

CEO UPDATE



Keeping you up to speed...

I write this report to keep you all up to speed as I embark on the road trip of all road trips next week! A month on the road from the Great Yorkshire Show and ending up at the other side of the NSA Sheep event at Malvern giving me the opportunity to meet with as many of you as possible and also giving you a chance to put any questions or queries to me should you want to.

A summary of the latest council meeting forms the part of this to try and keep you as updated as possible with what's going on in the Society. I feel that this is important as transparency in all our fields of activity helps to keep us on an even keel and hopefully heading in the right direction.

1886 HERITAGE SUFFOLK

Progressing on two fronts now one is to collect some data not on the performance but that which is vital for progression with our retail and processor partners as we build our relationships with them.

Member Scott Bourman who is happy to be involved and close to Wishaw Abattoir can supply us with Suffolk sired lambs. Pack size and weight is all important also meat yield from the heavier carcasses to back up the theory on extra weight over the 21/22 kg because of the length will confirm that cutting Suffolk sired lamb can lead to a consistent product that can be managed at cutting on fixed price packs.

A lot of factors to come together and things may need to be adjusted but basically the data on the butchery of R3L lambs that we consider essential for the progress of the heavier lambs which is key to the appeal to the commercial man.

Speaking of the Commercial side of the sheep industry we discussed some options to bring commercial breeders into the fold. Many people over the years have left the Society for various reasons and still breed very good Suffolk sheep and supply them into the market. The unregistered rings at Kelso and Bulth are two examples that spring to mind. The other unaffiliated pedigree sales again where Suffolk genetics are available. A membership scheme designed around the creation of the Suffolk Sired Lamb under the 1886 Heritage Suffolk is being worked through. Great care is being taken to ensure that the pedigree side of the Society is unaffected by this engagement with the commercial world and Council have approved this to be developed.

I am continuing to work on communications with processors and retailers on this unique and innovative approach by demonstrating the Suffolk advantage to them and taking our story well beyond the farm gate.

DNA TESTING

We are continuing to engage with organisations with our hidden treasure chest of DNA profiles to see where and what we can utilise them for. The foresight of you as members and Council at the time by going for the higher density testing is now being used in work to identify genetic markers that we can use in our breeding programme as has been seen in other livestock sectors. With some 3700 profiles available we are in an enviable place to progress the various strands of research.

NATIONAL FLOCK COMPETITION

Dennis Taylor (Ballynacannon) has been on his own “Road trip” flying round the flocks who entered the National Flock Competition thanks to all of you who entered and made yourselves available to suit Dennis’s tight schedule and carefully worked out route. The results should be announced mid-July with hopefully the presentation taking place with the overall winner at their farm, in September 2024.

SHOW SEASON

The Show season is now well underway and impressive show entries for Suffolk classes are being reported throughout the circuit. The high standard of sheep entered at Shows is a credit to all who partake, and this is being reflected in the breed and our breeders being featured throughout the press in the breed and interbreed competitions. Highly successful display at the Balmoral, Three Counties and Highland Show, with lots of interest around the ring from new breeders and interestingly from other breed breeders verifying the continued renewal of interest in the Suffolk Breed.

SOCIETY SALES

The Society sales will soon be upon us all a bit cramped up this year owing to an essential move of date for the Ballymena Premier Export sale. The uptake of the presale offer of DNA testing has been well received and taken up by breeders wishing just to check that everything is in order with their consignments. We had a large amount of these samples arrive with us after the closing date which just puts the whole thing under a bit of pressure, but we will have all the results back hopefully before the catalogues are printed.

Exhibitors are reminded that results that you receive from us through this scheme will not be entered into Grassroots and therefore Scrapie results will not appear in the catalogue unless you have tested privately through SRUC. Please use the facility under the sellers’ comments to report the results of your testing or ask the Auctioneer to announce the results at the sale.

DNA kits and Ram proforma forms will again be available at the shows and sales and we would encourage you to swab and test and register your purchases before they are used just to ensure that all is correct when it comes to registering their progeny.



NATIONAL DINNER & AWARDS

We have gone for a similar format at Shrewsbury for the National Show and sale presentation evening. Numbers are limited so please book your tickets through the office in advance. We have taken steps this year in the form of a Caterer who is known to us, and I will personally guarantee that we will not be short of food this year, and no one will go hungry! Just to help us cater for the correct numbers pre booking your tickets would be very helpful. Main and Desert, all home cooked and home-made this year guaranteed!



SUFFOLK SHEEP SOCIETY
NATIONAL SHOW & SALE
AWARDS PRESENTATION & SUPPER
Friday 26th July 2024
Market Cafe - 6:30pm
Shrewsbury Auction Centre

Smash Burger / Pulled Pork
Green Salad, Potato Salad, Pasta Salad & Slaw
Trio of Desserts

Adults - £20 No. Under 16s - £10

QUINTON CUP

If I could ask everyone, please have a final check to see if they have the Quinton Clarke Cup anywhere in their collections to let me know if it turns up it seems to have evaporated into the ether and the trail has gone cold!

