

**Shearwell
Data**

Livestock Systems

Working to help the livestock farmer

LIVESTOCK NEWS



**Prize Draw - Win a
Pyon Heatwave
Milk Warmer**

**Whispering
Cedars
Ranch, Canada**

**COP26 &
levy vote
impact**

**Balancing
farm, family and
environment in NZ**

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Welcome to the third edition of Shearwell Data's Livestock News. I do hope you find it interesting, especially the articles from a range of industry experts from at home and overseas who are either dedicated industry representatives or farming in their own right.

I must thank Julie Edwards, our editor and Diana Murphy, our Marketing Manager, who have as always, put a huge amount of effort into producing this edition.

I am just back from the hugely successful Farmers Guardian British Farming Awards where you will be pleased to know Chris Dodds, Executive Secretary of the Livestock Auctioneers Association (LAA) and one of our regular contributors, won the Lifetime Achievement Award. We are so lucky to have people like Chris representing our industry on so many fronts, especially so now that we are beginning to see the effects of Brexit and Free Trade Agreements.

I was also involved with the judging of the Marts the Heart Awards. I was not only impressed by the calibre of entrants but the fact that they all acknowledged the important role markets play in recognising the need to look after farmers' health and mental wellbeing.

At a time when prices are good (or where they should be!), one wonders how long it will last. The future is difficult to read but threats of fertiliser prices at £700 per tonne does

indicate a challenging time ahead. We will be keeping our store cattle through until early May and finishing as many lambs as possible on the kale which we have under sown with a good clover grass ley mix.

Our IT team have been working hard on the next generation of Stock Recorder (page 19). It has been quite a challenge to put twenty years of product development into just a few months. We thank those customers for bearing with us whilst this vital work was undertaken. Once again Shearwell Data is leading the field in data collection and analysis.

At Shearwell Data we are very lucky to have a super workforce, dedicated to providing you with consistently good products and excellent customer service. Sadly, we are one less, due to a tragic car accident. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Timmy Gill who worked for us for eight and a half years as a Shift Supervisor. Timmy would always go that extra mile to make sure customers received their tags on time. He would also be the one to care for others. He will be sadly missed. Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

Richard Webber FRAgS Director, Shearwell Data Ltd



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Welcome to the Autumn 2021 edition of Shearwell Data's Livestock News. What a year it has been!

As ever a big thank you to you our customers for continuing to be so supportive of the business. Shearwell representatives have at last managed to attend a number of shows and events around the country this autumn. As useful as Teams and Zoom meetings have been, seeing and meeting people face to face is so much better!

The R&D team at Shearwell has been busy developing new products this year including the ShearWeigh Weigh Head and load bars and the Metal Cattle EID tag. The feedback from customers about these products has been very positive.

In this edition we hear from the Duckworths, farming in South Otago, New Zealand and the Greirs, who are based in Alberta, Canada. Both with big farming aspirations for the future.

We are very grateful to our industry experts including Chris Dodds, Executive Secretary of LAA; Norman Bagley, Head of Policy at AIMS; Phil Stocker, NSA Chairman; David Siddle, Director Andersons Northern Ltd; Alistair Mackintosh, Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Chairman; Scott Donaldson, Managing Director Harrison & Hetherington; Tom Dracup, NFU Livestock Adviser and Professor John Wibberley – all of whom have shared some incredible insight into the livestock sector. We are incredibly grateful to them!

As ever, we hope you enjoy the read!

Best wishes,
Julie

Contact the team: 01643 841611

Full range online: www.shearwell.co.uk



Our new look website is easier to navigate, especially when you are busy and you just want to order some new tags or products from our online shop. Or you may just want to find out more about a particular product - we've included more videos, so that you can see our products in action.



Wherever you see a 'QR' code you can scan it with a phone or tablet, to take you directly to a web page or video.



Front cover image - Shearwell's own cattle

Image foot page 3 - Webber family - left to right - Emma Thorne, Carlyne, Richard, James and Sam Webber

Images page 5 - L-R: Rep James at Westmorland show stand, Welsh mule sale, Welsh rep's own dairy calves, Calf with Combi and Metal EID tags, Rep Liz at 'Putting Ewe First', Readers get younger!, Welsh valley, Great from Grass at Fern Farm, Dairy cow, Single and pair of Shetland sheep on the Isle of Shetland, Rainbow at Shearwell.

To advertise or appear in our next edition, please email: newsletter@shearwell.co.uk
Editor: Julie Edwards. Design and Content: Diana Murphy

If you would rather not receive Livestock News in the post, then please contact us stating your account number.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Chris Dodds, Executive Secretary of the Livestock Auctioneers Association (LAA) was awarded the Mart's the Heart Auctioneer Lifetime Achievement Award 2021 at the recent British Farming Awards.

Chris is a very worthy recipient of this award, which recognises his tireless work to represent and support the auctioneering firms that run the livestock auction markets in England and Wales and the wider red-meat sector at Governmental, industry and public level.

Chris has been instrumental in the LAA's concerted efforts during the Coronavirus pandemic, keeping livestock markets open and supporting their essential role within the food supply chain.

Chris has been developing the role of the LAA since his appointment in 2002, helping to rejuvenate the industry after the FMD outbreak of 2001. Through his leadership, the LAA robustly supports the role of its members, and the economic and social contribution livestock markets play within their communities across England and Wales.

Congratulations Chris!



Prize Draw Winner



Congratulations to Robert Halcrow from Shetland!



Robert Halcrow from Shetland was the lucky winner of our ShearWeigh Weigh Head and ShearWeigh sheep Load Bars.

Jane Thomson our representative for the North of Scotland delivered the prize. Robert farms about 70 acres in-by plus common grazing land, with around 180 ewes, 40% of which are pure Shetland. Robert lambs indoors in late April (to ensure the availability of grass). The pure-breds are kept for replacements, with the remainder being sold as store lambs – destined for mainland Scotland or the north of England. Mr Halcrow is very much looking forward to using the ShearWeigh Weigh Head and Load Bars to monitor performance and weight gains of his flock.

PROUD TO SUPPORT UK LIVESTOCK FARMERS

Alongside Shearwell's commitment to provide high standards of customer service for our customers, we are dedicated to championing livestock farming by supporting and sponsoring awards and initiatives that promote the great work being undertaken by UK Farmers.

Shearwell Data Ltd is a proud sponsor of The Farmers Weekly Award for Sheep Farmer of the Year. The award recognises sheep farming enterprises that are progressive in their thinking, have a clear commercial focus, are continuously looking to improve the genetics of the flock and utilise data to measure and manage their sheep farming businesses.

Congratulations to this year's winner: Tim White a first-generation farmer, who helped pioneer the development of the Exlana, a composite based on 14 breeds of sheep. Tim added: "I count farming without subsidy as one of my achievements. I have an efficient business that is set to gain from the industry reduction in BPS because it will mean more opportunities." Tim was also awarded Farmers Weekly Farm Innovator of the year award.

Shearwell Data Ltd is delighted to be continuing its support (alongside the LAA) of the Mart's The Heart Awards. Livestock Markets are an integral part of the livestock farming community. Not only are livestock markets a place of business but also a space where farmers can seek advice and catch up with friends. Livestock markets and the live sale rings are key to a buoyant and competitive livestock farming sector and the future of the UK red meat sector.

Congratulations to this year's winners. Lifetime Achievement - Chris Dodds. Auction Mart of the Year - Gisburn Auction Mart. Auction Cafe of the Year - Dot's Cafe, Darlington Farmers Auction Mart.

Transition is a UK wide community of farmers, industry stakeholders and influencers working together to secure a sustainable future for farm businesses. Alongside food production, it is key that UK Farmers focus on biodiversity, soil health, air and water quality and storing carbon to reduce the impact of climate change. We can achieve and secure a sustainable and thriving future for UK agriculture if we work together. This project is a positive step and Shearwell Data is proud to be working with other dynamic and forward-thinking businesses on this goal.

Shearwell Data Ltd is delighted to sponsor the South West Farmer Awards, Family Run Farm of the year. This award recognises the families who are at the heart of farming around the region. The winning entry will reflect the ability to work as a team and adapt to changes, in order to maintain a sustainable business.

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Exmoor Rural Health Hub

The Exmoor Rural Health Hub has been set up to provide health checks and mental wellbeing support to those living and working in rural areas.

Farmers and agricultural workers are now able to access free, confidential health checks without the need to book appointments.

