Minutes of the Maternal Sheep Development Group Teleconference

Friday 8th February 2013 from 11.00am to 12.30pm

Participating: Sam Wharry (acting Chairman), Ian Duncan Millar, Bobby Lennox, Campbell Tweed, Ann Welsh, and Yvonne Jones (Secretary)

Agenda

1 The AGM, Office bearers and directors & make-up of the Development Committee

2 Tag format

3 Scanning data collection & lamb survival ebv

4 Website development, group PR and publicity

5 AOB

Minutes

1 The AGM, Office bearers and directors & make-up of the Development Committee

The Maternal Sheep group AGM will be held on Wednesday 13th March 2013 in the Board Room at the SAC, Bush Estate. It was decided to commence at 10.30am, allowing one hour for the breed groups to meet separately to elect office bearers within each group etc. The larger group will use the Board Room as their meeting place and the smaller group will use Dolly’s, the cafeteria. This will be decided on the day. The Easycare group will need to elect a Chairperson for the Maternal Sheep Group (MSG), a Secretary for the breed group and two representatives to participate in the Development Group. They will also need to decide whether the chairperson becomes a Director or whether someone else is to be nominated for the role. The Blackface group will need to elect a Vice-Chairperson for the MSG. (Whilst there are only two breed groups within the MSG, the EC Chairperson will stand for two years before the BF Vice-Chair takes over and then a new Vice-Chair will be elected from the EC group. Therefore, each breed group will have a two-year term of running the Maternal Sheep group).

The Development Group (2013-2015 breed group members in brackets) will consist of the Chairperson (EC) and Vice-Chairperson (BF), the treasurer (BF), two Secretaries (EC & BF), the past chairman (BF) and two Easycare representatives – 8 in all. In the future it should consist of three or four representatives from each breed, always including the Chairperson, treasurer and breed secretaries. Additional people can be invited for specific discussions when required, for example a representative from the SAC or Signet.

The breed groups would also need to discuss their thoughts on promoting their breed at this pre-AGM meeting.

The AGM would begin at 11.30am. Additional invited guests were discussed, and whether they should attend the AGM or arrive for the General Meeting in the afternoon. It was considered important that guests should be invited to the AGM so that they know who is involved and get an idea of what we are trying to achieve as a group. Invites to additional guests will include Kathy Peebles, Sam Boon, John Vipond, Aileen McFadzean, Robyn Hulme and Peter Baber. However, YJ will check the capacity of the Board Room first.

Janet Beveridge wishes to step down as a Director. With only one Easycare representative as a Director at present (Sandy Welsh) it was considered important that a new Director should be selected from the Easycare Group. This will probably be the chairperson unless anyone else is nominated.

The AGM should finish around midday when the group will have lunch in Dolly’s cafeteria. (YJ is to ask Jo Conington whether she can reserve tables for the group to sit at).
The **General Meeting** will start at 1pm and finish at 3pm, to allow time for those with flights to get to the airport in time.

It was agreed that it would be a good opportunity to meet the two new representatives of the Scottish Sheep Strategy and hear their views. YJ will ask Kathy Peebles if this is possible.

The meeting should include an update from Jo Conington about the lamb survival EBV. Also, there should be a discussion on the latest thoughts of tag format, and some information on the website development and PR/publicity. This should tie in with a discussion on whether we need a PR budget and whether the membership fee should be raised to cover this – IDM to mention this in his treasurer’s report.

### 2 Tag format

It appears that Egenes have not interpreted the tag format correctly. The Defra default is a 16 character string with no spaces whereas Egenes use a default with spaces.

A discussion is needed within the group to decide how we want the tag format to appear in our Signet records.

### 3 Scanning data collection & lamb survival EBV

Scanning data is not going to be required for the lamb survival EBV because Signet considers that scanning data is similar to birth data. This was considered unfortunate, as losses are always seen between scanning and birth. However, individual numbers needed to be allocated for each dead lamb at lambing time and the method needs to be clarified at the General Meeting by Jo. Also, what to do when a ewe is scanned as in-lamb and then gives birth to fewer lambs, and whether these should be recorded as dead lambs too.

### 4 Website development, group PR and publicity

The website needs continual updating to keep it fresh. IDM agreed to collate any improvements required on the website and liaise between Ellen & YJ for making these, and YJ would put up the content. However, someone is needed to write this content. AW will see if Barry Sangster is interested.

A member’s forum was discussed, instead of using email for discussions, as not everyone wants to receive the emails. This should be discussed at the AGM, to find out how the group would like to communicate regarding internal issues and also how they want to interact with the wider world. If emails are a preferred approach, then a statement would need to be included each time to allow people to opt out of receiving them. Alternatively, if a member’s forum is used, an email could be sent out saying that a discussion had started.

Apparently, the word ‘Marketing’ is not a tag word that comes up in a search for the website and IDM will follow that up with Ellen when he next makes contact.

YJ is to remind members of the website user name and password – Username *member* and Password *member2012*

Publicising the Maternal Sheep Group was also discussed. Exhibiting at a Sheep Event was not considered worthwhile as it is expensive and it allows for poor comparisons between ‘natural’ and show sheep. It may be far more effective to promote the website. The group could also be promoted at farm walks, in sheep groups
or through lamb marketing groups and through QMS, the monitor farms or in beef and sheep notes. BL could mention it at a Business Improvement Group meeting at lambing. Perhaps we could get a link to the MSG website on the Farming Forum.

Publicity can be expensive and this will be discussed at the General Meeting.

5 AOB

There was no AOB.

The teleconference finished at 12.32pm