

Genetic Improvement



Llywio Lleyrn Group

The Llywio Lleyrn Group was set up in October 2001 by four Lleyrn sheep breeders, the main aim being to improve their already long established flocks. The main reasons for the formation of the group were the opportunity to maximise the number of sheep being recorded for Estimated Breeding Values and access to an Artificial Insemination programme using high index rams.

Each member initially selected 100 ewes for recording, of which 30 were Artificially Inseminated in the first year using a ram selected from one flock, which had the best attributes of the Lleyrn breed. This reference ram enables direct comparisons to be made between all of the flocks, allowing all of their stock to be recorded within the same Sire Reference Scheme. The members now record approximately 1060 ewes in the Llywio Lleyrn Sire Reference Scheme.

The main objectives of the group are to focus on producing good carcass and conformation and to maintain litter size. The Lleyrn ewe is prolific, regularly producing 200% lambing rates and has excellent mothering qualities with the lambs being vigorous at birth. In recent years there has been increased interest throughout the UK

in the breed with the society sales selling high numbers of sheep to pure bred and commercial markets.

Since the formation of the group each member now has annual records for their flock. Weights are recorded at 8 weeks and weights and ultrasound scanning of muscle and fat depth are recorded at 21 weeks. All of the flocks in the group participated in the Welsh Ewe Genotyping Scheme and are members of the National Scrapie Plan. Only ARR/ARR rams are put forward on the ram selection day.

Group members also have the opportunity to calculate Estimated Breeding Values for worm resistance through submission of faecal samples for worm egg burden.

What of the future of the group? The aim is to continue to record the flocks and monitor the breeding programmes closely so that they can produce the highest quality breeding stock and finished carcasses that can meet today's market requirements. The Group is looking to expand and would welcome enquiries from potential new members.

HCC supports genetic improvement through the Farming Connect Sheep and Beef Development Programme. For further details on this group, please contact HCC Industry Development team:

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