The initiative is being supported and run by the NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning group and NHS Somerset Foundation Trust, with sponsorship support from the NFU Mutual, Shearwell Data Ltd, Exmoor Farmers Chartered Surveyors and Avon & Somerset Constabulary.

The health checks will be carried out by fully qualified NHS nurses and will include:

- Blood pressure measurement
- Cholesterol test
- Blood glucose test
- Height and weight
- General lifestyle advice on alcohol consumption, smoking, diet and exercise

More information about dates of forthcoming clinics can be found by visiting www.erhh.co.uk, calling 03000 111 999 or email: info@erhh.co.uk



KEEPING CONSUMERS AT OUR CORE



If talk of trade deals has taught us anything, it's that consumers, as well as farmers, care deeply about food standards. It would be unrealistic to expect every shopper to adopt a 'think before you buy' attitude. The chlorine-washed chicken and hormone-treated beef headlines went a long way to increase awareness of how the same product can be produced in very different ways.

From my point of view, this message has to stay front and centre. British food and farming standards must be upheld. It's required by shoppers, and crucially it ensures that the food is produced safely and responsibly. In my role as Red Tractor Beef and Lamb Chairman, I will add my weight to keeping this a priority.

We have a lot to be proud about, and a lot of work to do, to keep reminding consumers and customers of that in the future. Red Tractor stands for food that's traceable, safe and has been farmed with care, as well as supporting the iconic British landscape, jobs, and the rural communities we care so much about.

Our government's determination to sign a free-trade deal with Australia received widespread condemnation from a farming industry united in fury over the proposals. Understandably so, but this will just be the start. Many deals will be brought to the table in the coming months and years.

Founded more than 20 years ago and covering 75% of UK agriculture, Red Tractor is uniquely positioned to ensure

that whenever you buy a product with the Red Tractor logo, you can trust it. Working closely with animal welfare experts, vets, agronomists and the entire supply chain, Red Tractor has become the most trusted assurance scheme in the UK. When surveyed, 76% of shoppers were aware of the logo, seeing it as an independent source they can trust. That's equivalent to 15.5 million shoppers.

The possibility that trade deals could undermine the solid foundation of trust we've worked hard to earn from consumers is galling. We don't know how products will be controlled at our borders, but looking at the situation with Europe following Brexit, work still needs to be done.

Right now, it appears as though most imports from Europe are being accepted, whereas the Europeans are being quite strict about what they do and do not allow through. Until the UK government puts enough people in place to do all the essential checks and balances there will be some serious challenges to making sure that everything arriving on our shores meets our high standards.

We know there will be discussions about equivalence standards and that we face serious competition from foreign markets. However, I am confident that none have what we have – a whole chain assurance scheme that ensures traceability from farm to fork.

During the next 18 months of my tenure, I'd like to see farmers, underpinned by Red Tractor standards, drive their businesses forwards, looking at the opportunities the new era of environmental stewardship and changing market will undoubtedly bring.

Farmers will need to rethink their day-to-day operations to take into account their carbon footprint and emissions, but they are in a strong position to innovate and utilise their assets to do so.

Which brings me back to the point I made at the beginning; Red Tractor standards have to be a vehicle to highlight how good our product is, and take the public with us. The steps Red Tractor is taking to eliminate practices which could damage the industry's reputation will help with that. These include not permitting tethered housing systems in our sector and eliminating routine euthanasia in the dairy sector are good examples.

Making sure the consumer understands our core values is as important today as it will ever be.

Alistair Mackintosh Red Tractor

Exmoor Farmers Livestock Auctions Ltd.

Livestock Auctions held at Cutcombe & Blackmoor Gate

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LEGAL FARMING STANDARDS COMPARED			
The Red Tractor logo means food can be traced back to British farms and produced to standards you can trust.			
FARM STANDARDS	Australia	UK	
HORMONE-FED BEEF	Legal	Banned	
HOT BRANDING	Legal	Banned	
SOW STALLS	Legal	Banned	
MANAGEMENT OF SOILED WOOL	Mulesing - cutting skin away (Only Victoria state requires pain relief)	Bagging - trimming wool only to prevent soiling	
PARAQUAT (WEED KILLER)	Legal	Banned	toxic to animals and humans
SLAUGHTERHOUSE CCTV	Not required	Mandatory	
TRANSPORT TIMES	Up to 24 hours	Up to 8 hours on conventional transport	

Whispering Cedars Ranch

Whispering Cedars Ranch was established out of love for the land and a dream that as we grew a ranch, we would also grow a family. Janna and Ryan have built their operation through hard work and perseverance over the last decade and have increased their flock to over 400 pure bred Rideau Arcott ewes.

‘Established out of love for the land and a dream’

The Arcott breed, an acronym for Animal Research Centre in Ottawa, was developed over 30 years, starting in 1958, by Agriculture Canada at the Federal Government Research Station. The breed, consisting of mainly Finnish Landrace, Suffolk and East Friesian breeds was released to Canadian farms in 1989. The original purpose of the Rideau Arcott program was to produce a maternal breed for crossbreeding that would offer ewes with high fertility, good milking characteristics, good body conformation and growth rate. As a result, the breed features very high prolificacy, with ewe lambs reaching sexual maturity at seven to eight months and lambing at one year.

Whispering Cedars Ranch practices regenerative grazing and rotates the sheep over almost 100 acres of native, tame,

and forested paddocks. We are working with different solar owners to establish a vegetation management relationship where the sheep can assist in controlling weeds and building soil in a symbiotic relationship with renewable energy.

GenOvis is a Canadian sheep genetic evaluation program utilized by Whispering Cedars Ranch in collaboration with the fantastic team at the Centre d'expertise en production ovine du Québec (CEPOQ). The program has made it possible to effectively evaluate the genetic value of our animals based on important economic traits as expressed by relatives and other animals within the Rideau Arcott breed.

We utilize FarmWorks by Shearwell Data with a Psion Workabout and technical support from Ronald den Broeder at Erona Farms. The software compatibility with this genetic evaluation program has allowed us to efficiently and quickly manage our data and cut down on duplication of records when submitting data for other reporting purposes. Evaluating genetics and utilizing reproduction technologies excites us, and genetic evaluation has assisted us with identifying our top replacements as well as new genetic lines available in Canada.

Sheep farming in Canada is performed differently across the country, depending on climate and feed availability. Our ranch has started the transition to an accelerated model,

which means some of our ewes will lamb up to 3 times in two years. Our ewes are maintained on pasture during the grazing season and brought back to the main yard to spend the winter in slatted pens. These pens offer our ewes protection from the wind, snow, and frigid temperatures (down to -40C) we experience through the winter on the prairies. We use synchronization and ultrasound scanning to verify ewes with lambs. Because we have this detailed understanding of projected lambing, we run groups of 60 ewes through a small lambing barn to provide additional oversight and protection from the elements. Ewes that lamb are given twenty-four hours in claiming pens, and the entire group is moved through and out of the barn in as little as a week, with the next group soon following.

‘Whispering Cedars Ranch practices regenerative grazing’

Lambs are weaned early (approximately 6-7 weeks of age). They are started and finished on a grain ration consisting of whole barley and a pelleted protein supplement and access to forage (alfalfa hay). All sheep have oversight of a large pack of livestock guardian dogs (LGD's). Alberta sees some significant problems with predation (particularly coyotes in our area), and these LGD's bond and live with the sheep. There are many vital features we like about the FarmWorks software. For example, creating management groups allows us to manage groups of ewes based on the stage of production and groups of lambs, allowing for easy export to GenOvis. Management groups also allow us to create drafting groups, when used in combination with our handling

system, making quick work of sorting large groups of ewes or lambs.

The many reports that FarmWorks can generate are also beneficial. We particularly like the weight reports (including ADGs), EID reports, and transport certificates for the shipping of lambs. Because we lamb smaller groups of ewes consistently throughout the year, we rely on the ability to predict average daily gains for shipping groups of lambs. In addition, the Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) became mandatory in 2004, and one of the approved tags is Shearwell's SET RFID tags. This RFID technology helps reduce manual input and improve data accuracy.

As we grow our flock, we look forward to providing producers with quality replacement breeding stock. We want to share this Canadian breed and recently collaborated with our flock veterinarian to collect, store, and market semen internationally. In addition to the farm, our team is developing an Agri-tourism enterprise to reconnect tourists and local families to the land.

Aside from off-farm employment, we are shepherds, stewards of the land, and parents to our two young boys. We love involving them on the farm and teaching them all about animal husbandry, caring for and giving back to the land, all while getting their hands dirty. In addition, improved technology, including the FarmWorks program, allows for improved time management, giving us more time for family.

