



Bleu du  
Maine

Sheep  
Society



December 2011

Hello everyone, the Christmas greetings are a little early this year as I have to go into hospital in early December for a hip replacement so I was keen that you should have the news & your flock returns in plenty of time.

It has been a good year for the Bleus, we have seen renewed interest in the breed, especially in Ireland, both north & south & it is hoped to re-instate the NI club in the near future.

The new web site is proving very popular & we now have a photo gallery as well as commercial news stories. Please let me know if you have a customer who is using Bleus & would like to feature in our Farmer Focus! It is very important for the breed to be successful commercially & I need your input!

**Flock Returns** - Details are enclosed if we are receiving lamb registrations from you. Flock books will only be printed BY REQUEST, as all the current data is available from the Grassroots system on the web site. For those unsure please go to the Society website [www.bleudumaine.co.uk](http://www.bleudumaine.co.uk), move the cursor over the Grassroots tab, click the tab & you will go directly to the Grassroots programme where you can not only update the data we hold for you, but the facility is there to look at any animal & its full pedigree, plus all the details for members.

### **Your Council for 2011 – 2012**

President - Stuart Goldie (Maunby)  
Chairman - Samuel Small (Randalstown)  
Vice-Chairman - Simon Norman (Hillview)  
William Baillie (Calla), Julie Bury (Burford),  
John Davison (Langley), Iwan Davies  
(Cysgod), Stan Kilby (Astley), Richard

Pilkington Aintree), Gavin Shanks (Inveresk), Sally Shone (Maximum).

Council members & friends visit the Ernford flock in early October.



Sue McInnes Skinner kindly hosted the autumn Council meeting at Crown Farm. Pictured below is out-going President John Davison making a small presentation to Sue, along with her husband Michael & son Jonathan.



Below: Sam Small congratulating Stuart Goldie on his appointment as president.



## SHOW FLOCK COMPETITION

Iwan & Mair	Cysgod	725
Davies		
W Baillie	Calla	400
J McInnes	Ernford	392
Skinner		
P Fraser	Tignahinch	340
Vile & Norman	Haydon	330
TS Goldie	Maunby	298

The show flock trophy, originally donated by Robin Johnson, was presented to Iwan Davies at the recent Council meeting by our new President Stuart Goldie.



## Farmer Focus from the web site Millennium Bleu in Action



The Verity family has been farming the 250 acres at Howe Farm in Fearby near Masham for 5 generations. Here they use the Millennium Blue tup across their flock of 600 Texel cross ewes which they breed. They also keep a few suckler cows.

Mr Verity's eldest daughter, Victoria, is also starting her own Pedigree flock of Bleu de Maines. All the lambs are sold through Thirsk fat Market. Due to a vitamin deficiency on the land Mr Verity has had to rely more on Vitamin drenches to get the best from his livestock. This is what Mr Verity had to say... "We use VitAmax Sheep Vitamin Drench which we get from Green's Farm Supplies Ltd. in Northallerton. ([www.greensfarmsupplies.co.uk](http://www.greensfarmsupplies.co.uk)).

"Using this drench ensures our sheep don't become deficient in essential vitamins, minerals & trace elements. We use it pre-tupping to help with flushing and to gain better lambing percentages and for stronger ewes at tupping time. We also use it pre-lambing to improve the condition of older, thinner ewes. It works wonders."

Hopefully we'll see more great results as Victoria works to develop her own flock using similar strategy.

We hope to have regular Farmer Focus stories on the web site, so please let me know if you have a story!

## Review of 2011 show season

Exhibitors have had another successful show season, winning Interbreed championships at county level & frequently in the short list for national championships, so well done to everyone who has flown the flag this year.



Jonathan McInnes Skinner won several interbreed championships in the east of England - here he is pictured at Lincoln with Ernford Gardinia



Runner's up in the Lowland Interbreed Championships  
Johnny Stables with the Langley bred ram  
& Stuart Goldie with his home-bred ewe

We had ten exhibitors at the Great Yorkshire Show & it can't all be down to the excellent hospitality extended by the Northern Club! The judges report from the show has been on the website for a while but for those of you who don't use the Internet it will make some interesting Xmas reading!



