

Genetic Improvement



Nelson South Wales Mountain Breed

The Nelson South Wales Mountain Breed is involved in a positive breed improvement programme called Sire Referencing where genetics are combined with the breeders' demand for breed type.

For some years now, several members of the Society have recorded their flocks for such factors as improved **GROWTH RATE, MOTHERING ABILITY and CARCASS QUALITY**.

These records are used to create a sophisticated programme, designed to identify the very best animals bred to enable breeders to maximise output at economical costs.

Once identified, the animals are then subjected to rigorous inspections by the members for breed type and physical characteristics.

Those rams, deemed to be of the required high standard, can then be accepted as sires within the Sire Reference Scheme and can be shared by participating breeders, either by artificial insemination or through natural service. Their progeny can then be compared with those of the stock rams used by the members in their own flocks.

By choosing superior animals annually, genetic improvement is accelerated and breed type and physical characteristics are always maintained by the inspection procedure.

The star of the scheme so far is of course the record price holder ram noZ97, bred by Mike and Catherine Roberts of Penrhiwgwaith, Blackwood and sold to Dilwyn John for £3200 at the 2003 Breed sale at Penderyn.

The ram was the top stock sire in the group with an index of 175 points. His progeny, influenced by his superior records will go on to continue the improvement in other flocks throughout the breed. By using the Sire Reference Scheme, the Nelson South Wales Mountain will keep pace with other breeds.

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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