Ryan & Janna Greir

Owners of Whispering Cedars Ranch, Canada



Turbo Tagger

The future of high welfare high throughput tagging



"The Turbo Tagger makes tagging a one person job. One of the best things that has happened to tagging"



A revolutionary way to tag your sheep, designed for the market leading SET Tag



Shearwell Data

Livestock Systems

Heatwave Milk Warmer

Shearwell Data has extended its livestock husbandry range to include a number of award winning products from Pyon Products.

The award winning Heatwave Milk Warmer has been designed to deliver economic value and reduce labour when it comes to feeding milk to youngstock. The Heatwave Milk Warmer uses heat exchange technology to heat milk on demand and enables farmers to prepare a bulk reservoir of cold milk once daily and heat the milk immediately prior to delivery to the teat, allowing the animal to access warm milk on multiple occasions during the day.



The versatile system is suitable for calves, lambs and goat kids. It feeds up to 30 calves or 50 lambs/goats and is suitable for powdered or whole milk.

The Heatwave milk warmer is easy to set up and use and enables livestock farmers to realise their animals' potential by enabling warm milk to be fed little and often, which in turn increases higher daily live weight gains and produces healthy stock.

Store & Thaw

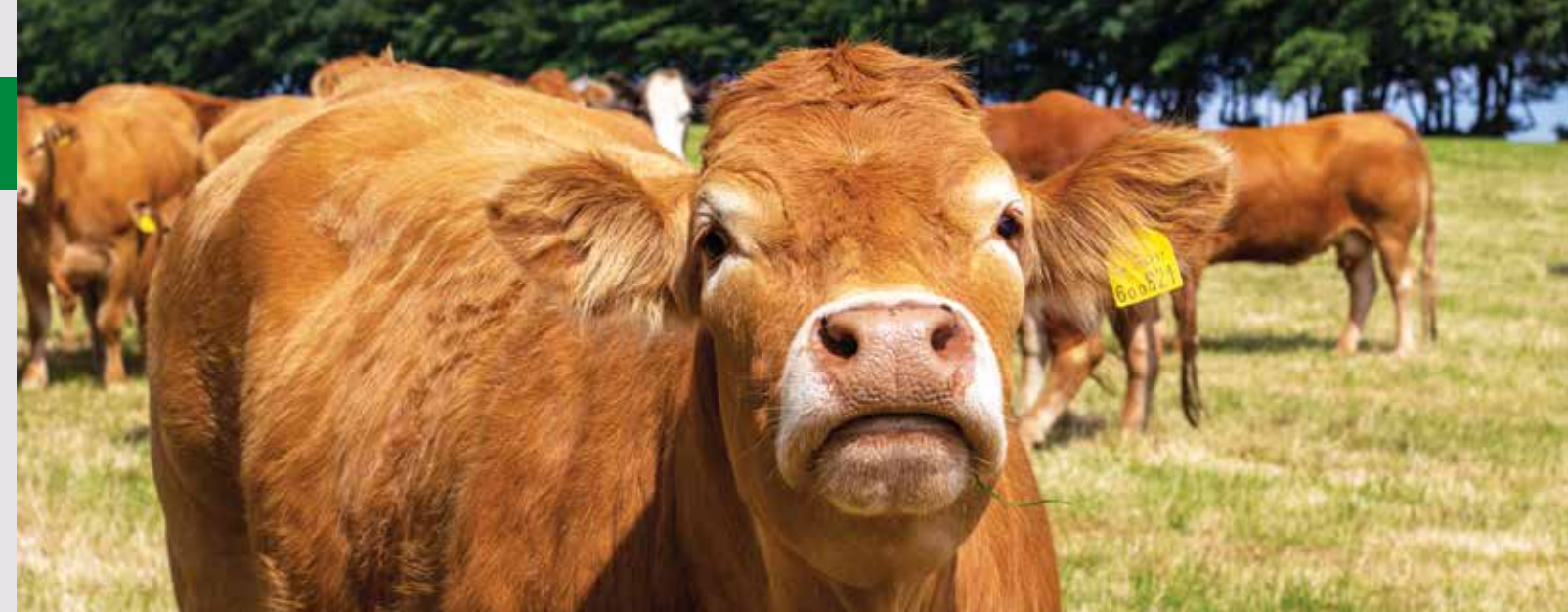
The Store & Thaw was awarded the RABDF Machinery and Equipment award for delivering the most economic value to the livestock sector. It is made in the UK and has a three year warranty and comprises a Store & Thaw colostrum system, which is made up of a storage kit and a thawing water bath with digital thermostat.

The thawing system defrosts colostrum rapidly and can also be used for pasteurisation if required. Colostrum is "liquid gold" and key to the successful growth and development of all ruminants. It is therefore imperative that colostrum is collected, stored and thawed in optimum conditions – the Store & Thaw allows for colostrum to be tested and frozen for future use.



The Starter kit: This contains a refractometer for testing colostrum quality, a filling station, jug and funnel with 40 bags. A thermometer is also included to check the feeding temperature. The thawing and pasteurising tank: The portable heater/stirrer unit clamps to the side and the insulated lid prevents heat escaping. It can be set at a maximum of 50°C for warming colostrum or 60°C for 60 minutes for pasteurisation.

For more details visit our website or speak to your local Shearwell representative.



Shearwell Data

Livestock Systems

PRODUCTS

Working to help the livestock farmer

EID Tags

EID Readers

Software

Handling



SHEARWELL DATA - SUPPORTING FARMERS WITH OUTSTANDING PRODUCTS & SERVICE

We provide a complete system to help you benefit from your data

EID Tags

EID Readers

Software

Handling



for cattle and sheep

PIG TAGS

Combi Pig and Button



Tamp2 - Steel

For cattle (secondary only)



Quantity

25 to 49

50 to 100

Runs

£0.55

£0.45

KL3 - Steel

For sheep, goats & pigs



Quantity

1 to 9

10 to 100

Runs

£2.20

£0.33

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"I wanted to thank you for the free replacement tag scheme which you run so well. It is a really helpful system and one that makes you easily the best choice when I buy my tags, every time.

Replacing tags is not a pleasant or enjoyable job but because of you it is less arduous and easier to manage and stay on top of. I feel that you are on my side, that is on the side of the farmer and at a time when we need to fulfil our commitment to proper tracing you make such a huge difference.

Thank You for being there for us and for delivering a great product."

Mr Wiggin, Herefordshire

FREE
REPLACEMENT
CATTLE & SHEEP TAGS
FOR LIFE - EVEN WHEN SOLD

Conditions apply - call for details

VISUAL CATTLE TAGS

Combi® Cattle Tags

Large and Medium (primary and secondary),
Small Flag and Button (secondary)

Colours available for SECONDARY tags



£1.12



£1.05



77p



92p

Free applicator with first order - see website or call for T's & C's

Tags with management space available

TST TAGS

Tissue Sampling Tag -
single BVD or DNA
tag without test

£1.95

TST/BVD Flag or Button
DNA tags also available



From
£5.05
pair of tags
& test



From
£5.05
pair of tags
& test



£2.09

£2.09

Combi E30® Flag or Button
(secondary only)



£2.09

Priced Tags Shown at Actual Size
Please call to order
or ask for tag
samples

Prices correct October 2021. All prices exclude VAT and delivery charges.

VISUAL & ELECTRONIC SHEEP TAGS

Excellent
Retention
Britain's Favourite
Sheep Tag

SET Tags

- One Design
- Two Functions



TAGS IN STRIPS

TAGS IN DRUMS



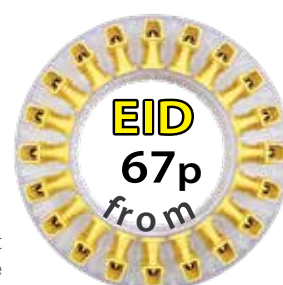
Breeding Pairs From 80p

EID Slaughter From 62p

Turb
Tagger



Tagger
£60



Drums not
actual size

SET Tags - tiered pricing applies to both breeding pairs and slaughter tags

SET Tag colours available (Reserved sheep tag colours:
Grey - NEMSA Mules only, Red - replacement tags only and Black - bolus only).



Supplied in strips of 10 SET Tags

In Scotland and N. Ireland we can supply
alternate EID and Visual SET Tags in the
same coloured strip (due to current sheep
tag legislation). For sheep and goats.

