



HCC Scholarship Association

October 2009



Scholars at Henfron



New Zealand Sheep



Norwegian Farm



New Zealand Sheep

The Scholarship Programme

The past 12 months have seen three very worthy Scholars undertake their trips and bring interesting ideas back to Welsh livestock farmers. This newsletter provides a brief summary of their travels.

Also during the last year HCC has undertaken a review of the Scholarship and the processes adopted to appoint new Scholars. This was undertaken

with full support from members of the Scholarship Association and feedback of this review



2008 scholars have traveled to New Zealand (above) and Norway

was provided during the January meeting. The most im-

portant outcome is that HCC considers the Scholarship to be a very important and worthwhile activity and will continue to fully support the Livestock Scholarship. As always HCC would like to draw on your support in publicising this funding opportunity and encouraging as many people as possible to apply in the future.

Keith Williams

Keith visited New Zealand in November 2008 to learn about farming without subsidies. Keith's trip took him to a number of locations including farms, abattoirs and markets where he discovered that NZ farmers also face a number of difficulties with the weather being one of them! Many

farming businesses there are much more responsive to market forces and farmers will change their enterprises accordingly. Keith visited a farm that has changed from dairy to kiwi fruit production and he also discovered that due to the boom in the dairy sector many sheep and beef

farms were switching to dairy production.

Keith found that sheep farmers in NZ were much more likely to utilise performance recording and huge emphasis was placed on improving the genetic potential of the stock.





Sheep in Norwegian fields

Tony Davies

Tony and his wife, Angela are well known for the mutton that they produce and Tony wanted to learn more about marketing his mutton as well as adding value to it by developing new products. He chose to visit Norway as the Norwegians prefer meat from mature animals rather than the

lamb that is consumed in the UK and they are also 95% self sufficient in meat.

Tony found the farms to be much smaller than those in the UK with average flock sizes of just 67 ewes with most farmers having a secondary income. A lot of Norwegian farmers market



their own meat and focus on adding value to it by producing salami, pinnekjot (cured ribs of mutton) and fenelar (cured legs of mutton). Tony has brought plenty of ideas back from Norway and we await the outcome with interest!

Marc Jones

Marc travelled to New Zealand to investigate how they are adapting their lamb production systems to meet the changing market requirements. He found that farmers in New Zealand have had to change their farming techniques over the last decade in order to increase productivity. These changes have included developing new breeds that meet market requirements, increasing

abattoir efficiency, enhancing sheep genotype and maintaining a grass and forage based system. More farmers are utilizing composite breeds of sheep and many of the abattoirs have adopted new technologies to improve their efficiencies.

Since returning home Marc has already researched some of the ideas he saw in NZ by investigating the



potential of growing swedes to out-winter ewes on. He has found that potentially out-wintering on swedes and lambing outdoors could provide a greater gross margin than feeding silage and lambing indoors. Marc will trial this system at home and we look forward to receiving his feedback.



New Zealand Lambs grazing on chicory

New HCC Livestock Scholar appointed

Congratulations to Eurion Thomas from Aberystwyth who is the recipient of the 2009/10 HCC Livestock Scholarship. Eurion is interested to learn how farmers in New Zealand manage their forage for maximum

productivity and is keen to bring these ideas back to Wales. As a firm believer that good grassland management is the key to every profitable farm, Eurion is looking forward to seeing how grassland can be

managed effectively to ensure quality forage is available to livestock throughout the year. Eurion's trip will take place in early 2010 after which he will deliver a series of meetings to farmers across Wales.



New scholar Eurion Thomas (centre) with Siôn Aron Jones and Lynfa Davies from HCC

Next HCC Scholarship Association meeting

Tony and Angela Davies hosted a very enjoyable open day at Henfron in May where we not only learnt about mutton production but sampled it too!! The next Scholarship Association meeting will take place at Keith William's farm on

27th October 2009 at 1pm.

Keith is also a Farming Connect Red Meat Development Programme Demonstration Farm managed by HCC and this meeting will coincide with an open day that Keith is hosting.

This open day will provide an opportunity to have a look at Keith's farm and see whether his trip to New Zealand affects any of the decisions he makes on the farm. Everyone is welcome and further details will be sent out nearer the time.



Hendy Farm