NEXTGEN

Details of the National event arranged for the 7th & 8th September 2024 at Mark Priestley's Limestone Flock, Seaforde, Northern Ireland have been sent out to Branch and Club secretaries. A fun filled educational day is envisaged and is well worthy of attending. Details of the event and booking info form to be submitted by 15th July 2024 and £20 deposit paid, refundable on attendance. £50 travel support also passed by Council for anyone entering except if from N Ireland. Society members only eligible for travel grant and anyone who sends in NextGen application to join along with deposit before event.

Visit our [website](#) to book your place. Let's make this inaugural event a really good one with plenty of numbers attending. Don't forget too its open to non-Suffolk breeder sheep people to showcase what it's all about, the only way is Suffolk!

Members of Branches and clubs organising any NextGen experience days for your breeders can apply to the Society for some funding support to help with the running of such events. There is an application form to be submitted available from the office.

We have rebranded the Web site with our remodelled image for our younger members – the web site has been updated to reflect this and details of all events reports and blogs have been added so if you are running a Next Gen event however big or small please let the office know, submit a report and we can keep the content fresh and up to date. Thanks to all on the NextGen committee for their support and input into the revisit, and to council for their support for this initiative.

SHOP

We have revisited our merchandise and are now able to offer an extended range of clothing designs colours and sizes we have also added a range for our NextGen initiative and 1886 Heritage Suffolk Lamb that so many people have asked me about when I have had my shirts on! Coming to our website VERY soon you will be able to see options and shop at a time that suits you.

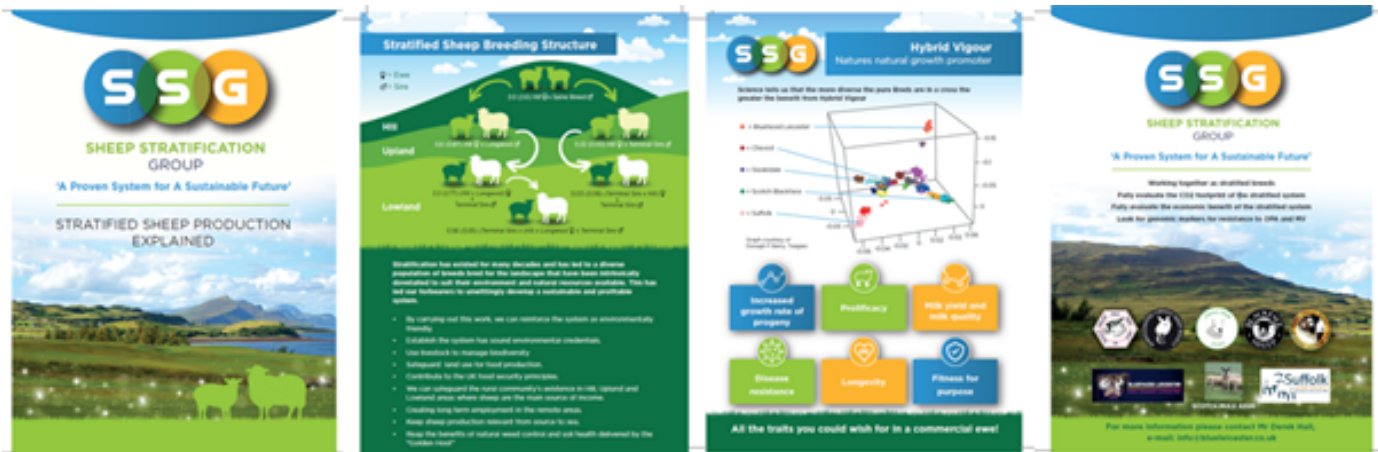
We are not quite Amazon yet, but we are a small step closer!



STRATIFIED SHEEP GROUP

I am continuing to work closely with the Stratified Sheep Group which we went live with at Scotsheep promoting the system that has been for many years a very successful and efficient way of producing lamb. Suffolk sires across any Mule is a recipe for a fast-growing lamb that meets R3L carcass quickly and efficiently maximising Hybrid vigour and having a low carbon footprint. Great to be a collaborator in the group and keep the Suffolk flag flying with the group that possibly represents 60% of the commercial sheep industry and is a great fit for the 1886 Heritage Suffolk initiative.

If you are attending the sheep event at Malvern there is a workshop at the event delivered by the group explaining more of what the group is all about. The answer to many of today's demands on the ruminant Livestock industry to reduce emissions may already be out there!



July is a whirl for me attending shows sales and events and I look forward very much to getting out and about and meeting you all at these. This is the opportunity to fly the breed flag and showcase just what we can do to help sheep farmers and the rest of the supply chain beyond the farm gate make their enterprises work for them and leave them in profit at the end of the year.

Good luck to everyone through the show and sale season and keep yourselves up to date with the Society happenings by visiting the web site on a regular basis.

Brian L. Trine