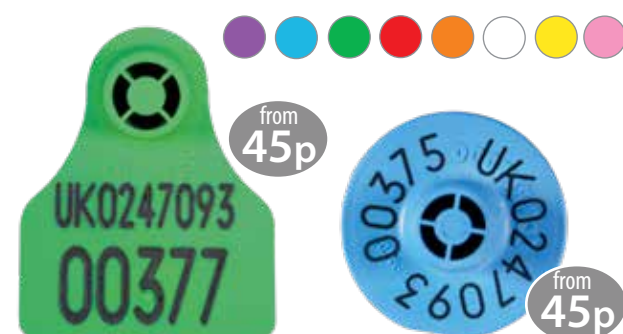
priced Tags Shown at Actual Size
Please
call to order
or ask for tag
samples

Supplied in 'drums' of 20 SET Tags

20 SET Tags preloaded into the drum.
Choose from 10 SET Tag breeding pairs
(alternate EID and Visual) or 20 slaughter tags.

VISUAL TAGS

Combi 2000® Mini and Button



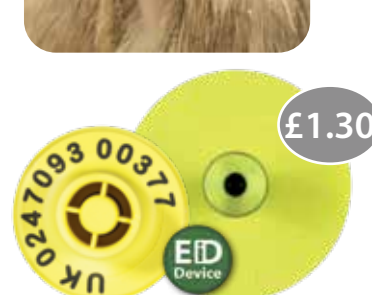
from
45p

from
45p



ELECTRONIC

EID E23® Button
or EID E23® Mini



£1.30



£1.30

Prices correct October 2021. All prices exclude VAT and delivery charges.



NEW



A WORLD FIRST - METAL CATTLE EID TAG

Shearwell Metal Electronic Secondary Cattle Tag

priced Tags Shown at Actual Size
Please
call to order
or ask for tag
samples



£2.09

Designed and
manufactured
by Shearwell
Data Limited

- Secondary or management cattle tag
- Made from Stainless Steel
- Permanently laser marked
- ISO 11784/11785 compliant RFID tag (134.2kHz)
- Designed for retention
- Tamper resistant / tamper evident



Supplied in strips
of 20 tags



Tagger
£24

Prices correct October 2021. All prices exclude VAT and delivery charges.



"It's early days but
so far we are very
pleased with the
new Shearwell Metal
Cattle EID tag. We
have tagged over
800 cattle without a
problem – absolutely
brilliant."

Mr Hulme, Canterbury

"Easy to apply
to my cows ears,
combined with high
retention rates
and easy reading
because of the
added benefit of the
EID element. The
Shearwell Metal
cattle EID tag is
certainly the way
forward for me."

Mr Wilson, Lanarkshire

Easy to use - for cattle and sheep

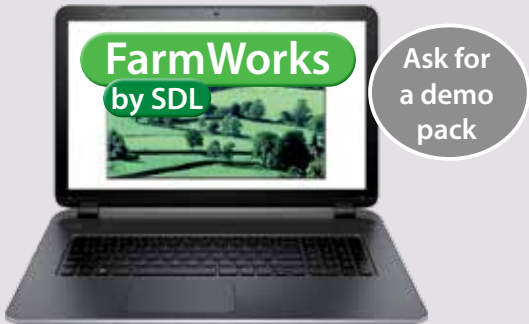
FarmWorks by SDL can help meet statutory requirements for record keeping and movement notifications. FarmWorks is the ideal livestock management program that helps turn livestock data into meaningful management information.

Fully compatible with the Shearwell EID systems. Communicates with our Stock Recorder and app.

Data capture and transfer is the key to the future of the farming industry. FarmWorks by SDL can help meet statutory requirements for record keeping and movement notifications.

FarmWorks is the ideal livestock management program that helps turn livestock data into meaningful management information. Fully compatible with the Shearwell EID systems. If you have any queries or would like a demo pack please contact us.

Software for PC - Communicates with our Stock Recorder and FW mobile app



- Complete (Cattle & Sheep) £525
- Cattle only £375
- Sheep only £375

Includes one year's upgrades and technical support via telephone.

The Shearwell X6 is the next generation handheld Stock Recorder device for cattle and sheep. It provides users with a lightweight, ergonomically designed device to capture on farm management data. It has the same features and easy-to-use interface as the popular Shearwell G4 Stock Recorder and the ability to have new features added via regular updates.

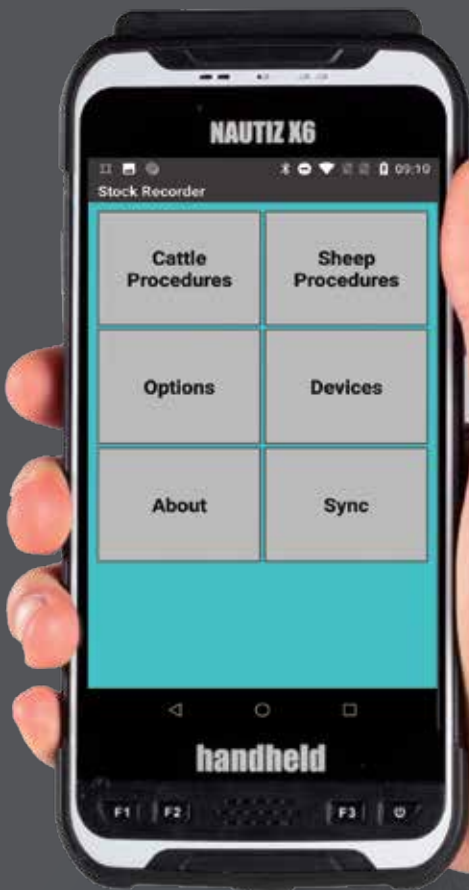
With its built-in RFID tag reader, you can use the X6 to record breeding, births, weights, treatments, movements and much more. The X6 is rugged, reliable and easy to use. And more importantly its size enables you to carry it in your pocket, so great when you are out on the farm. Once back in the office it will help you stay on top of your record keeping.

It works seamlessly with FarmWorks by SDL to help you plan and manage your livestock more profitably and to produce accurate, neat records and paperwork that help fulfil your statutory requirements.



X6 Stock Recorder £1,580

X6 Stock Recorder provides the management functions for the Shearwell weigh crates



FarmWorks by SDL Software (worth £525)

Supplied FREE with the X6 Stock Recorder:

FarmWorks has the facility to backup data to a free, off farm, secure website: www.nlm.co.uk



SHEARWELL MODULAR EID RACE READER

SDL150 Race Readers - for cattle and sheep

They can be configured quickly and easily within an existing set-up (non-metallic race) for fast, effortless recording of EID tags as stock run through the race.



- Large - Pair £1,700
- Small - Pair £1,550

SHEARWELL STICK READER

Easy to use - for cattle and sheep

The Stick Reader is rugged, and built for a hard day's work out on the farm. It has easy, single-button operation and a large display. In a pen, in a race or out in the field, simply point, scan, record and store the data - up to 16,000 animals and up to 26 management groups. Data can be transferred from the Stick Reader by Bluetooth to a PC, a Mac, our Mobile Printer or to our apps.



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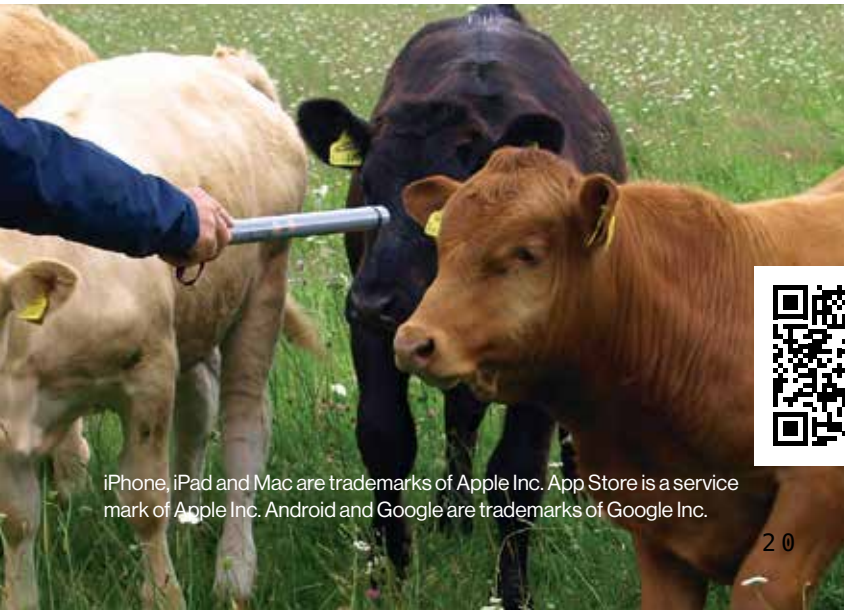
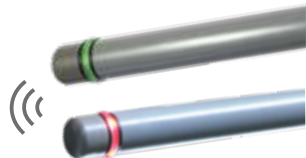


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The strong recovery of beef prices from the lows of 2019 and early 2020 to current highs, has generated more enthusiasm for the keeping of beef within farm businesses than we have seen for some time. Perhaps for some a renewed interest in mixed farming systems with regard to improving soil structures and organic matters.

