

PURCHASERS' GUIDE (NORTHERN IRELAND & EIRE)

This is an easy reference guide to assist you through the selection & sale process when purchasing Shropshire Sheep.

BREED STANDARD

The Shropshire is medium size, with mature rams & ewes typically weighing 120kg+ & 70kg+ respectively. Shropshire sheep are active & alert with a free action.

- HEAD:** Naturally clean soft black face, with a covering of wool on the poll. Rams should possess a bold masculine head.
- EARS:** Soft black in colour, of medium length and well set on.
- NECK:** Muscular & not too long.
- BODY:** Well fleshed, long, deep & symmetrical. A broad, straight back with well-sprung ribs. Rump: - quarters long & wide, dock well set on & gigot full & deep.
- LEGS:** Medium length, of strong bone & upright joints, well set apart & soft black in colour.
- SKIN & WOOL:** Cherry pink skin covered with a dense, fine quality wool of good staple.

CHECK

1. Check teeth – teeth should match stated age of animal and be in correct position.
2. Inspect feet – should be free from scald, foot rot and recently trimmed
3. Rams – 2 testicles of the same size
4. Rams – No swelling or lumps on sheath or penis
5. Ewes – 2 teats, udders of ewes that have lambed should be free from milk, lumps, both quarters should be the same size,
6. Ewes - check under tail to ensure everything is correct
7. Ewe lambs – exactly the same check as ewes
8. Check that two tags are present (including one EID tag or a bolus and appropriate tag) for lambs born 2010 onwards
9. All sheep have to move freely (loosely) and have a straight action

REJECT

Please refer to Critical Selection booklet (on web site), which clearly shows desirable & undesirable traits - particular attention should be made as to :

1. Skin Colour – cherry pink, not grey/blue
2. No black fibres in wool or kemp
3. No long/drooping ears
4. Pasterns should be short and not fall in /out/ or backwards.
5. Check on face and under jaw that there is no white mottling
6. Head, legs, ears should not be brown or lighter (*see breed description*)
7. Feet should be free of foot rot
8. Males should not have horn stubs

SCRAPIE GENOTYPE (do not confuse with Scrapie Monitoring)

You can test your sheep to determine what genotype they are. The grading is: ARR/ARR (R1), ARR/ARQ (R2), ARQ/ARQ (R3). R1 is the least susceptible to Scrapie and usually commands a higher premium in the sale ring. Again there is nothing wrong with selecting an R2 or R3 sheep.

You can breed for a higher level of Scrapie resistance by using R1 rams, although this obviously takes a little time.

SCRAPIE MONITORED

Please copy this link for full explanation - www.sac.ac.uk/mainrep/pdfs/scrapiemonrules.pdf

MAEDI VISNA (for information only) (NOT REQUIRED IN NI OR EIRE – MV FREE STATUS)

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW / RECEIVE FROM THE BREEDER ONCE YOU HAVE SELECTED YOUR SHEEP

CERTIFICATION

Female sheep over 4 months of age have to be registered by the Breeder before being sold. Male sheep can be registered by the Breeder or new Owner. All lambs need to be birth notified.

Request a copy/sight of the birth notification (*if not birth notified they cannot be registered*)

Society Rule: The Breeder has to pay a transfer fee of £3 to the Society on completion of a sale. Pedigree cards will then be sent to the Purchaser by the Registrar.

Good Practice: Take note of the ear tag numbers of the sheep you wish to purchase (if they don't have their pedigree certificate) then contact our Registrar Alison Schofield (01477 533256 or Alisonschofield@hotmail.com) who will advise whether they can be registered as 'pedigree' or registration has been applied for.

The ideal: All sheep should come with their pedigree certificate (*falling this see above*). If from Scrapie Monitored flocks you will be given a current Scrapie Certificate.

MEMBERSHIP

Finally, please remember to ask for a Membership Form from the Breeder or download from our web site (FORMS). It costs only £35 per year, and in return you will receive a Flock Book, four newsletters, eligibility to Society Show and Sales, support and advice whenever you need it.

We hope you find this guide useful and look forward to welcoming you as a new Member to the Society.

OFFICIAL SOCIETY IRISH REPRESENTATIVES

Please contact **Barry Hodson (NI) +44 (0)1744 811124 (barry.hodson@virgin.net)** or **Pat Delaney (Eire) 0539 139129 (patrickgdelaney@eircom.net)** who will ensure that your sheep are eligible to register as pedigree animals before making a purchase. Please don't hesitate to contact Barry or Pat who are happy to answer any of your questions or assist in anyway they can.

Claire Jakeman +44 (0)7766 238346 is the Sales Officer for the Society and can be contacted on the above number or via email clairejake@aol.com