

# Ryeland FBS Summer 2024



*Photo: Simon Archer*

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## Editor's Note

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As I type this, dare we hope that summer has at long last arrived?

I was a little stuck for a front page photo and put out a plea on Facebook. You answered the call and sent me some lovely pics. It's been difficult to choose, bearing in mind such factors as clarity and definition. I hope you approve.

Please let me have your next reports by 20 August.

Happy showing and may the weather be with you.

*Lin Whittall*

Ryeland Editor

lin.whittall@googlemail.com

### Chairman's Report

Dear Members,

I've just returned from the Royal Welsh Smallholders festival in Builth, where the weather overall was kind for both days with only one thunder storm downpour. We seem to have had relentless rain, unlike this time last year. Entries were good for both the Coloured Ryelands and Ryelands which is encouraging, let's hope all the shows follow this trend.

Since the last newsletter the RFBS Council held another council meeting in April at Malvern. The meeting covered a wide range of topics including the review of the two main society sales, the northern sale will be held again in Carlisle on the 31st of August this year, away from the rare breeds sale and moving slightly earlier in the year. The main society sale remains in Ludlow and will be held on the 18th of August. Council formally approved the increase of registration fees after careful deliberation over two council meetings, the increase was implemented on the 7th of May, giving all members a grace period of two weeks to get their registrations submitted for 2023/2024. Membership fees were also increased with this implementation occurring on the 1st of January 2025 for existing members and with immediate effect for new members. The appointment of the officials for 2024/25 was agreed, Caz Bateman remained chair, Jack Williams became vice chair, and Jill Gray was welcomed to the position of Deputy Vice Chair. I would like to thank John Donovan

(previous Vice Chair) for his support and contribution over the past few years.

In April the society held the annual AGM in Llandrindod Wells organised by the Mid, South and West Wales region, many thanks to them for the venue, catering and presentations. John Reed stepped down as President and I would like to thank him for his attendance and participation in numerous events across the country in 2023. John handed over the president badge to Robert Morgan for 2024. John and Marian THORNETT were able to attend and presented the Derwen Points Trophy to the winners for 2023 Andrew and Sian Owen.

It is great news to see that the Young Handler competition is being held again this year after the entries continue to improve year on year. It is hoped that the younger membership will participate in this again for the coming year. Keep an eye out on the RFBS website and Facebook page for updates and how to join and submit your successes.

For those who are showing throughout the summer I wish you much success, and to those who are just enjoying their sheep at home, watch out for those maggots; we have unfortunately had a number of cases with not being able to shear as yet due to the rather challenging weather.

Sadly 2024 has commenced with several society member or member's fam-

## **Council Members**

**President** - J Robert Morgan

**Vice President** - John Reed

**Chairman** - Caz Bateman

## **CRC Representative**

Caz Bateman

## **Ryeland Committee Representative**

Zoe Unwin

## **Councillors: retire 2027**

Vacant (Northern England)

Stephen Hipps (Yorkshire)

Michele Varmen (North Wales & Mercia)

Jack Williams- Vice Chair

(Hereford' & T. Marches)

Susan Quigley (Hereford' & T. Marches)

John Donovan (Mid, W. & S. Wales)

Sue McVicar (Mid, W. & S Wales)

Vacant (Eastern England)

Vacant (South East England)

Gillian Dixon (South West England)

David Mitchell (Scotland)

Chris Smyth (Scotland)

## **Regional Representatives:**

### **Retire April 2025**

Philippa Atkins (Northern England)

Jill Gray - Deputy Vice Chair

(Yorkshire)

Jane Pinches (North Wales & Mercia)

Jonathan Webb (Hereford' & T Marches)

Andy McVicar (Mid, W. & S. Wales)

Vacant (Eastern England)

Stephen Ramsden (South West England)

## **RFBS Office Hours:**

Tuesdays - Thursdays

9.30am - 5pm

ily bereavements - both the coloured Ryeland and Ryeland membership have lost well respected breeders and long standing supporters. The society is thinking of you all at these very sad times.

Let's end on a positive thought, we have all come through the winter months, and the show season is now well underway. If your stock are not quite show ready this year or you don't show, please do come to the agricultural shows across the UK and meet up with members in the show lines, don't stay at home - get out and catch up with members and have a laugh, it's the best medicine.

*Caz Bateman*  
Chair

## **Herefordshire & the Marches Regional Report.**

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I hope you have all managed to survive the wet and gloomy weather the start of 2024 brought, and you are now enjoying the lovely sight of your lambs out in the grass.

