# TEXEL

The Texel Sheep Society has grown over the last 44 years to become the largest pedigree sheep society in the UK and the largest registry of pedigree Texel sheep anywhere in the world.

Importantly, the breed continues to offer significant solutions to global industries as they are challenged with increasing productivity, providing increased resilience to disease and improving carcase quality.

The Society provides a community driven approach to Texel breeders through their Society membership; birth notifying of 55,000 lambs and registration of more than 20,000 females and 1500 males annually. Providing significant levels of data about the breed to support genetic evaluations. The Society breeders represent the largest cooperative sheep breeding group in the UK.

Aligned to this, the Society, supported by progressive breeders has been a forerunner in the field of performance recording and the adoption of new technologies to assist the exploitation of the highest performing genetics available in the breed.

The Society and its breeders have closely collaborated with researchers to pioneer the use of modern technologies available in sheep breeding. CT scanning (Computed Tomography) along with routine Ultrasound scanning has been widely used, with significant investment in to the research of novel phenotyping for hard to measure traits to help manage health & disease resilience and carcase quality.

It is a major focus on the Society to make available solutions to help maximise the value of Texel genetic evaluations for the benefit of their breeders commercial customers and the wider sheep industry. Such has been the success of the breed that a recent study estimated the breed adds more than £23m a year to the UK sheep industry.

Email: office@texel.co.uk
Tel: 0247 669 6629
Website: texel.uk

TEXEL SHEEPSOCIETY

#addtexeladdvalue

Today the Society continues to invest in the future of the UK sheep industry, undertaking ground-breaking genomic research and development work into several key areas, with an aim to help sheep producers thrive in a post-Brexit era.

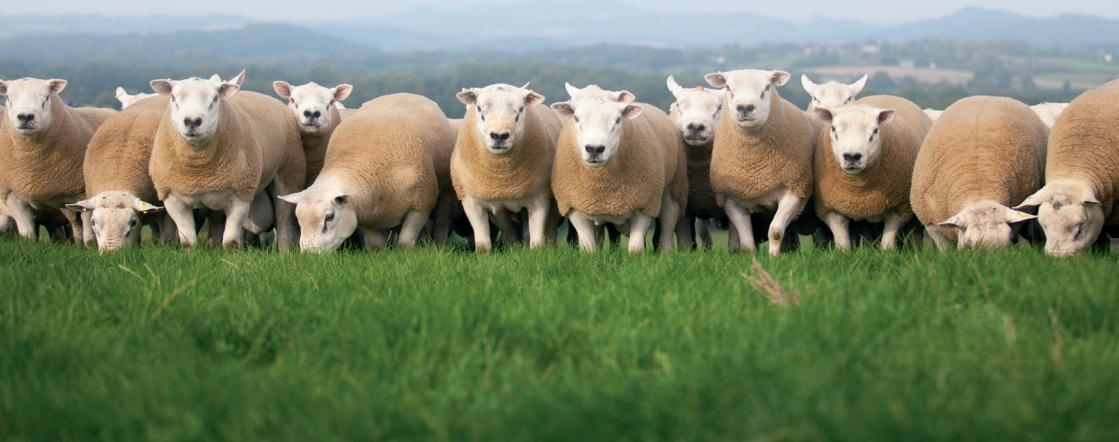
# Breed development

The Society has a clear vision for the future aimed at ensuring the breed continues to progress and benefit the entire industry:

*'Through leadership and collaboration, increase the financial, animal health and welfare, and environmental benefits of Texel sheep to breeders, commercial farmers, industry, and the public'*

Delivery of the vision is enabled through three key strategic objectives targeted at industry leadership, value creation, and broad impact. To this end the Society will:

- Provide leadership and coordination in the development of the wider sheep industry to highlight the benefits of genetic improvement
- Accelerate the rate of genetic gain in Texel sheep to boost profitability, improve health and welfare, and reduce environmental impact
- Deliver a high-quality service by streamlining systems and processes to maximise benefits to breeders, commercial farmers, industry, and the public



Innovate UK

SRUC

# Leading research and development

As the UK's leading terminal sire, and the sire of more than 12% of the national ewe flock.

As the livestock sector aims to reduce antimicrobial use the Society's research into the genetic influence on mastitis and footrot, is providing breeding solutions that enables the production of sheep with greater resilience to these key diseases.

This has the potential to reduce the industry's reliance on antimicrobials to treat these two diseases; saving money and reducing the environmental impact of sheep farming and improving animal welfare.

Estimates suggest each case of footrot has a direct cost of more than £8 per ewe, with further indirect productivity losses costing up to £3 per ewe.

The Society is also undertaking research into the genetic influences behind meat eating, and carcass quality.

By reducing costs through lower disease challenge sheep producers can improve margins in the post-Brexit era by producing lambs with the potential to appeal to added value markets. Meeting consumer expectations is becoming increasingly important to ensure lamb remains a protein of choice for much of the population.

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European Commission

Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation

# SMARTER

In addition to breed-specific projects, the Society is also engaged in the pan-European SMAll RuminanTs breeding for Efficiency and Resilience (SMARTER) project.

Involving partners from across Europe, Canada, China and Uruguay, this project is focussed on breeding terrestrial livestock for improved resilience and efficiency.

The Society will collect and contribute measurements of hard-to-measure health traits, particularly mastitis and footrot, amongst others; and as such, is contributing to the multi-disciplinary international working group focussing on disease resilience.

While there is an increasing focus on the efficiency of animal production, systems also need to be resilient, at both an animal and a system level. For all animals, this resilience needs to apply to their welfare, as well as their health.

To remain profitable as the industry moves to an era with less direct support, it will be essential for sheep farmers to become increasingly more efficient. That will mean working with sheep which require lower levels of routine intervention and which can thrive in challenging environments.

One of the biggest factors in this research is managing the trade-offs between increasing efficiency and disease resilience with factors which influence productivity and profitability in sheep farming systems.