



Frequently Asked Questions

1: Flock Book Related Questions

Q: Who owns the breed flock book?

A: The flock book is owned by the Valais Blacknose Society. The registry is managed on behalf of the Society by Grassroots Systems Ltd.

- Gold Members (full breeder members) have full access, including the ability to register animals.
- Silver, Bronze, and Overseas Members have read-only access.

Q: Who do I contact if I have issues accessing the flock book?

A: For any access issues, application errors, or support with lamb registrations, pedigree certificates, flock updates, or DNA testing, please contact Grassroots directly:

agency@grassroots.co.uk

Q: How do I register my flock prefix?

A: You can register a flock prefix when completing your Valais Blacknose Society online membership application form. This prefix will appear on the pedigree certificates of all lambs bred and registered by you. Alternatively, you can contact Grassroots to check whether your chosen prefix is already in use or too similar to an existing one.

Q: Is there a time limit for registering lambs?

A: Lambs can be birth notified on Grassroots at the time of birth and must be fully registered by 18 months of age. Late registrations require mandatory DNA parentage verification and will incur additional fees.

Q: How do I obtain pedigree registration certificates?

A: When lambs are registered or ownership of registered sheep is transferred, Grassroots will email the relevant pedigree certificates to the new owner.

Q: How do I transfer ownership of sheep?

A: Breeders can transfer ownership directly via Grassroots:

- Log in to your account
- Select 'Manage My Animals' → 'Transfers'

Alternatively, new owners can:

- Complete the 'transfer of ownership' slip on the animal's pedigree certificate and return it to Grassroots by post or email
- Or email the full certificate to agency@grassroots.co.uk

If the certificate is unavailable, record the ear tag number(s) and contact Grassroots. They will liaise with the seller to confirm the transfer.

Q: Do I have to purchase the Grassroots app?

A: No. The Grassroots app is optional. It provides a convenient way to manage your flock's details and updates, but it is not required.

2: Membership Related Questions

Q: Do I have to join the Society to register sheep?

A: Yes. To breed and register sheep, you must be a Gold Member of the Valais Blacknose Society. Join [here](#).

Q: Which membership should I opt for?

A:

- Gold Membership - Breeder Membership (individuals or families with one flock prefix, includes one Society vote)
- Silver Membership - Associate Membership (non-breeders, read-only access)
- Bronze Membership - Junior Membership (under 18, non-breeders, read-only access)

Q: What if I need a family membership?

A: Gold Membership covers one breeder and their family under a single flock prefix, with one Society vote.

Q: How do I request access to the Society's Facebook members forum?

A: Visit the Society's Facebook page and request to join the members' group: www.facebook.com/groups/vbsmemberforum. You will need to provide your membership VBN reference number for verification.

Q: Can I join the Society if I live outside the UK?

A: Yes, the Society offers an Overseas Membership, which provides read-only access to the online registry. However, overseas members cannot register animals. If you wish to register animals, you must join the recognised Valais Blacknose Society in your own or neighbouring country.

3: Livestock Identification and Record Keeping

Q: What is a UK Ministry Tag or 'flock mark'?

A: A UK Ministry Tag (or *flock mark*) is a unique six-digit number that identifies all animals born on your holding. Its purpose is to trace the origin of livestock when moved from their birth holding.

- A flock mark is required even if you do not intend to breed, and even if you own only one animal.
- The flock mark forms part of the identification printed on your animal's ear tag.
- Flock marks are issued by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). You must have a County Parish Holding (CPH) number before a flock mark can be obtained.

Q: What is a CPH number?

A: A County Parish Holding (CPH) number identifies the land where you keep livestock. You must apply for one before moving animals onto your holding. More information: [Register Land You Use to Keep Livestock \(GOV.UK\)](#)

Q: Where can I order ear tags?

A: You can order ear tags from an APHA-approved supplier. A full list is available here: [Approved Sheep and Goat Ear Tag Suppliers \(GOV.UK\)](#)

- Society tags can also be ordered from [Caisley Eartag Ltd](#)

Q: What information must appear on ear tags?

A: All sheep must be tagged according to UK legislation. Breeding sheep require two ear tags, one of which must be electronic (EID).

- In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the EID tag must be yellow.
- In Scotland, the EID tag can be any colour.