It has been a sad start to the year for the Herefordshire and Marches group, with the passing of two very long-standing and respected members within the society:

### **Grace Nugent.**



Grace sadly passed away on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Grace, alongside husband John, bred Ryelands under the Halton prefix.

## Keith 'Taff' Jones



Keith sadly passed away on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Keith, alongside wife Queenie, bred Ryelands under the Westfield prefix, and later Coloured Ryelands under the Westgate prefix.

Both won many prizes at shows and were a regular face at regional shows and events, always willing to talk and help other members. They will be greatly missed within the Herefordshire and Marches region, and we send our deepest condolences to John and Queenie.

### **Regional Events:**

By the time of publishing, our Conference/Educational Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024 at Ludlow Rugby Club would have taken place.

I would like to extend my thanks to James

and Sophie Wright, who gave up their time and came to give a veterinary talk, and to those who brought sheep and supported the event by providing a trimming demonstration.

The committee are busy planning another event for a weekend in November, so keep your eyes out for further details which will be published.

### **Regional Committee:**

There have been a number of changes to your regional committee over the last few months, and it has been a pleasure to welcome 3 new members to our committee: Elaine Parker, Margaret Bedford and Simon Ridge.

Your regional committee members are now: Dominic Dickson, Jonathan Webb, Sue Quigley, Zoe Unwin, Ann Swankie, Jack Deakins, Elaine Parker, Margaret Bedford and Simon Ridge.

If you have any suggestions for things you would like to see in the region, please do contact one of us. Or if you wish to support with any of our current events planned just let us know. We hope we will see many of you out this year, be that at local shows or regional events.

*Dominic Dickson*  
Regional Chair

## Mid, West & South Wales Regional Report

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What a beginning to the year. Rain, flooded and waterlogged fields and many having a difficult time with lambing.

This year we are planning a farm visit, with many topics and demonstrations which we feel will be of interest to members. We are in the process of finalising the day, but in the mean time **please save Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> August in your calendar**. Full details will follow and all members will be informed of the venue and what will be taking place. All members will be welcome and will be open to Ryeland and Coloured Ryeland members.

Regional members will have been sent notification of vacancies on the committee; We would ask anyone who feels that they have the time to please apply. We would encourage new members to also apply, everyone has something to offer and we are a friendly group and you would be very welcome.

If you are interested, please contact me [andrewmcvicar245@btinternet.com](mailto:andrewmcvicar245@btinternet.com) . More than happy to have a chat!

*Andy McVicar*

Regional Chair

## North Wales & Mercia Regional Report

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We have finalised plans for a workshop to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> June. It will be of interest to both new & experienced flock owners, as it will concentrate on the pre tupping period and how to get the best results at lambing time. We hope to have several vets and experienced breeders on hand to give presentations and answer your questions, and we will be using some of my own flock in the demonstrations. The topics included will be:

- Choosing the right time for lambing for your flock
- Checking your ewes (including body scoring, teeth and udders)
- Nutrition before and after tupping, including advice on bolusing
- Vaccinating against abortion
- Ways to condense the lambing period and/or get earlier lambs
- Ram health (including fertility testing demonstration)
- Ram lamb retention

The event will be held at my home - Ivy Farm, Common Lane, Snelson, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK119BJ, time 10am – 4pm. Everyone is welcome, light refreshments will be provided but bring a packed lunch. This is a free event but please book by emailing names of those attending to [michele@snelsoncolouredryelands.co.uk](mailto:michele@snelsoncolouredryelands.co.uk) and it is open to members from any region.

Looking further ahead we are making plans for our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Lamb show, which will be held at Stafford showground within the English Winter Fair on November 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>. Before then I and the rest of the Committee hope to catch up with you at some of the shows in our area, and we may also have news of another event planned for the Autumn. Any updates will be available on our website [www.ryelandnwam.org](http://www.ryelandnwam.org) as well as our regions' Facebook page.

*Michele Varmen*

Regional Chair

## Northern England Regional Report

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Greetings from the Northern Region, on writing this report spring has finally sprung after a very wet start to the year. We hope everyone has had a successful lambing time despite the weather. Since the last report we have welcomed some new members to the committee - Tom Redmayne, Alison Robinson and Rachael Ashworth.