Set against this is the declining level of farm support, at least in England, on which many of these enterprises have traditionally depended.

In this article we have tried to reflect on the costs of producing a kilo of beef and to look at some of the key factors which influence that cost.

The figures shown in *table one* are actual costs from Scottish survey data, the only imputed cost being that for family labour.

“Renewed interest in mixed farming systems”

The figures suggest at current heady prices an element of true profit being achieved from the best rearer finisher enterprises, perhaps for the first time, with the best suckler herds producing yearling calves nearer to generating profits without support than for many years. For finishing enterprises good margins may have been made from cattle bought pre the current price rises but with the store cattle prices now having risen sharply and feed costs up, on a rolling average basis the margins are likely to be a little changed. The total costs of production shown in *table one* as compared with five-year average prices show a more sobering picture. It would be a brave person who

would predict that the recent price rises seen, represent a fundamental upward shift in the beef price sustainable over the longer term.

In any analysis of costs of production those with the lowest overall costs are able to generate more output from the same or less resources and this is reflected in *table one*.

- Those with the lowest costs of production are achieving:
- Higher calving percentages - breeders
 - Higher growth rates – breeders and feeders
 - Higher sale weights – breeders and feeders
 - Higher sale prices per kilo – breeders and feeders

In summary they are producing more kilos of output across which to spread their variable and fixed costs and selling it for a higher price.

High standards of cattle health, science-based selection for key traits (ease of calving, growth rates etc) producing what the market wants and perhaps still most importantly good stockmanship are key to achieving the above.

With regard to costs, three key differences explain the majority of variation between best and worst producers.

- These are:
- Feed and forage
 - Labour
 - Power machinery and depreciation

With regard to feed and forage, those with the lowest costs tend to exhibit some or all of the following:

- Achieving more from forage as compared with concentrates
- Producing higher quality forage whether grazed or conserved
- Better ration formulation and understanding of nutrition
- Modern grazing techniques / extending grazing seasons
- Closer monitoring of performance and higher standards of general herd health

“Labour is an increasingly expensive input”

Labour is an increasingly expensive input for all farm businesses which tends to arrive in significant chunks. This can be difficult to manage in particular with regards to breeding enterprises, which often have irregular requirements.

- Those that manage it best might do so via:
- Scale (200 cows plus for a full-time stockman)
 - Tight calving patterns (less than 10 weeks)
 - Use of technology (CCTV, EID, auto weighing)
 - Good handling facilities and field layouts
 - Sharing labour within and between businesses
 - Ability to find valuable work at other times
 - Simple systems that allow animals to be fed and checked quickly

“We are seeing an increasing degree of specialisation”

Power and machinery costs are one of the largest areas of overhead costs, they include machinery depreciation, fuel and oil, repairs, contract work, machinery hire or lease and electricity.

- In looking to reduce these costs things to consider might be:
- Finding innovative solutions to taking out these costs.
 - Can you change your system, feeding and grazing regimes, outwintering.
 - What would you do if you didn't have a particular machine?
 - What are the alternatives to purchase, use of contractors, sharing machinery, hire?
 - Is the size of machine proportionate to the enterprise?
 - Ignore tempting offers about reducing tax by purchasing (unnecessary) machinery. HP can be all too easy to obtain.

For the majority of farm businesses, the beef enterprise is unlikely to be the main contributor to overall profitability. We are however seeing an increasing degree of specialisation particularly in the finishing sector.

For most it is about finding a fit within their own farm business and ensuring they have an understanding of the enterprise's economics within it.

David Siddle

Director, Andersons Northern Ltd



Table one

	Upland Suckler Herds Selling Yearling Calves		Forage Based Cattle Finishing < 22 Months		Rearer Finisher Suckler Herds	
	Average	Top Third	Average	Top Third	Average	Top Third
	Kg lwt	Kg lwt	Kg lwt	Kg lwt	Kg lwt	Kg lwt
Gross Output per Cow to Bull or per Head	344	395	629	665	491	517
	p/kg lwt	p/kg lwt	p/kg lwt	p/kg lwt	p/kg lwt	p/kg lwt
Replacements	24	25	131	109	15	11
Variable Costs						
Purchased Feed & Forage	55	41	32	25	55	47
Home Grown Forage	21	20	4	7	18	14
Vet & Med	14	10	2	2	10	11
Bedding	14	9	5	8	14	12
Other Variable Costs	11	10	5	5	8	8
	115	90	48	46	107	92
Fixed Costs						
Paid Labour	34	8	6	6	17	22
Unpaid Family Labour	43	64	8	14	38	28
Contractors	11	14	3	2	8	8
Power & Machinery	32	28	4	6	25	24
Property Maintenance & Rent	27	31	7	6	22	15
Depreciation	28	30	7	7	18	18
Finance	10	8	3	1	7	6
Administration	7	8	2	2	10	9
	191	191	40	45	146	129
Total	381	306	219	200	268	233
p/kg/dwt			399	364	487	423
*5 Year Average Price	220 p/kg lwt		355 p/kg dwt		355 p/kg dwt	

Source - Scottish Survey Data * Source Andersons



MARTS DEVELOP NEW STRATEGIES



Operating nine auction marts across the North of England and the Scottish Borders, Harrison & Hetherington (H&H) is an internationally recognised livestock business. Its main livestock centre in Borderway Auction Mart, Carlisle, is one of the largest mart sites in the UK, and the business is the appointed auctioneers for the UK's major beef, dairy, and sheep breed societies.

Earlier this year, Scott Donaldson took on the role of Managing Director and has since had his sights firmly focused on the future.

Mr Donaldson reflected that this past year has been a turbulent one for livestock trading, with many significant

obstacles needing to be overcome. From the restrictive impacts of Covid-19 to ongoing Brexit discussions and trade talks. Farming enterprises have had to remain resilient and have had to innovate, adapt, and navigate new ways of operating.

When lockdown first happened, many markets were forced to close, however thanks to various associations and support from the government, we managed to continue trading. We developed new strategies which allowed for farmers to leave their stock for auctioneers to sell without them being there. In many ways, I believe the pandemic has cemented the trust and integrity between farmers and marts and confidence in the system.

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Marts provide a fair and transparent marketing system

During the last eighteen months digital portals and new technologies have certainly come to the fore. These have proved a hugely successful means of selling livestock and keeping customers connected. While some may have perceived Auction marts as old fashioned, the past year has shown that H&H, along with many other marts, has been able to quickly implement new systems like online bidding and on-line timed sales. Most markets now have video and livestreaming of sales, and it is remarkable to see how many people tune in. Social media is also becoming an increasingly important tool for producers to promote their stock to a wide audience.

Social media is becoming an important tool for producers

Across our marts and online platforms, we have an annual throughput in excess of 850,000 head of livestock. Marts provide a fair and transparent marketing system for farmers.

From both a Brexit and a Covid-19 perspective, the past year has really reinforced just how vital auction marts are to both the livestock industry and to the entire food supply chain. In turn, this has undoubtedly proved how crucial marts are in setting prices. If they had been closed, I question whether the values of livestock would remain as buoyant.

As I write this, livestock values in the first half of the year have been and remain extremely encouraging, and through the early summer demand for all classes of sheep and cattle has rarely been as strong at this time of year.

Across all our sales centres we have experienced one of the busiest and most successful spring seasons of beef breeding cattle sales for many years. Interest in pedigree beef cattle sales also shows no signs of abating, with every sale conducted since the beginning of the year, of every breed, having been a roaring success. Records are being broken almost on a weekly basis.

The spring and early summer pedigree sheep sales have also seen unbelievable interest, with headline prices and averages exceeding even the most optimistic of valuers. Looking at the early breeding sheep sales, I am hopeful that producers can look forward to being rewarded for their efforts.

Looking to the future, there are many exciting prospects on the horizon. We recently hosted another very successful Agri Expo at Borderway. This event is regarded as many to be one of the leading livestock events in the UK, with perhaps the best display of beef cattle and sheep you will ever see. This is a true celebration and showcase of livestock from across our four nations and as such is the event which everyone wants to win!

