

BRITISH TEXEL SHEEP SOCIETY

2010



The British Texel Sheep Society is the UK's largest Pedigree Sheep Society supporting 2000 Members from across the entire UK. The Society is based at the home of the Royal Agricultural Society's Exhibition Centre near Warwick, in the heart of England

The Breed famed for its exceptional carcass qualities, conformation and growth, making it the most popular terminal sire in the UK. In recent years the breed's hardiness and adaptability has been recognised by upland and hill producers, who farm in harsh climates >350m above sea level. Using the versatile Texel to their advantage by breeding store lambs and cross bred females, which increasingly replace traditional hill breeds with a more marketable product.

The Texel sheep originates from the island of Texel, one of the north-western islands off Holland where the ancient native sheep was known as Pielsteert (Pin-tail, because of its thin short tail).

In an attempt to improve prolificacy, growth rate and size several English breeds such as Lincoln, Leicester and Wensleydale were introduced at the end of the nineteenth century. Rigorous selection resulted in the development of a large, prolific and well muscled sheep. 1909 saw the formation of the first Texel breed society in North Holland which in 1911 issued the first description of type.

About 1933, the Texel was introduced to France and has since become established, particularly in the Northern provinces. In 1970, the first Texels were introduced to the United Kingdom with an importation organised by the Animal Breeding Research Organisation, who brought in four rams for experimental purposes. Another four followed in 1971 and ABRO initiated extensive trials to compare the Texel with other terminal sires. The verdict was that the Texel excelled in carcass quality and, in particular, in lean meat yield.

In 1973, thirteen Lanarkshire sheep breeders joined forces with ABRO to import twenty-seven Texel females and thirteen rams from France. Further importations were made throughout the 1970s, with the first direct import from Holland at the end of that decade.

In Great Britain, the Texels have shown that they are capable of withstanding the rigours of the Scottish winter without any hardship and their progeny have proved to be as adaptable in our climate and altitude as the Flocks in Holland and France.

The Breed is well known in Europe, Australasia, Africa and North and South America as a provider of a high quality carcass that has a high killing out percentage. It is also well known in many countries as a breed that transmits its qualities to its progeny when used for crossing purposes.



“A progressive Society, assisting its membership to develop a breed that continues to evolve and meet the requirements of a modern and reforming industry.”



Society sales held in high recognition by Industry and Members.



The Society provides pedigree registration, marketing services and governance to its 2000 strong member base across the UK. Whilst the nineteen Clubs run regional sales, the Society is responsible for its four National sales. Held in high recognition, the showcase of production from a cross section of the membership are held in late August and Early September. Dungannon - Northern Ireland, Lanark - Scotland, Worcester - England and Welshpool - Wales. Although a significant amount of stock is also sold privately direct from farm or through collective sales.

The Breed is the Commercial Producers Choice of breed, indicated by the success and popularity of the breed at two of the largest Commercial Ram Sales held in Europe, in mid September. The Border Union Agricultural Society Ram Sale, at Kelso Scottish Borders and National Sheep Association (NSA) Ram Sale at Buith Wells Mid Wales. In excess of 40% of the total Rams at these sales are Texel. Performance of Registered Texels were impressive at the 2009 National Sheep Association main sale, in excess of 800 Shearling Rams sold, with 94% of all Texels selling to an average of £603. Whilst, at the Kelso Ram sale, 1187 Shearling rams sold, at near 100% clearance for the breed, averaging £606, with the Top price achieving £12,000.

Sales performance at the Scottish National 1992-2009

Year	Number of Ram Lambs	Average Price (£)
1992	376	£892
1998	412	£922
2004	390	£2,346
2009	357	£2,256



Deveronvale Perfection / MGV 09346 selling to a World and Breed Record of 220,000 gns - Scottish National Lanark August 2009

Research, Development and Progress

The Society has a reputation as being progressive, concentrating its breed development on the use of modern technologies, increasing awareness of breed improvement tools to its membership. Breed attributes for commercial production are promoted to the Industry as a whole. Marketing the breed extensively within the UK and abroad. The breed strengths help producers to increase margins, with improved conformation and growth providing efficient production of lean red meat from a diverse environment.