We would like to remind everyone of our points shows this season -

- Cumberland 8th June
- Bury 30th June
- Skelton 6h July
- Penrith 20th July
- Royal Lancashire 19th - 21st July
- Dalston 10th August

Other up and coming events

- Countryfest 1st and 2nd of June
- The Cumbria Wool Gathering 22nd and 23rd June
- Carlisle show and Sale 31st August
- Butchery Demonstration at Ryecroft Rare Breeds 22nd September

We look forward to seeing everyone out and about

*Philip Holmes*

Regional Chair

## South West England Regional Report

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This is normally a quiet period, as many members are preoccupied with lambing.

Like most regions, the SW has suffered both heavy rainfall and high winds, with parts receiving a month's precipitation in a single day. This has added complications to both lambing and turning stock out and may influence the numbers entered for our three early County shows.

Although the weather has not encouraged people to get out and about, there was a good turnout to our SW Introduction to Lambing course, kindly hosted and led by Gillian Dixon. In addition to the practical side, the workshop offered lots of helpful information on the necessary equipment and the importance of record keeping.

Our Q.1 SW Regional Newsletter was published in late March, covering a range of topics. Amongst other items, were further details of Schmallenberg and Nematodirus, (both of which have been reported by SW members), and Blue Tongue. Further information on the Veterinary Attestation certificates now required by abattoirs, together with details of sheep dipping for scab, and a DIY guide to faecal egg-counts, for those who really want to get their hands dirty.

Plans for a farm walk focusing on rearing sheep on grass, a butchery demonstration, and a workshop to introduce newcomers to showing sheep have been circulated, and we await expressions of interest from members.

The first three shows with Ryeland Breed classes are the 3-day County Shows of Devon, Bath & West, and Royal Cornwall, between May 16<sup>th</sup> and June 8<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful to the Ryeland Committee, who have made a new cup available for Devon County and Royal Cornwall, to mark the champion Ryeland in each of these events. The SW one-day shows with Ryeland and Coloured Ryeland breed classes starts with Liskeard on June 13<sup>th</sup> and run through to September 7<sup>th</sup>.

There are many one day shows in which our sheep can be entered in AOB classes, and to encourage Cornish members to enter these (as well as the 3 Cornish Breed class shows) Bettina Addington-Smith has kindly sponsored the Milltown Cup, a points trophy for the highest cumulative score in nominated shows.

Finally , we are sad to record the passing of Sharon Westwood, a great personality, and a capable and enthusiastic exhibitor of Coloured Ryelands. Having achieved success in the ring with her Exmoor Horns, Sharon moved on to Coloured Ryelands and quickly established her presence – both amongst the prize-winners, and as a



friendly and helpful exhibitor. Undeterred by her progressive illness, with great determination Sharon continued to exhibit her sheep, and with the aid of her supportive family, brought new generations into the ring. We shall miss her smiles, larger than life personality, and hope her spirit lives on – not only in her flock, but through the inspiration she has given to many.

*Stephen Ramsden*  
Regional Chair

## News from Scotland

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Scottish members held a get-together at the beginning of May at Keirhead, Stirling by kind invitation of Janice Milne. The morning was given over to fleece/wool talks and demonstration. We were fortunate to have former Ryeland breeder Fiona Hipwell to talk members through what makes a good fleece and helped us understand what a judge in a wool on the hoof competition would be looking for. Attendees were then able to get 'hands on' with a couple of ewes with differing qualities of fleece with Fiona demonstrating why she would chose one over the other.

The recently formed RFBS fleece and yarn committee has Julie Comins from Aberlour as a representative from Scotland on it. Julie was unable to come to the event but she sent information about the aims of the committee which was read out.



Aberdeenshire breeder, Diana Miligan, then gave talk of her own wool 'journey' including getting her own wool processed and spun, and selling in a local outlet. She also told us the charming story of Cobweb the Coloured Ryeland and her major contribution to Diana's wool story.

We were very grateful to these two ladies for making it such an interesting and informative morning.

In the afternoon, shows, events, competitions and future direction were all discussed and it was agreed to make more use of social media to help raise the profile of Ryelands and Coloured Ryelands in Scotland.

Event - Diana Milligan, Dessland Ryelands hosted a junior show craft and handling course on June 2, to give youngsters a chance learn all about showing sheep in a young handlers class .At the end of the demo there was a handling competition for those who wanted to take part.