Importantly, Agri Expo is also a business event, and through the trade show it provides an invaluable opportunity for people to learn and share new innovations and developments, as well as to network and meet other people in the industry. With farming facing so many changes this year we have introduced a series of seminars, focussing on the future of farming and opportunities for the next generations.

I am so grateful that as an industry we have managed to remain resilient this past year despite the many obstacles in our path. The future is looking brighter however the industry is changing, and we need to continue adapting.

So as the buzz begins to return, we look forward to busy sales rings and that electric atmosphere that we thrive on for our commercial and pedigree autumn sales.

Scott Donaldson
Managing Director Harrison & Hetherington



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BREXIT & TRADE DISPARITY MUST BE ADDRESSED



Since Brexit at the start of 2021, shifts in trade dynamics have been experienced across many areas of the food and livestock industry. Some of the initial teething problems are now history but reports of additional costs and delays in exporting to the EU and to Northern Ireland still circulate. Excessive bureaucracy, increased labour needs and shortages, scarcity of hauliers mean some customers have just gone elsewhere for an easier life.

While the volumes of exported lamb to the EU have decreased, prices have remained steadfast compared to the same period in 2020 – and there has been some growth in export volumes to non-EU countries, albeit from a low base. With lower volumes likely to come forward, and global demand being strong, prices are expected to remain at a good level. Our domestic market has been strong – in part because of Covid-impacted supply chains and a greater loyalty to British sourcing from the retail outlets, who experienced growth due to the closure of the hospitality sector, but also as a result of ongoing growth in the Halal market and effective promotional activities, as seen in Love Lamb week in September.

All our levy bodies worked together to create content for the retail trade and raise consumer awareness, with mouth-watering recipes as well as creative materials for use in the local butcher, farm shop and pub.

With our sheep meat markets performing well, the picture for the

seasonal breeding and store sales got off to a good start and remained positive. There is confidence in the market, and rightly so, and the current level of prices is where they need to be if we are to deliver the Governments ambition to be viable without the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). However, there are real frustrations and difficulties for some individual farmers.

“What was a surprise was the tariff free quota volumes”

With a well-established demand for British sheep genetics in the EU, it is frustrating that the breeding season is well underway still with no Border Control Posts with live animal facilities across the channel. Live animals are coming into the UK from the EU but they are not going in the other direction and this is a valuable trade for many breeders. In addition, the Northern Ireland protocol is set to seriously disrupt a long established and integrated breeding sheep trade between GB and NI. The UK and EU Commission have just agreed some amendments to rules for movement of goods which for live animals may help although the freedom of trade will not be as it was.

One of the highly sought-after ambitions of the UK Government, once Brexit was “done”, was to agree and sign up to international trade deals to demonstrate how well we can operate as an independent trading entity.

So, it came as no surprise when an agreement in principle (AIP) between the UK and Australia was announced, and now a similar AIP with New Zealand. What was a surprise, was the tariff free quota volumes that had been offered to Australia, rising from the current 15,349 tonnes now to 125,000 tonnes during the transition period. The reaction of New Zealand, second in the queue for a new free trade deal with the UK was no surprise at all, seeking a similar level of liberalisation. It's unlikely to come about but it's sobering to think these two countries could end up with tariff-free volumes to the UK that together nearly meet our entire consumption needs. We wait now for the AIPs to be translated into formal documents, to be officially scrutinised, and will be pushing for safeguards in the form of volumes being converted into whole carcass equivalents, seasonal restrictions, and of course equivalence in welfare and environmental standards, to reduce risk to the British sheep industry.

With the CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) in sight, and more potential deals on the horizon, we have a lot to do to ensure our domestic market is served primarily by domestic production. This makes good economic, as well as good environmental sense and helps build trust and confidence between our farmers and our public.

The UK has started the process of joining the CPTPP, which covers eleven different countries currently

representing 13% of global GDP that will increase to 16% if the UK joins. There is a growing appetite amongst consumers in many of these countries for quality meat products, where agri-food imports are growing at double that of the EU. CPTPP nations are projected to account for 25% of global meat import demand by 2030, potentially leading to more GB lamb in supermarkets in the Asia Pacific.

“It's crucial that farms are adequately equipped to ride out any difficult times”

With these incredibly exciting times for our markets there is a lot to be positive about, but with it will come volatility and it's crucial that farms are adequately equipped to ride out any difficult times. BPS has provided a buffer, but this will be gone by 2028 and replaced by schemes that provide payments for public goods – intended to encourage and reward environmental works and not buffer our farm enterprises. Investing to expand our market opportunities is essential whether it's at a commodity or artisan level, and now, in the good times, is not the time to rest on our laurels but the time to do more – as individuals, through our levy boards, and through any Government initiatives.



Phil Stocker
National Sheep Association (NSA) Chief Executive

LIVE SALES PROVIDE STABILITY & SECURITY



Live system influences trends and prices

Liveweight prices continue to drive the trade, with the live sales ring providing the stability and security the red meat sector has needed throughout the unpredictable months of Covid-19 restrictions and Brexit adjustment.

The sector can reflect on the significant role the live auction system plays in working for the producer to achieve best price. It remains the only route to market that works for the vendor, rather than the buyer.

Annual throughput figures announced by the Livestock Auctioneers' Association (LAA) back in March give a clear indicator of how the live system has been so influential in setting trends and prices.

Well over 11 million animals were sold through the live sales ring in England and Wales in 2020, with turnover topping £1.8bn. The figures represent an increase in almost every sector over 2019 numbers, despite the unprecedented challenges of Covid-19, and a drop in production numbers in some categories.

Working on behalf of the sector

The LAA and its members have worked tirelessly on behalf of the sector to ensure the live sales ring delivers the strong market prices that drive this trade. It has lobbied strongly on behalf of the industry on Government consultations covering issues including

animal welfare in transport and bTB. In July, following lengthy negotiations with Defra and the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) and their vets, the LAA was pleased to announce that producers could benefit from easier access to competitive Approved TB Dedicated Sales platforms for cattle from Approved Finishing Units (AFUs). This policy change, applicable in England and Wales, enables vendors to benefit from the ability to use the live auction sales ring to achieve the best price possible for AFU cattle.

GB Dairy Calf Strategy

The LAA has also been working closely with industry to support initiatives such as the GB Dairy Calf Strategy, identifying new outlets to ensure calves are utilised in the food chain. A quarter of a million calves go through the live sales ring every year in England and Wales, making it the largest viable marketplace for dairy bull calves.

"The live sales system is by far the biggest market outlet," explains LAA executive secretary Chris Dodds, "It provides an outlet for all breeds, sizes and ages, and we have worked with processors to help vendors meet their requirements."

Back-end sales

The Shearwell Thame Summer Sheep Fair in August heralded the start of the breeding sales season. Alongside the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, the sale delivered a strong trade throughout, and across the country the following back-end breeding and store sales have surpassed the

strong figures achieved in 2020. The Fair also coincided with the LAA Next Generation Group AGM, as younger auctioneers from around England and Wales converged on Thame, providing the first opportunity to gather in person rather than virtually since the first lockdown.

The meeting concluded with a butchery demonstration from master butcher Phil David of Dart's Farm. He provided a fantastic insight into what butchers and retailers are looking for when buying through the live sales ring, and how they prepare the cuts for the consumer.

Animal welfare

Alongside a commitment to the next generation of livestock farmers and auctioneers, the LAA has also focused its activities on further training to support safe operational activities at livestock markets.

The 'Safe Hands' Master Drover Programme was launched in 2017 to enhance existing training practices, providing a series of units covering handling, animal welfare, health and safety and market requirements.

Initially designed and delivered on a train the trainer basis, the LAA-owned material has now been converted to a series of online training modules. The LAA is continuing to develop the course content and delivery options across its member marts.

The Prince's Countryside Fund

The importance and reach of livestock markets was further recognised with the launch of a new report, commissioned by The Prince's Countryside Fund, and carried out

by Dr Caroline Nye, Professor Matt Lobley and Professor Michael Winter from the University of Exeter. The report highlights how auction marts tackle social isolation and improve the health and well-being of their users.

Launched at an event with HRH The Prince of Wales in July, *More than a Mart* identifies a number of different ways that markets add value to their local communities. The report shows that from running health surgeries to carol services, venues for training to farm shops, marts are far more than just a place to buy and sell livestock.