The Society actively engages with Research Institutes worldwide to ensure the breed maintains performance with the desirable functional traits. Lamb vigour, hardiness and growth. Breed research and development focus on ensuring that quality, taste and tenderness are also managed for the added benefit to the Red Meat Industry which has led to the success of the breed in the UK over the past 37 years.

Phenotype is judged at the extensive array of shows throughout the year, ranging from traditional local shows to the larger National Shows.

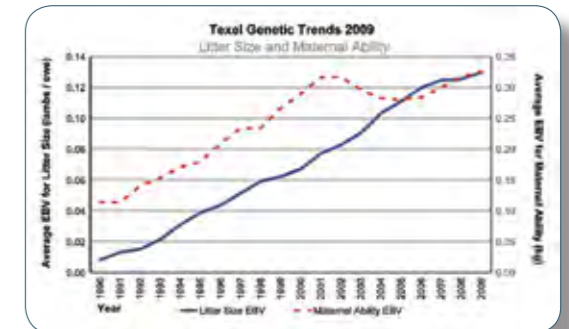
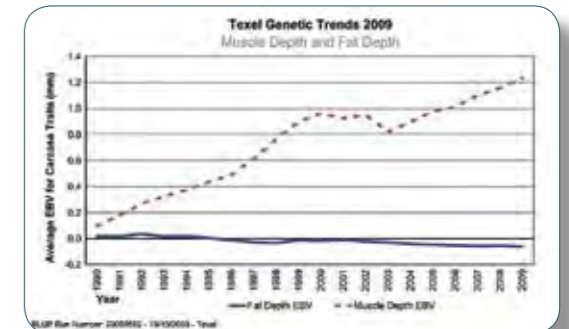
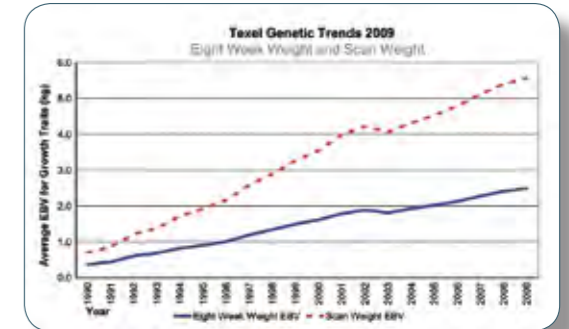
Research initiatives include collaboration with researchers to improve the breeds' resistance to Internal Parasites, Foot Rot and Mastitis whilst maintaining essential carcass traits and meat quality.

Early enthusiasts recognised the value of performance recording and the first progeny test started in 1974. The development of new reproductive technologies and Best Linear Unbiased Prediction (BLUP), a statistical procedure for determining how much of an animal's performance is due to its genes and how much to its environment, made a fundamental difference to performance testing programmes.

Top 10% of the breed have the potential to be scanned using Computer Tomography (CT), annually. Enabling breeders to enhance their overall rates of genetic gain. Particularly focusing on improving the efficient production of lean meat, maintaining conformation, growth and meat quality.

Maternal traits are recorded, with EBVs for litter size and maternal ability (milkiness), presented as standalone EBV's, not incorporated within the Texel Index. Lambing Ease EBVs will be available for members in 2010, the Society recognises the value of this important trait that will assist breeders to develop breeding goals based on commercial producers needs.