As well as the junior handling, Eilidh Garrett organised a demo on:

- How to prepare Ryelands for showing
- What equipment you may need in your showing kit
- Information on local shows in the area and how to enter

Along with general sheep care such as worming, condition scoring and vaccinating. A great initiative by Diana and Eilidh with support from other Scottish RFBS members.

Shows - The show season in Scotland kicked off at Ayr on May 11, the first of 10 shows in Scotland to offer Ryeland classes. Retaining the championship, making it three in a row, was Andrew Hunter Blair, winning with a gimmer.

*Susan  
Bryden*



*Above right to left: Ayr Show Champion, shearling ewe exhibited by Andrew Hunter-Blair, judge Janice Milne and David Mitchell with his lamb that took the reserve slot.*

## Yorkshire Regional Report

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The Yorkshire regional shows have opened entries and we are hoping to have a good turnout with both the Ryelands and Coloured Ryelands. It will be lovely to see familiar faces again and hopefully some new ones too.

Please note that North Yorkshire county show has been cancelled, and Tockwith has been cancelled this year too. Hoping to see them both back up and running in 2025.

It's a difficult time for shows so let's all try and support as many as we can to keep those classes going.

Good luck to anyone showing this summer, hope to see you out and about.

*The Yorkshire committee.*

## From the Vet - Worm Control and Reducing the Need For Treatment

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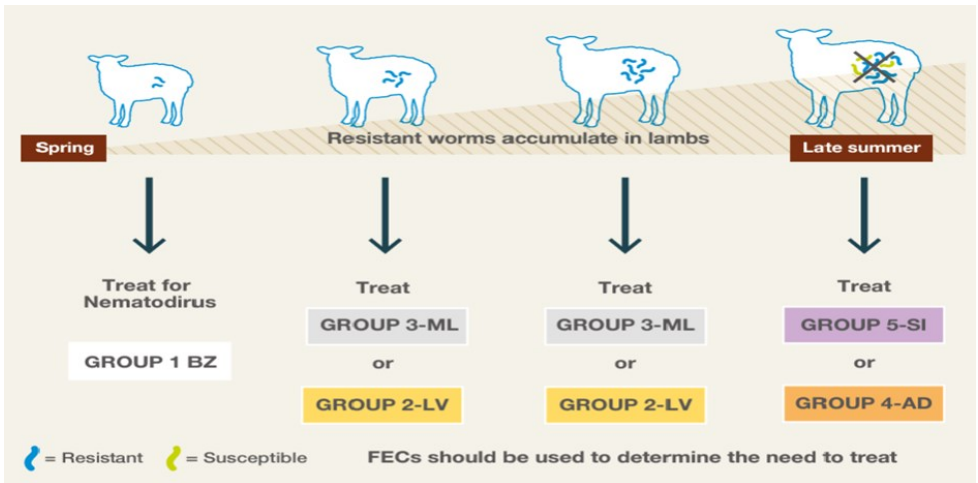
'What wormer should I use, and when should I give it?' may seem like simple questions. In truth the answer is complex and very much varies from farm to farm depending on location, age of lambs and pasture management. There is not a one size fits all answer. To complicate matters further, the approach will need to adapt each year depending on the weather and temperature, which dictate the timing of high risk periods. Many were caught out by the second rise in worm levels due to the hot weather at the end of last summer. Worm control is vital for good lamb growth rates, viability, and profitability. However, overuse of wormer will encourage the build up of anthelmintic resistance, defined as the worm's ability to survive despite dosing.

### **Use the right wormer at the right time**

For most lambs the first challenge will be from the Nematodirus worm, usually in the spring or early summer. Nematodirus typically affects lambs between 6-14 weeks old, after which most lambs will develop good immunity to this worm. When weather conditions are optimal large numbers of worm eggs hatch onto the pasture and are ingested by susceptible lambs. In this instance faecal egg counts (FECs) are not useful for monitoring because sudden illness occurs before the lamb can expel any worm eggs in their faeces. Instead, farmers are encouraged to monitor the 'Nematodirus Forecast' on the SCOPS website for the best regional predictions of when mass egg hatching will occur. This should be interpreted considering lamb age/

susceptibility and the current risk on your pasture due to its history of contamination. Group 1, white drench (Benzimidazoles) are still considered to be the most appropriate product to use when treating for Nematodirus.