Competitive Trade

This again underlines the marts' crucial role as a rural social hub, but the raison d'être of the live sales ring is to secure fair prices, and provide a transparent and traceable marketing system.

"Livestock farms are small businesses and have little market power when compared to large scale, corporate food companies. Put simply, they are weak sellers if entering into private negotiations with powerful buyers and risk a transaction that under-values their animals," explains Mr Dodds.

"Within the live sales ring, neither buyer nor seller can unfairly influence the price. The auctioneer is an independent individual, working for both the buyer and the seller. They ensure the price is 'fair' – it accurately reflects current demand based on available information," he adds.

"In 2021, despite the dual challenges of Brexit and a global pandemic, we have maintained competitive trade throughout, and this has been reflected in the record numbers and prices achieved," Mr Dodds concludes.



Chris Dodds

Executive Secretary, Livestock Auctioneers Association (LAA)



Top: HRH The Prince of Wales meets staff from the University of Exeter and The Prince's Countryside Fund, along with LAA chairman Bob Mosley.
L-R: Professor Michael Winter, Ellie Burnage, Bob Mosley, Dr Caroline Nye, HRH The Prince of Wales. *Photo Credit: Charles Sainsbury-Plaice.*
Middle: Shearwell Thame Summer Sheep Fair. **Bottom:** Skipton Market sale ring.

BALANCING FARM, FAMILY & ENVIRONMENT



FARM FACTS

Name: Tom Duckworth

Location: South Otago, New Zealand

Farm Size: 150Ha/370 acres

Livestock:

- 2,000 hoggets contract reared September - February
- 120 dairy heifers contract reared December – May
- 400 hoggets owned, reared and sold at Balclutha Ewe Fair
- 100 ewes owned - lambs fattened and sold



South Otago,
New Zealand

Hi there - my name is Tom Duckworth (29) and alongside my wife Rochelle (30) and daughter Grace (1), we farm in South Otago, New Zealand.

I will begin by telling you a little about myself. I have worked on a few properties in the South Island, starting as a shepherd and slowly (between different properties), working my way up to managing 8,500 stock units on a farm right next door to the block we currently lease.

I grew up in the high country of North Canterbury which is seven hours north of where we farm now. My parents are still in the high country, and I think I am the first generation in a few not to farm there. Instead, I moved south to learn how to fatten lambs. This was only meant to be a short venture of a year or two at most. However, I ended up meeting my wife, landing my first role with proper responsibility, getting the opportunity to lease my own ground and start a family.

We farm mostly as a grazing system, with a few stock of our own, to keep a few fingers in different pies. The farm area is about 150Ha or 370 acres. We take on around 2,000 hoggets each September and they stay with us until the start of February. We also contract rear around 120 dairy heifers which arrive in December

and we run through until May. We also buy 400 hoggets of our own and take to the two-tooth ewe fair in our local town of Balclutha. We have a project mob of 100 ewes and we lamb them and also buy stores to fatten to fill in the gaps. The reason we run a mainly grazing operation, is that it gives me the freedom to work full time during the week sub-contracting to a couple of local guys, one of which is a fencing contractor.

I am very familiar with Shearwell tags and I think they are without a doubt the best there is on offer here in NZ. Also, the Stick Readers seem to blow some of the major names here out of the water, in terms of how well they perform and their ease of use. I have used EID tags in a stud flock where I previously worked before leasing, and we switched from another brand to Shearwell back in 2017 and have never looked back. They read better than the other tags and sit in the ear very well, I will be sticking with them from now on, wherever I may end up.

Anyway, enough about me. When Allan McLeary, our regional Shearwell Data representative, asked if I would write this article for him, I said “yeah, I’ll chuck something together for ya”. But then I went on to think, “what the heck am I going to write about?” I’ve never thought before what it means to me to farm in NZ, as it’s all I’ve ever known. I suppose you could say that I

would consider myself extremely lucky to be given a lease opportunity and in such a beautiful spot. We are so lucky here in NZ, as you don’t have to drive too far to find National Parks; alpine areas such as Queenstown and all the beautiful lakes and ocean coastlines with all the fishing, hunting and outdoor recreation you could imagine. There is nowhere else I would rather farm than in New Zealand, as we still have more freedom to do what we love than in a lot of other countries. We are so well set up and are doing it so well, that it is one of the main primary industries keeping New Zealand going, alongside forestry and tourism. I love this country and I would also go as far as saying I love farming here in NZ.

“There is nowhere else I’d rather farm than New Zealand”

Although when we do get some snow days or tricky days outside, you have to question “what the hell am I doing!” And the 4.30am alarms and long days with late knock offs can make you question yourself, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. I’m very excited about bringing my daughter up on the farm and any other children that may come. Some of my best childhood memories are with my family on the farm. So yes, I think in a nutshell, I would just consider myself lucky. Lucky for my

opportunities and lucky for the country I was born in.

“Covid-19 has proved that tourism was not the main driver”

But not all is good. Covid-19 has proved to us that tourism was not the main driver of NZ, but in fact it is agriculture. Our government had us believe it was the former. We currently have a government that is forcing unworkable regulations at us and it is not backing down despite farmer protests up and down the country. Thousands of farmers in tractors and Utes have protested in all of the main towns and cities.

The main areas of contention are around winter grazing and carbon emissions, which farmers seem to be unfairly getting the blame for. Forcing unworkable blanket rules will see a lot of us having to completely change what we do, instead of just going after the 5% or so, that need rectifying. As we all know in every industry, no matter the sector, the bottom 5% ruin it for the rest of us.

The Government is trying to introduce a surcharge on our Utes to make buying electric cars for people cheaper. We are also seeing a lot of farms being sold for conversion into pine trees so

that overseas companies can offset their carbon emissions. Some of these farms are selling at \$13,000 a Ha, which is huge money, that no bank would ever lend to people to buy a farm for themselves to run. There is also an initiative underway trying to plant one billion trees.

So, it does add a level of concern to a lot of farmers here in NZ. Especially young guys like myself that are working hard and chipping away, making the most of opportunities to hopefully one day be able to afford a small farm that I can then hopefully hand down to my children to farm with their families - this is my ultimate goal. But alongside overseas investment that are willing to pay huge amounts of money, to a Government that won’t admit it, but would rather see us farmers gone, and the farms planted out. I don’t know if I will ever have a farm of any significant size - perhaps a couple hectares with a nice house would satisfy the urge! Who knows?!

All I do know is that I will keep on doing what I love and what I know and make the most of what comes my way.

Tom Duckworth
New Zealand

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COP26 AND LEVY VOTE COULD IMPACT LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION



As we enter the last quarter of 2021 there is one event which will bring into sharp focus the livestock industry and the views that some wish to express about it in relation to climate change, COP26. But before I come to that, it is worth noting another item on the 'challenges to livestock production agenda'.

In a few months' time, livestock farmers and primary processors in England will be asked to vote on whether to maintain the levy. To date we have seen both Horticulture and Potato growers vote away the levy and thus no longer be part of AHDB.

Who, if not AHDB, will represent the views of British livestock farmers in the climate debate?

In May I read a letter in Farmers Weekly in which the farmer spouse of an AHDB employee wrote of what he had witnessed from seeing several on-line meetings during the pandemic. In his letter he wrote: "Many of those in leadership roles (at AHDB) seem to have a distinct lack of passion for agriculture or any desire to support the farmers that pay their considerable wages." He continued by saying that he highly valued the research and scientific information that is made available to levy payers before concluding that if more farmers listened into AHDB meetings then he believed that more of the sector boards would already have been voted out of existence to, he concluded, "the detriment of the whole industry".

In many ways I sympathise with him and urge AHDB's new CEO, Tim Rycroft, to start by listening to farmers and processors and to take their views into account as a means of informing decision making.

It is important to remember that AHDB is currently coming to the end of the first year of their five year 'Change Programme and Strategy'. It remains to be seen if they will still be in existence by the end. I for one, hope that they will be, and my reasoning is this.

In terms of livestock the UK is made up of four levy bodies, three of which, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) and the Livestock and Meat Commission of Northern Ireland (LMCNI) are not facing a vote of levy payers. These three levy boards have a 100% focus on the livestock industry and whatever the outcome of the AHDB vote they will be promoting their farmer's output in both the domestic and overseas markets for the foreseeable future. They will be continuing to promote the environmental benefits of grazing and no doubt responding to the challenges that their levy payers face, be it the continued issues from Brexit, climate change or post pandemic recovery.