The second (visual) tag can be any other colour.

Both tags must display:

- The UK flock number, and
- The individual animal's five-digit number.
- The yellow EID tag should be inserted in the left ear (viewed from behind).

Q: When do I need to tag my sheep?

A: All pedigree lambs must be individually tagged at birth before being entered into the flock book. Further information: [Sheep and Goat Identification \(GOV.UK\)](#)

Q: Do I need to keep a medicine book for my flock?

A: Yes. By law, all sheep keepers must record any medicines administered to their flock. Records must be stored in an appropriate format and made available for inspection if requested.

- While the Society does not require treatment details, members are advised to record the cause of death when updating an animal's record in Grassroots.
- We also recommend preparing a flock health plan with your vet, including Routine treatments and vaccinations, Parasite control, Disease prevention, and response procedures.

Q: Is there a breed-up programme in the UK?

A: No. There is no recognised breed-up programme for Valais Blacknose Sheep in the UK, nor are there plans to introduce one. Cross-bred animals cannot be registered as pedigree or listed as non-breeding stock. The Society's focus remains on preserving the original bloodlines imported in 2014.

Q: Where can I find healthcare information?

A: See the Flock Management section on our [website](#).

Q: How do I find stock for hire or sale?

A: Gold Members – can list animals for sale or hire through Grassroots.

- The Society accepts no responsibility for the pedigree or registration status of animals advertised externally. Buyers are responsible for verifying pedigree certificates or confirming registration with Grassroots. The Society is unable to provide breeder contact details - all enquiries must be made directly with breeders.

Q: Can the Society provide information on stock for sale outside the UK?

A: No. The Society does not have visibility of breeder stock or registries outside the UK. Please contact the relevant national societies or breeders directly.

Q: Do UK breeders sell stock for export?

A: Yes, provided exports comply with current UK and destination country regulations. Contact breeders directly for availability.

Q: Where can I purchase Valais Blacknose fleeces?

A: Please contact Society members directly via their websites or social media pages.

Q: Where can I find information on upcoming Society sales?

A: Information and updates on Society shows, sales, and events are available under the 'Shows & Events' section on the [website](#).

Q: Which agricultural shows have dedicated Valais Blacknose classes?

A: A full list is available under the 'Shows & Events' section on the [website](#).

Q: How much do Valais Blacknose Sheep cost?

A: Prices vary greatly depending on bloodlines, grading scores, and animal quality. Prospective buyers should research carefully and speak directly with breeders.

4: General Questions

Q: Why do all lambs have to be DNA tested?

A: Compulsory DNA testing ensures accurate pedigree lines, protects breed standards, and supports long-term preservation of the Valais Blacknose Sheep.

Q: Must all ram lambs that do not meet breed standards be castrated?

A: Yes. Ram lambs that do not meet the breed standards should be considered for castration. Castrated males are not eligible for pedigree registration but may be listed as non-breeding animals in the flock book, with an optional non-breeding certificate available.

Q: How long do I have to castrate my ram lambs?

A:

- Within the first week of life, castration may be performed without anaesthetic using a rubber ring (ensure both testicles have descended).
- After 3 months of age, castration must be carried out by a vet under anaesthetic.
See further guidance here: [Flock Management](#)

Q: Who do I contact to order DNA tests?

A: For untested animals, DNA kits can be ordered via your Grassroots account (Manage My Flock) or by contacting Grassroots directly. Results take approximately 4–6 weeks. Kits are available as blood cards, nasal swabs, or tissue tags (from Caisley Eartag Ltd). For new registrations, DNA testing is included in the process - simply select your preferred method when registering.

Q: Do my sheep have to be scrapie tested?

A: No. Scrapie testing is not required for birth notification or registration. However, breeders wishing to determine resistance levels or export genetics may arrange testing via Grassroots or their vet.

Q: Why have registration costs increased?

A: Registration costs reflect the Society's responsibility for flock book ownership and daily management. While the base registration fee is unchanged, the additional cost now includes compulsory DNA testing for all animals born from 1 January 2024.

Q: Can I register imported sheep?

A: Yes, provided the animal comes from a European Zootech-recognised registry and full documentation is supplied. DNA testing will also be required.

Q: Where can I find Society rules?

A: All rules are published on the [website](#).