Other gut worms (Teladorsagia, Trichostrongylus, Haemonchus), usually pose a threat to grazing lambs from early summer onwards, but again this varies depending



on the weather. By the time lambs have dirty bottoms growth is already compromised. Faecal egg counts can be a useful tool to help determine when worming is required. Faecal samples can be analysed by your vet practice, many commercial laboratories, or with the correct equipment it's possible to perform counts yourself at home. Faecal samples should ideally be analysed every 3-4 weeks over the grazing season to detect any rise of worm levels. It should be remembered that FEC results can be an underestimate of the actual worm burden. Individual lambs with high burdens may be missed when testing is carried out on pooled group samples. Your vet should assist in interpreting the results but less than 250 eggs per gram is usually deemed a low count. Group 2, yellow drench (Levamisole) and group 3, clear drench (Macrocytic lactones - ivermectin) should be used when required and alternated throughout the year. Most farms will have some roundworm resistance to white drench, resistance to yellow and clear wormer is less common but still increasing year on year. It is recommended to dose lambs with either group 4, orange drench or group 5, purple drench ONCE, when needed, in late summer to help reduce resistant worm numbers caused by drenching earlier in the season. Orange and purple drenches should only be used on this occasion and during quarantine of new animals so to protect their efficacy.

Regularly weighing lambs and recording average daily weight gains can also be incredibly useful. Lambs may require worming if they are not achieving sufficient dai-

ly weight gains (anecdotally <200g/day but will vary farm to farm) and there is absence of other signs of illness. Although it is time consuming, this approach allows you to target individuals who require treatment rather than relying on the blanket treatment of the whole group. This could save on wormer and reduce resistance that can be caused by worming large numbers of lambs at once.

## **Ewes**

Minimise the worming of adult ewes. Historically ewes may have been dosed once or twice yearly, at tupping and at lambing time. Current advice is if the ewe is fit, well and in good body condition then she does not require worming. Adult sheep develop immunity to worms by 12 months old (accept where there is known presence of *Haemonchus* on farm). Research has shown that this immunity may be compromised for ewes in poor body condition and under nutritional stress. These thin ewes are responsible for a significant amount of pasture contamination after lambing, whereas ewes in adequate condition will have a comparably low burden. For a targeted approach use body condition scoring to decide which ewes require worming, if any. Do not use long-acting injectable moxidectin in ewes at lambing time, as this has been shown to increase resistance.

## **Breeding and selection**

Some sheep have more natural tolerance to worms than others. Retain lambs that have grown well without needing lots of treatment. Research has shown a genetic variance for natural worm tolerance in lambs of up to 15% for strongyle worms and 17% for *Nematodirus*. Some breeds (Lley and Romney) are actively selecting for genetically worm tolerant sheep via EBVs (estimate breeding values).

## **Pasture and grazing management**

- Group lambs by age to so that FEC results are more representative for the whole group.
- Where possible, lambs should be grazed on low risk fields. This will help to reduce the need to worm. High risk pastures are those that have been grazed by lambs in the previous year. Low risk pastures are those ungrazed by sheep in the previous year, have been grazed by cattle or cut for hay. Utilizing dry ewes (in good body condition) to graze heavily contaminated pasture can help to reduce the worm egg levels. The dry ewes will consume a lot of the eggs and should be unaffected due to their immunity.
- Rotating grazing with cattle or horses can help to reduce the infectious worm burden on the pasture. Note goats and camelids share common worms with sheep so do not have this beneficial effect.
- Move lambs from a pasture when if the sward length less than 4 cm to reduce the number of infective larvae ingested from the base of the sword.

## **Worming treatment check**

A worming treatment check is useful for identifying if wormer is still working adequately on your farm. Detecting anthelmintic resistance in worms at an early stage allows farmers to maintain good worm control, reduce repeated dosing and avoid production losses associated with declining product efficacy. A 'drench test' should be performed for each type of wormer used throughout the year. This involves an initial FEC of the group (to prove the need for treatment), followed by worming, and then a second FEC test 14 days later (7 days for yellow drench). A reduction of 90% or more in the FEC shows that the wormer is still working well. If resistance is suspected an action plan should be discussed with your vet. There is funding for worming treatment checks available in England as part of the Defra Animal Health & Welfare Pathway. Details for eligibility can be found on the Defra website ( >21 sheep required).