Royal Welsh Champion - Iwan & Mair Davies  
very successful Cysgod Elegant

The Royal Welsh is becoming a victim of it's own success & with pens limited to 3, breeds with big sheep like ourselves are finding they can only take half a show team which makes it un-viable. We then get into a situation that because of lack of entries they amalgamate the classes which makes the matter worse. However, we have written to the Society, lodging our concerns but I don't know if we will have any success. I appreciate that the problem is lack of space & over subscription, but they do need to consider all breeds if it is to continue to be "The greatest sheep show on Earth". The Highland Show was blessed with good weather & a good entry, judged by Ian Beck, who had been our steward for many years.



Ian Beck at the Royal Highland, we could have a competition to guess who the other two famous people are! Answers on the back page!



Maunby Discovery - Male Champion at the Royal Highland Show for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running - Born in 2006 & still looking great!

[Events we did in 2011 & where we will be to in 2012.](#)

The two main NSA events in 2011 were Welsh Sheep in May & North Sheep at Hexham. The new display panels were excellent & gave a whole new dynamic to the stand. At Welsh Sheep we focused on Millennium Bleus kindly supplied by Richard Pilkington from his Aintree flock & a pure bred ram from Sally Shone.



Left - the one that got away! Sally Shone & David Eglin practised their rugby tackles to catch this errant ewe who made a bid for freedom at Welsh Sheep.

Right: Bleu x ewe with twin lambs at North Sheep.

For 2012 we will be attending ScotSheep at Morrison's farm at Dumfries House in Ayrshire on June 6th & then NSA Sheep 2012 is at Malvern on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

### Premier Sale - Carlisle

The sale saw an excellent entry of 127 sheep & our judge for the pre-sale show was Arwel Rees from Welshpool. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running an entry from Messrs Vile & Norman clinched the Championship, this year it was the yearling ram DE 10 28 which they had shown successfully during



the summer. He went on to sell for 1050gns.

Equally the top price was Richard Pilkington with a Millennium Bleu shearling, part of a great consignment of rams from Aintree.



Females met a good trade with total clearance.

At Carlisle we were pleased to welcome Jens Kohrs from Germany. Jens has a small flock of Bleus & wanted to add some UK genetics to his flock, considering them to be far superior to anything he can buy in mainland Europe.



from Germany. Jens genetics to his flock, can buy in mainland

A consignment of 12 Pedigree Bleus made the long France, Belgium and Holland, at the end of October

journey to Germany via

The export consisted of sheep from three UK flocks:

1 Ram and 5 Ewe lambs from Stuart Goldie's Maunby Flock in Yorkshire. 2 Rams from William Baillie's Calla Flock in Scotland



& 4 Ewe lambs from Robin Johnson's Yorkshire flock

New arrivals – Maunby Jaquar settles into his new home in Northern Germany.

Jens said "I was most impressed by the quality of the BDM's in the UK and I am excited about the potential of these new bloodlines in Germany."

Think Christmas! Stuck on what to buy for Christmas - we have the very thing! The new society tie is available for £11 + VAT. Really good quality & quite funky!



We also have available sweat shirts, polos & fleeces in some amazing colours & all can be embroidered with your flock details. So what are you waiting for - get in touch with me & we can get it organised.

#### Photographic Competition

Title: What a Bleu ewe can do for you?

Come on everyone, cameras & imagination to the fore & lets get the pictures! All entries to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Two lovely prizes for the winner & runner-up.

As this year comes to an end, and I look forward to my final year in office, I can say with confidence that the demand for Bleu sheep is now outstripping supply in most areas of the UK and Ireland. Ireland as a whole, especially demonstrates this trend, with several new breeders establishing flocks, recognising new business opportunities as the Bleu enjoys resurgence.

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Special congratulations to Jonathan Stables, a relatively new Bleu breeder, who on his first outing to the Great Yorkshire Show took top honours.

The launch of the society web site in late spring coincided with our new corporate logo depicting the bleu ewe with twin lambs, and marked the first marketing opportunity of the Bleu in the replacement ewe sector or the sheep industry. The web site has been a tremendous marketing tool with visitors to our site being traced literally from around the world. "Information is power" - the more valuable information which we can post on our site about the positive influence which the Blue du Maine ram has brought to a flock near you, will only add to the success which many "bleu" sheep breeders are already enjoying. Fast growing Bleu sired cross bred male lambs are topping mart prices week after week, while the female cross lambs continue to impact the replacement ewe market. If only more were available!!

If you are struggling for Christmas gift ideas, be sure to put on your list, a camera. We are organising a photographic competition, so cameras to the ready in 2012. (See [Jane's article for further information.](#))

May I take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you and your families a truly Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

The folk in the caption with Ian Beck are Jim & Kay Goldie, major players when Bleus first came to the UK.