Hill Speckled Face

Factfile:

- 450 Welsh Hill Speckled Faced ewes half of which are bred pure
- 325 acre family holding, half of which is open heather moorland, the rest either steep banks or cold, wet and stony ground
- 21 day rotational grazing (depending on conditions) is an integral part of grassland management at Rhiwfelen
- The flock is run on a 'passive low input system' – problematic ewes are never bred pure again and are put into the commercial flock.

Wyn and Chris Owen are keen to ensure that they have a sustainable business. They are aiming to maximise the output per hectare from Rhiwfelen, and are keen to ensure that the flock is producing lambs which grow well and finish quickly off pasture. With farm incomes in decline, both have pursued other avenues through part time employment whilst maintaining the sheep numbers, performance recording has helped them to achieve both.

The Owens began recording in 2001 with just 30 ewes, taking weights at 8 weeks and at about 5 months, along with ultrasound scanning of muscle and fat depths. This allowed them to improve their female lines by working out which were performing the best and to select the most efficiently producing lines as flock replacements.

Now, as apart of the Welsh Hill Speckle Sire Reference Scheme, they record 230 ewes and feel that with every generation the performance of their flock is improving – not only in the quality of the dams, but in the deadweight of their progeny.

Ram lambs now finish far more successfully, with lambs easily making 20kg deadweight. This is seen as a huge bonus, since beforehand it had been a major target and a huge challenge to get a 15kg animal of the desired conformation on the hook, at a time when the market price is high, without requiring cake to finish.

The Owens are delighted with the way that recording has enabled them to improve the quality and outputs from their flock. They feel that one of the main benefits of the sire reference scheme is the use of a link ram across the group, allowing comparison over several flocks This has enabled the Group to generate credible and robust results and to make considerable progress. "When we started recording the aim was purely to improve the quality of our ewe flock," says Wyn. However, this has also resulted in many other spin off benefits. We have increased our liveweights by 3kg per head and are now selling all male lambs at deadweights of 15kg and over, much sooner than ever before. Whilst prior to recording, it was a rarity to be able to send any lambs away before September, the first lambs now go in August."

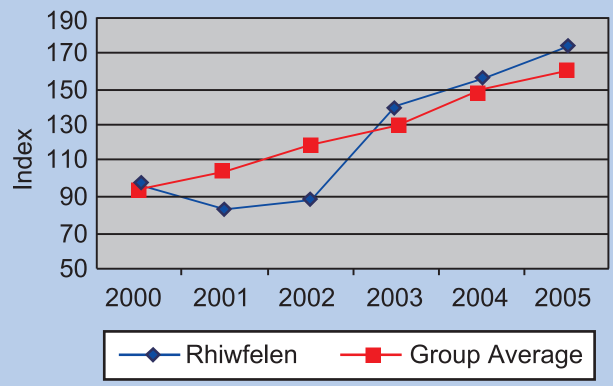
3kg extra liveweight @ £1/kg means an extra £3 per lamb as a result of using high index sires

In addition to this they are now producing rams with a high index which are also true to type and these have attracted considerable attention from other breeders.

The couple are now aiming to achieve 12 week weaning weights of over 30kg in 80 per cent of their lambs, and they are keen to try to clear as many of their lambs as possible from the farm before November.

The flock has also managed to maintain a focus on an easy care system, with all ewes lambing outdoors, and no more than 5 lambings assisted in the last 2 years.

Catapult Shepherd® is being used to help them reduce the effort of recording, enabling them to take advantage of multi-sire mating. Catapult Shepherd uses a profile of DNA markers to match lambs to their parents.



Caiff y Rhaglen Datblygu Defaid a Chig Eidion, a gaiff ei rhedeg gan Hybu Cig Cymru, ei rheoli gan Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru fel rhan o Cyswllt Ffermio.

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

November 2006

Defaid Penfrith Mynydd

Ffeil Ffeithiau:

- 450 o famogiaid Penfrith Mynydd Cymreig, a'u hanner yn cael eu magu'n bur
- fferm deuluol 325 erw, ei hanner yn rhostir grug agored a'r gweddill yn dir llethrog neu'n dir oer, gwlyb a charegog
- mae pori cylchdro 21-niwrnod (gan ddibynnu ar gyflwr y tir) yn rhan hollbwysig o reolaeth y tir glas yn Rhiwfelen
- caiff y ddiadell ei chadw ar 'system fewnbwn isel oddefol' - os yw mamog yn creu problem nid yw'n cael bridio'n bur wedyn a chaiff ei rhoi yn y ddiadell fasnachol

Mae Wyn a Chris Owen yn awyddus i wneud yn siŵr fod ganddynt fusnes cynaladwy; maent yn ceisio cael y cynnyrch yr erw gorau posibl yn Rhiwfelen ac felly maent yn awyddus i sicrhau fod y ddiadell yn cynhyrchu ŵyn sy'n tyfu'n dda ac yn pesgi'n gyflym ar borfa. Gydag incwm ffermydd yn dirywio, mae'r ddau wedi cael cyflogaeth ran-amser heb newid nifer y defaid – ac mae cofnodi perfformiad wedi eu cynorthwyoi gyflawni'r ddau beth.