## **Minimise Resistance**

- Leave 10-20% of fattest, well growing lambs untreated if there is need to treat a whole group.
- Appropriate treatment of new sheep during quarantine will remove any resistant worms carried by the incoming animal. New sheep should be wormed with a group 4 or 5 wormer, and then housed for 24-48 hours. Then isolate new sheep for 3-4 weeks on pastures that have recently been grazed by the rest of your flock. Perform a FEC 14 days after treatment to check that treatment has been effective.
- Ensure dosing equipment and weigh scales are calibrated and working correctly.
- Avoid underdosing. Weigh lambs/sheep prior to treatment to allow accurate dosing, or dose for the heaviest animal.
- Do not 'dose and move'. In other words, do not move sheep onto clean pasture immediately after dosing. Leave them on the current field for 4-5 days before moving them.

Further information can be found on the SCOPS and AHDB websites.

*Sophie Wright MRCVS*

## **News from the Ryeland Committee**

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There has been a pleasing number of Ryeland flock memberships this year, from both people new to the breed and as second flocks for existing RFBS members. Welcome to you all.

A quick reminder, the current members of the Ryeland Committee (RC) are:

David Duggan, Jill Gray (Vice Chair), Philippa Gray, Stephen Hipps, Matthew Pink, Zoe Unwin (Chair), Anne Watson, Jack Williams, Justine Williams (Secretary).

If you have any suggestions how the RC can best help Ryeland members please do get in touch, it would be great to hear from you.

The show season is now underway and there have been reports of increased Ryeland numbers at some of these early shows, with lovely sheep on display for the public to admire. Hopefully, this will continue throughout the summer. The shearling ewe of the year shepherd's crook award has regionally nominated qualifying shows (listed in this newsletter). Shearling ewes placed in these shows will have their ear tag numbers recorded, with accumulated points being calculated at the end of the season. Please make sure ear tag numbers are available for members who have agreed to collect them.

If you are entering a show, best of luck and have a fantastic time.

At the time of writing, the Ryeland Fibre Award is in full swing and there are just a few weeks left to enter. So far 89 samples have been received from across the country. The individual reports received from the Wool Testing Authority Ltd will be very interesting. The data collected by the laboratory will also allow the Society to gain a more detailed understanding of Ryeland fleece qualities and will be reported once completed.

Hoping you have a wonderful summer.

*The Ryeland Committee*

### **Ryeland Show Results & Photographs**

Please remember to send results and photographs for Ryeland classes to the dedicated email address. If the registration/breeding of the winner can be included too it would be helpful when the show supplement is put together. Thank you

**[ryelandresuts@gmail.com](mailto:ryelandresuts@gmail.com)**

## **Shearling Ewe of The Year**

Regionally nominated qualifying shows, where points can be collected for The Shearling Ewe of the Year Shepherd's Crook Award

- Skelton
- Penrith
- Great Yorks Show
- Ripley
- Stafford
- Derbyshire
- Tenbury
- Royal Welsh
- Aberystwyth & Ceredigion
- Royal Cornwall
- Mid Devon
- Royal Highland
- Scottish National
- Three Counties

## **Percy Wear Trophy & Richard Wear Shearling Ram of The Year**

Qualifying shows for the Percy and Richard Wear points trophies are

- Devon County
- Royal Bath and West
- Stafford County
- Royal Cornwall
- Royal Three Counties
- Cumberland
- Royal Highland
- Great Yorkshire
- Royal Welsh
- Tenbury
- Pembrokeshire

*Please note: shearling sheep and older should be registered prior to showing in Ryeland classes. Lambs should be eligible for registration.*



## Devon County Show.

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**Judge: J Robert Morgan**

### **Aged Ram**

- 1 Carla Mynott
- 2 Carla Mynott

### **Shearling Ram**

- 1 Michele Varmen
- 2 Michele Varmen
- 3 Thomas Nash

### **Shearling Ewe**

- 1 Michele Varmen
- 2 Michele Varmen
- 3 Carla Mynott

### **Group of Three**

- 1 Michele Varmen
- 2 Carla Mynott

### **Champion Male**

**Michele Varmen - Moss Rose Ding-a-Ling**

### **Champion Female**

**Michele Varmen – Moss Rose Daffodilly**

### **Breed Champion**

**Michele Varmen – Moss Rose Daffodilly**

### **Interbreed Group of Three**

**Reserve Champion – Michele Varmen**

### **Additionally**

### **Wool on the Hoof**

### **Ryeland**

1 Michele Varmen - Moss Rose Daffodilly

### **Champion Shortwool**

Michele Varmen – Moss Rose Daffodilly

### **Overall Interbreed Wool on the Hoof Champion**

Michele Varmen – Moss Rose Daffodilly



*Pictured: Judge, J Robert Morgan and Michele Varmen. Devon County Champion and Interbreed wool on the hoof champion, Moss Rose Daffodilly (left) and reserve breed champion, Moss Rose Ding a Ling.*



# 2024 SALE DATES

**17th August, McCartneys Ludlow**  
**31st August, H&H Carlisle**



## Coloured Ryeland News

Welcome to the summer edition. Its lovely to see the RFBS Facebook page listing the various successes by members at the various agricultural shows across the UK. Show season is now in full swing.

