Minutes of the Maternal Sheep Development Group Meeting

Wednesday 29th August at 11am at Shantron, kindly hosted by Bobby Lennox

Present: Sam Wharry, Ian Duncan Millar, Bobby Lennox, Campbell Tweed, Ann Welsh, Alison Glasgow and Yvonne Jones

Agenda

1 Formal structure of the Maternal Sheep group

2 The role of the Development Group within Maternal Sheep

3 The Autumn Technical Meeting – Topic, revised date

4 The Website – route for enquiries for membership, sale sheep, general enquiries

5 AOB

6 Date of the next Development Group meeting

Minutes

Sam Wharry took over as acting Chairman for the Maternal Sheep Group until the March AGM after Janet Beveridge requested to stand down. Thanks were expressed for all Janet had done as Chair person and vice-chair, and all present were sorry she has stepped down. A card will be sent to Janet thanking her on behalf of the group.

1 Formal structure of the Maternal Sheep group

It was decided that, starting from the March 2013 AGM, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the group would be selected from the different breed groups, both breeds being represented. The Chairman would stand for two years before the Vice-Chair took over. Therefore, each breed group would have a two-year term of running the Maternal Sheep group. One treasurer would oversee the finances and the group would keep the Blackface Sire Reference Co bank account and company name for now, for ease of use. Each breed group would need its own Secretary, and the work for running the Maternal Sheep group and website would be shared between them. Half of the Membership fee income would go towards running and developing the group, for advertising, auditing etc and half would be paid as honararia and split equally between secretaries, no matter whether one breed group had more members than the other.

The Maternal Sheep group AGM will be held on Wednesday 13th March 2013. YJ to discuss booking a room at the SAC in Bush Estate with Jo Conington, and each breed group will meet up before the start of the AGM to hold their own meetings. [A room is now confirmed for the AGM].

2 The role of the Development Group within Maternal Sheep

The role of the Development Group is to make the decisions on running the group and arranging the two member meetings per year – the AGM in March and the Technical meeting in the Autumn.

After the March 2013 AGM it was agreed that the Development Group should consist of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the past Chairman, the two group Secretaries, the Treasurer, James Duncan Millar (as the Blackface breed representative) Alison Glasgow, representing Signet, and two additional members – ten members in all. In addition, the Chairman could invite anyone else who he/she thought could help and
support the group with current issues. These people would be part of the Group for a limited time, may vary according to subjects being discussed, and would not be part of the decision making.

3 The Autumn Technical Meeting – Topic, revised date

The Autumn Technical Meeting will be held on Thursday 29th November 2012 in Northern Ireland. Either Alistair Carson or Ronald Annett from AFBI (Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute) will speak on their research on easier care sheep systems, both hill and lowland, and the use of recording in them. Eamon Walls from Sheep Ireland will also give an update on their system, and we hope to discuss the movement of data between the systems.

A second farm visit may be possible with an overnight stay, but this will be decided once interest for it is known.

An invitation to the meeting will be extended to the new person who joins the Scottish Sheep Strategy, as Rod MacKenzie’s contract is ending soon.

4 The Website – route for enquiries for membership, sale sheep, general enquiries

The Maternal Sheep website is up and running, although there are some improvements to make. IDM is collating these and will send them to Ellen all at one time.

Some of these changes are:
- A link from sale sheep to the producer contact details
- Possibility of personalisation of the breeders map with a photograph from each breeder
- Highlighting the members selling sheep, so you don’t need to click on each member to see if sale stock is available
- A single spreadsheet of all sale sheep so direct comparisons can be made, but also to include a column showing the breeder of each sheep

IDM to ask members for any other comments or changes they have about the website, and also ask for tups for sale from those members who have not sent in details. There have been a number of enquiries for stock for sale through the website and it was felt that it is better to have stock listed, even if it is already sold when followed up by a buyer, than no stock shown.

Advertising the website to reach a wider audience was also discussed. IDM will ask Cathy Peebles whether an article could be included on the QMS/SSS websites or on the QMS page of the Scottish Farmer. AG will see whether it can be included in the SAC Beef and Sheep Notes.

There has not been much interest in members using the Cool Sheep Facebook page so far.

For website enquiries, it was agreed that membership enquiries would be forwarded to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman after the AGM, depending on the breed. Before this, IDM would answer Performance Recorded Blackface (PRB) enquiries, Ann Welsh would answer those for Performance Recorded Easycare (PRE).

Enquiries for tup sales would be pointed to the website, those for female stock would be sent to members producing that breed.

5 AOB

YJ announced that the EU project to research fertility and longevity in sheep had been rejected and would not now go ahead. Claire Morgan-Davies will be in touch if she gets further projects that we might be involved in.

6 Date of the next Development Group meeting

The date of the next Development Group meeting, for those present only, will be Friday 8th February 2013, as a teleconference. YJ to organise.

Thanks were extended to Bobby Lennox for hosting the meeting and for his generous hospitality.