

Genetic Improvement



Penlle'r Castell Sheep Breeders Group

The Penlle'r Castell Sheep Breeders Group was formed in 2001 and comprises ten farm businesses, all of who graze hefted flocks of Welsh Mountain ewes, on adjoining commons in the locality. The group takes its name from a historic Norman motte and bailey castle, which is a central point within the commons grazed by member flocks. Penlle'r Castell is the highest altitude point of Mynydd Y Gwair at 1200 feet above sea level.

The group was formed by likeminded, full-time, neighbouring farmers, with a view to working collectively for mutual benefit, and to keep pace with an agricultural, environmental and economic climate which is moving at a fast rate. Members accept that genetic assessment and selective breeding strategies will allow participating flocks to develop in a positive manner, therefore, each member farm has selected a nucleus flock of 30-100 ewes for recording through the Sheepbreeder programme, and Sire Referencing Scheme.

Nucleus flock ewes of suitable scrapie genotype were chosen on visual attributes. Thirty of these ewes were further selected for Artificial Insemination and the remainder recorded to stock rams. As we progress it will be possible to select from recorded progeny based on their indexes as well as visual correctness.

The Group aims to achieve improvements in performance through the identification and selection of animals displaying superior traits for growth and muscle, weighted against the importance of selecting for maternal traits and abilities. All flocks are members of the National Scrapie Plan and have participated in the Ewe Genotyping Scheme, and are now benefiting from the current three year Welsh Ewe Genotyping Scheme (WEGS II).

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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