Usual plea to CR members for articles for inclusion in the newsletter. If you would like to feature in the newsletter in the future, please let me know. Are you selling your Ryeland meat from home? Have you created something with your Coloured Ryeland fleeces? ...If so, the CRC committee would love to hear from you. Send to cazef@btinternet.com

*Caz Bateman*

### It's Showtime!

If you need to check the Coloured Ryeland judges for the shows in 2024, please visit the Ryeland Flock Book Website at [Coloured Ryeland Shows 2024 | RFBS \(ryelandfbs.com\)](https://ryelandfbs.com) We will aim to keep these as up to date as possible and will also aim to notify judge changes on the RFBS website and RFBS Facebook page.

**\*\* IMPORTANT \*\***

Don't forget that the Coloured Ryeland Committee and Ryeland committee formed

**For all coloured Ryeland results please send to  
[colouredryelandresults@gmail.com](mailto:colouredryelandresults@gmail.com)**

a means of channelling show results to be included in their respective Show Supplements. There are two dedicated email addresses to send the details to:

- There is no predefined format, but ideally the results should include placings for rosettes in each class, and if possible, a count of the number entered in each class.
- Champions and Reserves for male, female, and overall where possible.
- A photograph of at least the champions and reserve if possible please, with the name of the breeder and the judge.
- Any significant CR results in the interbreed classes, Wool on the Hoof, Fleece competitions, or Young Handlers would also be appreciated.

**Congratulations to all who will be winners in the shows this year.**

**Please ensure trophies are returned in a clean, tidy condition. We ask that you take pride in the trophies that have been provided by the RFBS, so that they can continue to be used across generations.**



<b>Coloured Ryeland Committee</b>			
<b>Chairperson</b>		<b>Vice Chairman</b>	
Carol Bateman	01874 636549	Andy McVicar	01686 621977
<b>Committee Members</b>			
Steve Bradbury	01437 563312	Sue McVicar (Treasurer)	01686 621977
Joanne Fisher	07899 076651	Sian Owen	07919 030018
Paula Wills	01736 786173	Claire Weedall	07539 195580
Anne Swankie	01531 640348	Jonathan Webb	07803 498529
<b>Coloured Ryeland Newsletter Editor</b>			
Vacant			

## The Derwen Trophy

The Derwen Trophy, in honour of Marian THORNETT and all that she has done for Coloured Ryelands and the Commi□ee over many years commenced in 2023.

Marian & John THORNETT attended the RFBS AGM in Llandrindod Wells and Marian presented the trophy to the winners for 2023 which were Andrew & Sian Owen. Joint runners up were C & E Bateman and T & G Glover.



# Young Handler Competition

Building on the great success of last year's young handler competition, we are pleased to announce that the RFBS National Young Handlers Competition is back for 2024.

Please register your interest as detailed in the advert.

## 2024 RFBS Young Handlers Competition

To register email entrants name and age to:  
Justine Williams for Ryelands ([justinewilliams16@gmail.com](mailto:justinewilliams16@gmail.com))  
Ann Swankie for Coloured Ryelands ([annswankie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annswankie@yahoo.co.uk))

All Shows Qualify

Please add the subject heading "RFBS 2024 YH Entrant"



Age Groups:  
3 – 6 years  
7 – 11 years  
12 – 16 years

## Member Profile

### Siandy Coloured Ryeland Flock & Midgarth Ryeland Flock Est 2013.

We are the Owen family, farming 250 organic acres in the heart of Mid Wales, raising two free range daughters Erin & Lia alongside running our holiday cottage.

