



Genetic update for Lleyn breeders

Key messages

- New genetic information for Lleyn breeders and commercial farmers
- New fee structure makes it even more cost-effective to performance record



A new breeding index for Lleyn sheep

The creation of a new Lleyn index follows discussions with breeders and several other enhancements to the Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) produced for Lleyn sheep.

The breed has been using two indexes – the ‘Maternal index’ and the ‘Carcase+ index’ successfully for many years, but next year they will be updated.

In 2017, Signet will introduce one index that is more closely aligned to the breeding objectives of Lleyn breeders and their ram buying customers.



The new index still enhances maternal ability, lamb growth rate and muscling, but will also:

- Reward sheep with ‘optimum prolificacy’
- Place some downward pressure on ewe mature size, to try to counter increases that arise when selecting to enhance lamb growth rate
- Penalise the leanest breeding lines

Optimising, rather than maximising traits

Indexes are usually created in a linear manner, eg the greater the EBV, the greater the index.

In reality, many traits such as prolificacy and leanness/fatness have optimum levels, above or below which production and profitability suffers.

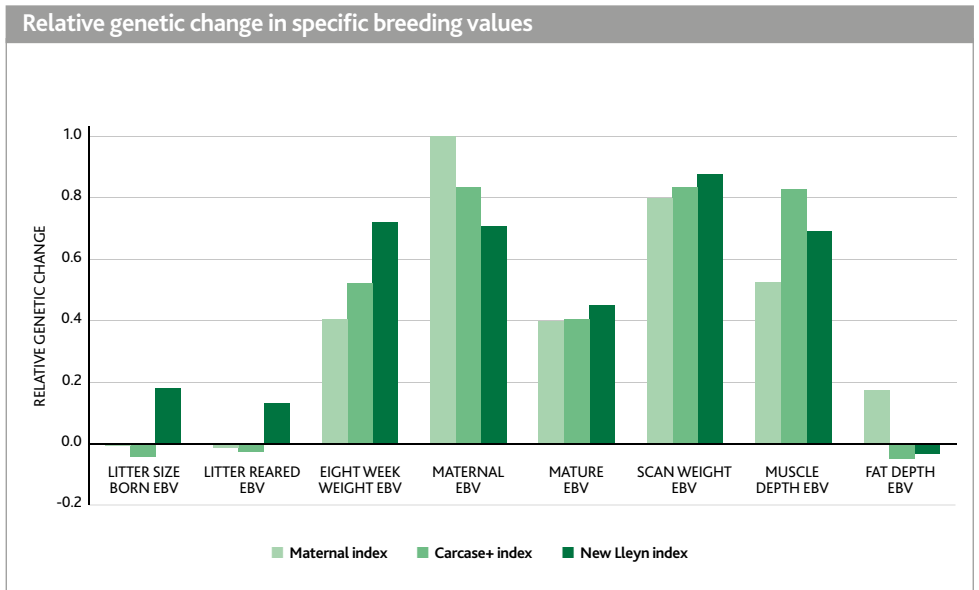




One way of dealing with these traits is through non-linear penalties/rewards. This approach will now be applied to traits like the Litter Size Born EBV, where animals with very low (genetic potential to produce many singles) and very high values (genetic potential to produce more triplets), will be penalised.

Impact of the new Lleyn index

Using the new index, improvement continues to be made in maternal ability, growth and carcass traits, while introducing a positive emphasis on the EBVs influencing the number of lambs successfully reared.



New Signet fee structure for 2017 for even more cost-effective performance recording

For Lleyn breeders wishing to enter data online or to send data electronically, (via Excel spreadsheets) Signet's performance recording fees have reduced substantially.

Example

	Online/ electronic	Paper (old fee structure)	Flock size (ewes)	New (online/ electronic)	Current (paper)
Flock fee	£95.00	£120.00	10	£120.00	£150.00
Additional price per ewe			25	£158.00	£195.00
First 50 ewes	£2.50	£3.00	50	£220.00	£270.00
51-150 ewes	£2.00	£3.00	100	£320.00	£420.00
151-400 ewes	£1.00	£3.00	200	£470.00	£720.00
401+ ewes	£0.25	£3.00			

Anyone interested in recording a Lleyn flock, please return this slip to Signet or email emma.steele@ahdb.org.uk

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Send me an information pack

I would like to record next year

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Signet Breeding Services
AHDB
Unit 201
5th Street
Stoneleigh Park
Kenilworth
CV8 2TL

Breeding for worm resistance – a UK first for Lleyn breeders

Lleyn breeders have achieved a UK first in breeding for health traits, with the delivery of a new EBV for Saliva IgA to accompany existing EBVs for Faecal Egg Count (FEC).

This collaboration between the Performance Recorded Lleyn Breeders Group (PRLB), the University of Glasgow and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), supported by AHDB Beef & Lamb, has led to breeding values which highlight animals that are genetically more, or less, likely to resist a worm challenge. This gives sheep producers a genetic approach to controlling parasites.



New EBVs to improve flock production

AHDB Beef & Lamb-funded research at SRUC has created three new EBVs of economic importance:

- Lamb survival
- Ewe longevity
- Age at first lambing

These traits can be derived from existing data, although flocks will only receive lamb survival EBVs for lambs that have a birth weight provided (for both live and dead lambs)

For more information contact:

Performance Recorded Lleyn Breeders (PRLB)

Ed Collins (Secretary)

Tel: 07970 015 186

Email: edward@bearwoodfarm.com

Signet Breeding Services

Email: signet@ahdb.org.uk

or visit signetfbc.co.uk

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