

Genetic Improvement



Tregaron Sire Reference Scheme

The Tregaron Welsh Mountain breeding group came together in the autumn of 2001 following participation in the Welsh Ewe Genotyping. The members decided to co-operate to form the sire reference group. Recording and analysis in the first year was within flock and remains a qualification for new applicants to join the group. The primary objective of the group is to improve size, growth rate and carcass quality of the breed through improving muscling and conformation whilst retaining the essential breed type and characteristics to survive and thrive on the hills and uplands.

Two reference rams were selected by the members, on appearance, in the autumn of 2002 and used, through A.I., across the flocks. In the autumn of 2003 the ram with the highest index from the previous year was selected together with a fresh ram again selected on appearance. Only rams of the group 1 scrapie genotype are brought forward for selection as reference sires. Thirty ewes are bred to A.I. rams and members record at least a similar number bred to their own rams to increase the pool of rams available for selection.

Lambs are recorded as soon as possible after birth, weighed in late May and scanned for back fat and eye muscle depth in August. As rams have been used across the flocks records are analysed and indexed across all the flocks. The index ranks the breeding stock and the lambs and concentrates on improving carcass quality and maternal ability.

Rams are first used as yearlings and the first crop of yearling rams with across flock indices will be available for members to select from this autumn. They will also be able to select indexed yearling ewes to replenish their nucleus flocks.



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:

Hybu Cig Cymru
PO Box 176
Aberystwyth
SY23 2YA
01970 625 050
enquiries@hccmpw.org.uk
www.hccmpw.org.uk