Genetic Progress in the Breed 1990-2009



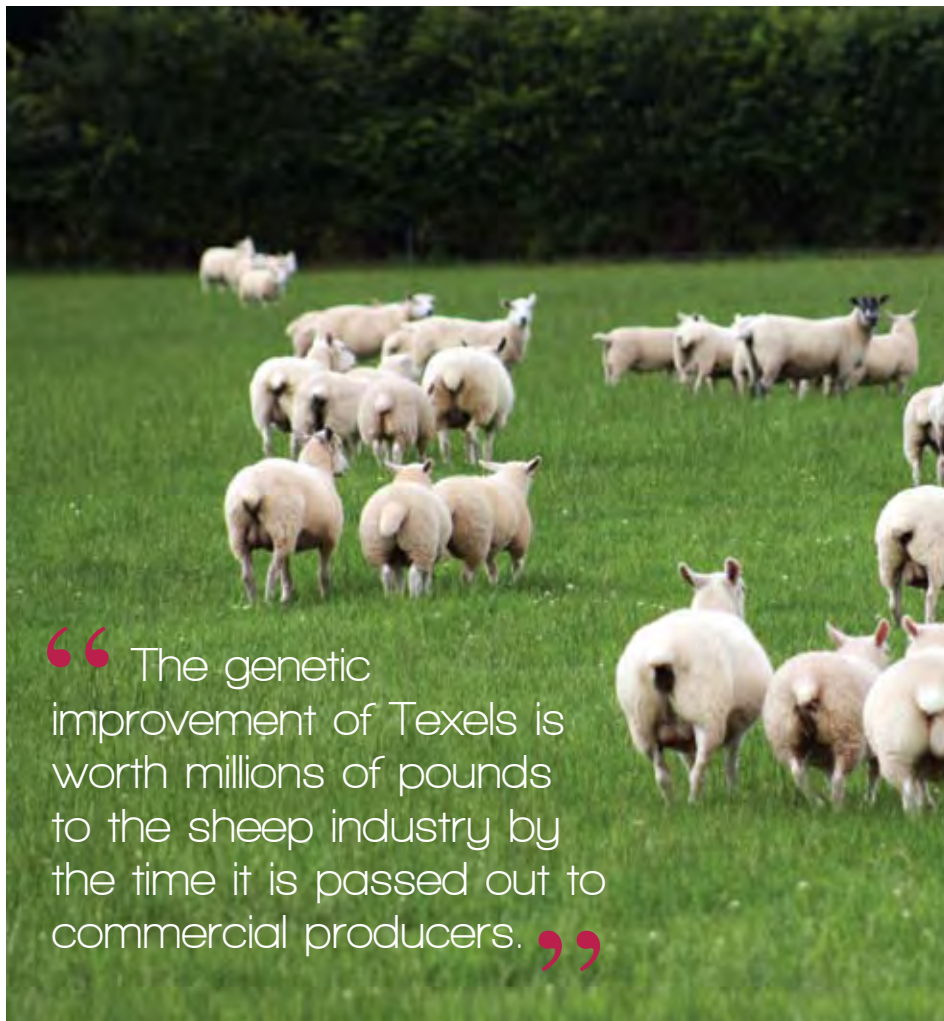
“ Breeders focus on improving the efficient production of lean meat, maintaining conformation, growth and meat quality ”



Value of Performance Recording

Texels have an excellent reputation for their efficient production of lean meat from across a wide range of production systems, and environments.

Efficiency is the key to increased profit, and the identification of efficient systems that include the Texel breed is crucial. The Society recognising the importance of accurate record keeping including the production of EBV's as these become ever more important to recognise superior animals that perform well in terms of Longevity, Fertility and Growth Rates, whilst grazing well managed forage.



“ The genetic improvement of Texels is worth millions of pounds to the sheep industry by the time it is passed out to commercial producers. ”

Performance Pays

A major trial involving 12,000 lambs has shown that high EBV recorded rams can generate premiums of up to £8/ewe mated.*

This benefit may be expressed through

- ✓ Increases in carcase weight
- ✓ Savings in feed costs
- ✓ Premiums for carcase quality
- ✓ Reductions in penalties for fatness

The trial showed that to optimise returns, commercial farmers should;

- Identify whether it is most profitable to change growth or carcase characteristics
- Pick rams based on their EBVs, not just their overall index
- Avoid rams with very low fat depth EBVs where lambs are to be finished under 21kg
- Time lamb sales to capitalise on periods of high returns

* Trial run in 2005 - 2007 by CST Recorded Ram Marketing Ltd, Grampian Foods and ASDA Walmart. Managed by Lesley Stubbings, LSSC Ltd