- Who, if not AHDB, will represent the views of British livestock farming in the climate debate?
- Who, if not AHDB, will represent the output of British livestock farming in the global market place?
- And, who, if not AHDB, will represent British livestock farming when it faces crises?

Which brings me back to COP26. I can confirm that Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb will be on the menu during the 12-day conference and that QMS will have a presence at the event. I understand that all the levy boards will be actively promoting the benefits of sustainable livestock production here in the UK and that meat production and consumption can flourish in a net zero world.

Meat isn't the problem but very much part of the solution

In March 2020, just a few days before the pandemic's impact became felt across the UK, WRAP published "Meat in a Net Zero World."

WRAP works with organisations across the food and drink industry, as well as local authorities, governments, non-governmental organisations, and others to create economic and environmental value from reducing food waste and greenhouse gas emissions and tackling issues around water stress across the supply chain.

*WRAP's report, which was backed by the levy boards, trade associations such as AIMS, the NFU and many of the country's biggest meat processing businesses set out plans by which the impacts of meat and poultry processing could be reduced. Initiatives from the obvious around green energy and transportation, extended shelf-life and better use of packaging have been adopted along with redistribution of product to charities and food banks. Some have developed more imaginative initiatives such as fully compostable packaging and water cleaning processes.

As COP26 dawns and farming, meat consumption and the processing sector become the subject of climate change comment, much of which is mis-informed, it is I believe incumbent on us all, wherever we sit in the supply chain, to champion what we do. We must remind consumers and the media that livestock and dairy farming along with its associated processing into meat isn't the problem but is very much part of the solution to a sustainable, greener and more environmentally friendly future.

*<https://wrap.org.uk/resources/report/meat-net-zero-world>

Norman Bagley
Head of Policy at AIMS (Association of Independent Meat Suppliers)

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TB FREE ENGLAND REMAINS KEY FOCUS

Bovine TB (bTB) remains prominent in our minds as stock begins to be brought in for housing this autumn.

The challenge of this crippling disease continues to be at the forefront of the livestock industry. The last twelve to eighteen months have been turbulent for all involved, with a range of government bTB announcements which have caused huge uncertainty and frustration as to what lies ahead.

“The results speak for themselves”

The farming industry over the last nine years has undertaken a task which I simply could not do justice to in a few hundred words. The level of collaboration to enable wildlife control across such large areas is phenomenal. The results speak for themselves, with the areas which have completed four years of wildlife control seeing on average over 50% reductions in bTB. What an achievement. The outcomes of a complete bTB eradication strategy are clear for all to see, with a recent APHA publication highlighting that England is seeing the lowest levels of bTB since 2007. The NFU team remains committed to playing its part in this process.



“The NFU has championed the need for wildlife control”

As I write this article in August, the NFU remains focussed on gaining further details from Defra as to what lies ahead. We have seen a clear exit strategy from wildlife control set out by Defra, but alarmingly with no details as to how the strategy will continue to function. The NFU has championed the need for wildlife control where necessary, based on the epidemiological evidence going forwards. While we are pleased to see Defra acknowledge and endorse this process, it is now critical to see the details behind Defra's ambitions. Rest assured we will continue to fight to see these details. It is essential this eradication strategy remains focussed on evidenced measures.

Meanwhile, other elements of the strategy remain crucial to ensuring our continued reductions in bTB. A topic high on current agendas is the pivotal role of TB licensed units in all their forms. Recent supply chain announcements will undoubtedly have further effect and as such, the NFU alongside other organisations is supporting increases in these units. Whether this be housed AFU's, AFUE's, Isolation units or indeed LFU's. Ensuring the industry has enough capacity within these bio secure units and the relevant infrastructure to ensure the animals can move to and from these units is essential. The recent announcement from Defra to allow AFU stock to enter an orange

market (particularly welcome for calf rearers) is a great step to aid facilitating this, although there are many more steps to be taken.

Testing changes - we are all too aware of the current changes to six monthly testing across the HRA (high risk areas), originally confirmed by Defra back in 2018. There remains a huge amount of uncertainty as to this Defra introduction, with veterinary availability at the front of everyone's minds. I have spoken with many producers who hadn't appreciated the exemptions for this new policy and therefore can remain on annual testing. Any herd which has been in existence for six years and had no breakdowns in that time would benefit from this exemption and full CHeCS accreditation equally offers the ability to remain on annual testing.

Looking forwards, we will continue to champion the success of a complete eradication strategy, incorporating managed and effective wildlife control where appropriate, continuing to hold government to account to both safeguard our progress to date, whilst maintaining a focus on the ultimate goal - a TB free England.



Tom Dracup
Senior bTB Policy Advisor



LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT - FROM COW BELLS TO TAGS

Professor John Wibberley is an agriculturalist and rural extensionist working in agriculture and rural development in the UK and internationally. He is Chairman of the Tropical Agriculture Association (www.taa.org.uk), Chairman for Devon FCN (Farming Community Network, www.fcn.org.uk) and Trustee of the Exmoor Society (www.exmoorsociety.com). He lives in South Devon with his wife Jane.

"My first recollection of an animal in the wrong place was as a toddler waking up to see a cow lying in our vegetable garden calmly cuddling on cabbage!" Stray livestock are initiators of many conflicts worldwide yet properly managed and identified, livestock are integral to sustainable farming.

A lot of communities don't plant staple food crops, such as bananas, or trees because of stray animals. Thus, many Malawi families survive on only one or two meals per day from October to January. The answer is community-agreed livestock control using fencing, controlled grazing and overnight housing to enable the capture and utilisation of dung to enrich compost for vegetable growing.

In West Timor, Indonesia, local Bali cattle (*Bos sondaicus*) were kept in simple shaded stalls in pairs by small-scale farmers, with food rationed to them—notably leafy branches from the leguminous tree, *Leucaena*. However, a psyllid bug from the Philippines attacked in 1986 and completely defoliated *Leucaena* below the 300m contour.

The solution was banana stems, which are often wasted. In this instance, they were chopped and fed with urea to stimulate rumen protein production. The complete control regarding straying means utter dependence on rationing!

By contrast, the Brown Swiss herds of Switzerland make an orchestra of cowbells as they freely graze the alpine pastures in summer. The age-old system of transhumance relocates them to lower ground for winter. Cattle in proper systems such as this - like Exmoor grazings - can be defended against those who ignorantly vilify all cattle and other ruminants in these days of climate change sensitisation.

Respect farmers' wisdom!

In India, improved goats were introduced, capable of reaching much higher carcass weights than local breeds. Well-meaning promoters of these improved goats were much discouraged to find farmers were not adopting them and asked "why?". The answer was, "thieves take these big goats easily because they just stand there and make no noise whereas our local goats escape quickly with much noise."

Regarding cattle security, parts of East Africa are notorious for cattle raiding. One vivid memory is helping to load at dawn some 200 flighty, top quality Boran x Friesian heifers into a convoy of wagons to go from Kenya's Rift Valley to Ethiopia's Ogaden. Each driver was accompanied by minders,

each swathed in headgear and armed with machete and AK47!

The Banyankole people of western Uganda elaborately describe their cattle to know each well; the good shepherd knows his sheep too! In Kenya's NW, Turkana people have 23 words for shades of brown describing cattle but none for 'please'!

Mutual Benefit

Fulani cattle keepers in northern Nigeria have dry season arrangements with crop producers to graze stubbles. Yet now much conflict rages in which extremists infiltrate this system and society in general. In neighbouring Niger, so valued is livestock control that I was kindly named Kangei - meaning 'tether'...

Livestock ear tags were produced in 1799 under the direction of Sir Joseph Banks FRS for identification of Merino sheep in King George III's flock. Ear tags were used in Canada in 1913 to identify cattle when TB testing. I first recall UK cattle ear tags as a boy in the 1950s when TT testing; those tags were mainly steel with nickel plating. Widespread use of tags came from the 1990s UK outbreak of BSE.

Of course the real answer to all livestock straying matters is to adopt the Shearwell EID system to control management, breeding and rustling!

John Wibberley

Images Left - right: Cow in Kenya - tethering can work! Elephant - wondering where to put the ear tag! Billy goat AWOL from his tether in Uganda! Kenya - goats are intrepid explorers! Niger - tagless sheep scavenge.

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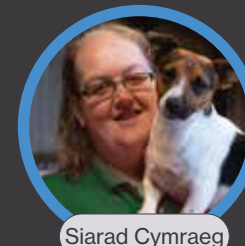
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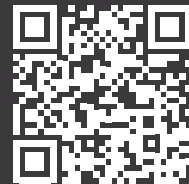


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