breeding cycle before they are turned out to Charollais rams, preferred for ease of lambing. Ewe-lambs are wintered on grass keep, returning to stubble turnips then housed two to three weeks before lambing. In Dan's opinion, Welsh Mule ewe lambs manage to give birth easily, have tremendous mothering ability and good milk yield,

In 2013, hogs and lambs were sold at local markets, but as prices were lower than anticipated, many of the couples were kept, selling the finished lambs at 11-12 weeks with the first pick coming out at 21 Kgs. In 2014, the ewe-lambs are being kept at home and the lambs will be sold finished.

Dan's view of Welsh Mule ewes is that "They grow on very well with good confirmation, are good on their feet, have good length and depth of body: a very good type of sheep which suits my needs very well."

Please note that the association has issued an extra Sale Entry Form this year for those members wishing to sell Performance Welsh Mules.

We would be grateful if members could ensure that they choose the correct form to fill.

For Yearlings and older ewes, please use the **WHITE** forms;

For Ewe Lambs, you need to use the **pale YELLOW** forms and

For Performance Mule Ewe Lambs, please use the **pale GREEN** form. Thank You.



Dan Hutchings with his Welsh Mules and their Charollais cross lambs