Dechreuodd y teulu Owen gofnodi yn 2001 gyda 30 o famogiaid yn unig, gan gofnodi pwysau 8 wythnos ac oddeutu 5 mis, ynghyd â sganio uwchsain i ddarganfod trwch cyhyrau a braster. Golygodd hyn eu bod wedi gallu gwella llinach yr anifeiliaid benyw trwy gyfrifo pa rai oedd yn perfformio orau a'u galluogi hefyd i ddewis y llinachau mwyaf effeithlon o ran cynhyrchu i fod yn anifeiliaid cyfnewid.

Fodd bynnag, fel aelodau o Gynllun Cyfeirnod Hyrddod Defaid Penfrith Mynydd Cymru, maent yn cofnodi 230 o famogiaid ac yn teimlo bod perfformiad eu diadell yn gwella gyda phob cenhedlaeth – nid yn unig o ran ansawdd y mamau ond hefyd o ran pwysau marw eu hepil.

Mae'r ŵyn hwrdd nawr yn pesgi'n fwy llwyddiannus o lawer, gan gyrraedd 20kg yn rhwydd. Mae hyn yn cael ei ystyried yn fonws enfawr, oherwydd o'r blaen roedd yn darged pwysig ac yn her enfawr i gael anifail 15kg â'r cydffurfiad cywir ar y bach, ar adeg pan fo pris y farchnad yn uchel, heb angen dwysfwyd ar gyfer y pesgi.

Mae'r teulu Owen wrth eu bodd â'r ffordd y mae cofnodi wedi eu galluogi i wella ansawdd a chynnyrch eu diadell. Maent o'r farn taw un o brif fanteision y cynllun cyfeirnod hyrddod yw'r defnydd o hwrdd cyswllt ar draws y grŵp, fel bod modd cymharu nifer o ddiadelloedd. Mae hyn wedi galluogi'r Grŵp i gael canlyniadau cadarn a chredadwy ac i wneud cynnydd sylweddol. "Pan ddechreusom gofnodi, yr unig nod oedd gwella ansawdd ein diadell famogiaid," meddai Wyn. Fodd bynnag, mae hyn hefyd wedi golygu llawer o sgil-fanteision eraill. Rydym wedi cynyddu ein pwysau byw fesul 3kg yr anifail a bellach rydym yn gwerthu'r holl ŵyn gwryw pan fyddant yn pwyso 15kg a mwy ar y bach, yn gynt o lawer nag erioed o'r blaen. Cyn cofnodi, eithriad oedd gallu anfon unrhyw ŵyn i ffwrdd cyn mis Medi, ond nawr mae'r ŵyn cyntaf yn mynd ym mis Awst."

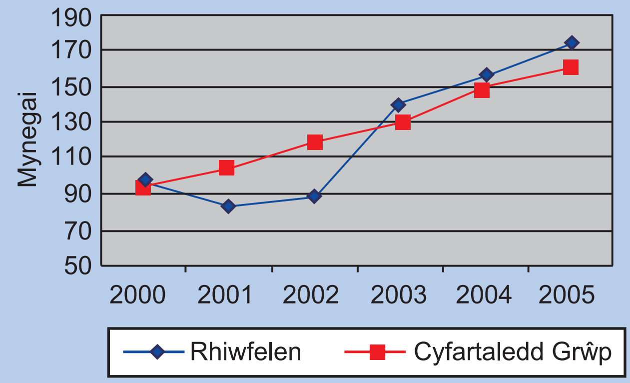
Mae 3kg o bwysau byw ychwanegol yn ôl £1/kg yn golygu £3 yr oen fel canlyniad i ddefnyddio hyrddod mynegrif uchel.

Yn ogystal â hyn maent bellach yn cynhyrchu hyrddod â mynegrif uchel sydd hefyd â gwirdeiprwydd ac mae'r rhain wedi denu cryn sylw gan fridwyr eraill.

Ar hyn o bryd mae'r pâr yn anelu at gael pwysau diddyfnu 12-wythnos o dros 30kg gan 80 y cant o'u hŵyn, ac maent yn awyddus i geisio clirio cynifer o ŵyn ag y bo modd oddi ar y fferm cyn mis Tachwedd.

Cafodd y ddiadell ei rheoli hefyd gan ganolbwyntio ar system gofal hawdd, gyda'r holl famogiaid yn wyna allan, a dim mwy na phum dafad yn ymofyn cymorth wyna yn ystod y ddwy flynedd ddiwethaf.

Defnyddir Catapult Shepherd® er mwyn hwyluso'r gwaith o gofnodi a chynorthwyo i fanteisio ar hwrdda lluosol. Mae Catapult Shepherd yn defnyddio proffil o farcwyr DNA er mwyn gallu cysylltu ŵyn â'u rheini.



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Tachwedd 2006