HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE RECORDING INFORMATION FOR NEW FLOCK OWNERS

**The following information may be of use to new Charollais breeders. If the Society can be of any assistance with the selection of stock or putting you in touch with breeders in your area, then please do contact us.**

MAEDI VISNA – ACCREDITATION SCHEME

Maedi Visna is a disease of sheep. Since the first Charollais sheep were imported from France they were all tested to be clear of this disease. From that date we have encouraged our breeders to remain free of the disease. This is achieved through an accreditation scheme, which is run by the SAC’s Premium Sheep and Goat Health Scheme. Maedi Visna is a slow degenerative disease which can cause severe economic losses in infected sheep flocks through deaths from pneumonia and wasting and its knock-on effects such as poorer fertility, reduced milk production resulting in increased lamb losses and lower weight gain in lambs. There are also losses from the premature culling of adult sheep because of mastitis, occasionally arthritis and paralysis.

SAC vets are urging sheep farmers who sell breeding sheep to join the Maedi Visna (MV) Accreditation Scheme, as the disease becomes more common in non-accredited flocks. SAC Veterinary Investigation Officer Catriona Ritchie said: “Some farmers may think because MV is not widely recognised, that it is not worth joining the scheme, but the incidence of MV is increasing.”

All our official Society sales are for sheep from MV Accredited flocks, so you can purchase in the knowledge that these animals have been tested free from this disease. We would urge all new flocks to join the Maedi Visna Accreditation Scheme. It is best to contact the scheme prior to moving accredited sheep onto your holding. If you have recently purchased stock then you should contact the Sheep & Goat Health Scheme, Greycrook, St Boswells, TD6 0EQ – Telephone: 01835 822456 – Email: psghs@sac.co.uk for full details of the scheme.

**SCRAPIE GENOTYPING**

Most farmers will be aware of the disease Scrapie to which all sheep breeds are susceptible. Those who have experienced the disease in the past will inform you just how devastating it can be. However, the sheep industry was fortunate to have a government backed scheme to help eradicate the disease. This was through the blood testing of animals and looking at their DNA to identify those animals which are most resistant to the disease. Through the use of resistant genotypes the disease can be completely avoided. We were lucky within the Charollais breed that our genotype profile was relatively simple and the supply of the most resistant genotypes plentiful.

The national scheme finished in 2009, but we are still able to test our animals through commercial genotyping service providers.

The results from these tests give the following genotypes :

ARR/ARR (Group 1) This is the most resistant genotype

ARR/ARQ (Group 2) Virtually resistant genotype

Scrapie has been identified in the Charollais breed in all the following genotypes:-

ARQ/ARQ

VRQ/ARQ

ARR/VRQ

ARQ/VRQ

VRQ/VRQ

We would encourage members to keep testing their stock. At our breed Premier Sale held at Worcester Market at the beginning of July, all stock are tested and have genotype ARR/ARR. Also, all rams born in the 2014 year and later will have to submit an individual test result for scrapie genotype, before they can be upgraded to full pedigree status.

Contact the Society if you wish to arrange for some of your flock to be tested. We can supply you with testing kits.

SCRAPIE MONITORING SCHEME

The Scrapie Monitoring Scheme is run by SAC as part of the SGHS operation.  If you wish to join the scheme then contact them for details.

There are advantages within the rules for scrapie genotype ARR/ARR animals, but breeders will have to support this information with documentation from an authorised laboratory.

The main reason for joining the Monitoring Scheme is to allow for the export of animals to EU Countries and Northern Ireland. Export of ARR/ARR animals from non-monitored flocks is also allowable. To facilitate trade the majority of the flocks who take part in female sales have joined the scheme. Council felt that it should be the choice of individual flocks if they still wished to continue with the scheme. Facilities for Scrapie Monitored flocks will be provided at our official in-lamb ewe sales.  This scheme is different from individual testing and is primarily to facilitate export of stock.

Contact for scheme details and application forms:
**Premium Sheep and Goat Health Schemes
Greycrook, St Boswells, TD6 0EQ**

**Telephone: 01835 822456**

**Email:** **psghs@sac.co.uk**

PERFORMANCE RECORDING

It is Society policy to encourage the use of genetic evaluation to allow Charollais to become the leading performance terminal sire breed. To this end we encourage breeders to participate in the Signet breed evaluation. Currently there are approximately 60 recorded flocks. All Charollais flocks that are recorded are compared one with each other and reports published for top ranked stock sires, top ranked ram lambs and the ‘High Five’ top five ram lambs in every flock. These may be viewed on the website. Each flock has performance figures for all their own stock.

Included in Society catalogues are published benchmark figures for the breed in that year. These give values for the various traits that we measure for, together with a brief explanation of the importance of that trait. Within the sale catalogues you will see values given for the **BREED INDEX** of each recorded animal. The average Terminal Sire index for the Charollais in 2021 was 184; so animals with a breed index in excess of 184 have breeding potential above average. If you wish for more information on individual animals for sale, then please speak to the vendor who can furnish you with the full details.

For more information on performance recording your flock, please contact

**Sam Boon at Signet. Telephone 0247 647 8826 or email samuel.boon@ahdb.org.uk**

*This information is supplied as a guide to new flock owners by the British Charollais Sheep Society Ltd, Youngmans Road, Wymondham, Norfolk. NR18 0RR*

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