Andrew took over the running of the family farm at the age of 17. Wanting change, he cut out his dad's milking parlour and went on a path to converting the farm to organic. Roll on 20 years, the farm has changed immensely, farming Hereford beef cattle that are finished for Waitrose, 3 poultry units, four flocks of sheep (*Siandy Coloured Ryelands*, *MidGarth Ryelands*, Erin's new venture *Garth Badger Face Texels* and a commercial flock of cross breeds which we finish and sell to M&S consisting of Ryeland cross, Texel, Cheviot, poll Dorset and Suffolks) and not forgetting our 7 pet Alpacas and 2 dogs! In his spare time, Andrew is sales rep for Hurrell McClean Seeds based in Yorkshire alongside running his grass seeding and land management contracting business. One of our greatest achievements on the farm was building the first ever static Soil Association hen shed in the country supplying Waitrose's Duchy range (which we now have 2 of) and having a chick rearing facility on site allowing us to keep all in house, and of course growing our flock of Coloured Ryeland and Ryeland sheep over the past 11 years from a flock of 4 in 2013 to now loosing count. When we do have half a day off from the zoo, you'll find us all sheep showing.

- ***How the pedigree flock started:***

After marrying, Andrew was keen for me to have my own interest in the farm - so a very excited me in 2013 set off to the Spring Festival in Builth to choose a breed of sheep for myself. I instantly fell for the Ryeland breed and lucky for me, our neighbours Andy & Sue McVicar had stock for sale and that's where it all began, three Ryeland ewes and one Coloured Ryeland ewe later! Andy & Sue kindly invited me along to Llyswen show with them, where I had a taster as to what show day entailed. I was instantly hooked and there was no turning back!

- ***The Flocks:***

We currently have just over 100 registered pedigree Coloured Ryeland breeding ewes and around 50 Ryelands. Running the two pedigree flocks alongside the main commercial flock means any ewe or lamb that isn't show potential will either go in the meat chain or will slot into Andrew's commercial flock. As an organic farm, we don't believe in feeding concentrate feed as the Ryeland breed are perfect grass grazers and are best described as the Hereford Cattle of the sheep world, converting grass forage extremely well. All lambs on the farm are finished on re-seeded high protein leys.

- ***Lambing:***

Lambing usually takes place here in March but on occasions when our laying sheds are on turnaround, or our chick shed has a new delivery we must adjust to suit. No sponge use is allowed for organic and over the years we've found the ewes naturally cycle to lamb end of February and into March. All the ewes on the farm are out until a week before they are due (weather permitting). They then have access to the shed and yard until they lamb. Once lambed our ewes and lambs are turned back out with a bit of luck on to fresh spring grass.

- ***Grassland management:***

Being organic we do not rely on any fertilisers, instead on nitrogen fixing legumes in our leys and forage crops, having clovers, lucerne, peas, and vetches in them. Crop rotation and grazing management is key for us.

- ***Shearing:***

Our shearing calendar starts in March with our yearling show team, followed by tailing early May and shearing our aged ewe show team. The remainder of the flock is sheared early June and all the flock again mid-September before winter and tupping.

- ***Terminal Sire:***

For many years we've bred and used Ryeland rams as terminal sires for our commercial flock and sold many onto other commercial farms with great success. Using the Ryeland breed as a sire for commercial systems is an area, were keen on promoting after seeing the results first hand ourselves, lambs that convert forage extremely well resulting in great live weight gains making them more financially viable by getting them to the market earlier. What a great selling point we as breeders have to take this further!

- ***The Future:***

With everything stacked against agriculture in general, we must all try and remain positive in the times ahead, ensuring we all check in on each other even when everything seems well on the outside. Here on the farm, we will continue with our grass-based system that has worked for us for the last 20 years, we look forward to seeing Erin progress with her love for showing and all things sheep and hopefully Lia



too in the next couple of years. So, here's to another 10 years of Ryelands taking over the farm here! (I may need to hide a few from Andrew along the way!)

Wishing everyone a successful 2024 showing season.





## **Taking My Sheep to School, by Alice.**

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Hi, my name is Alice and I am 11 years old.

I live on a farm. I am in year 6 at Crayke Primary School.

I brought my 3 week old lambs and a ewe into school. The two white lambs are called Emily and Esme and my ewe is called Ava.


I took my sheep into school because we were doing a science day and the theme was to do with time.

I brought the sheep in to show the sheep growing and how a small lamb will eventually grow into a ewe.

I answered some questions from the children.



All of the children really enjoyed it and I did too.



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*Ryelands*



NORTH YORKSHIRE

VICTORIA UNSWORTH

MOBILE 07743 386309



# 2024 SALE DATES

**17th August, McCartneys Ludlow**  
**31st August, H&H Carlisle**

