



VALAIS BLACKNOSE SHEEP
Spring 2021 **NEWSLETTER**



Welcome

We are overwhelmed with the number of members who have joined the newly formed VBS and humbled by the positive feedback which we have received. The merge transition has been a complex process and it is rewarding to see members old and new coming together to take the new society forward and build it from strength to strength.

We hope you enjoy the first quarterly Spring newsletter.

We wish everyone a successful lambing and as they say in Valais, 'Alles gluck im stall'.

Meet the Council Members

The Governance of the Society consists of Directors and a robust council structure made up of 12 elected members from across the UK who work to uphold Society values and represent all members.



David Hodge CHAIRMAN

Location: Dartmoor, Devon

My partner and I have a VBN flock bred up from Swiss imports that we brought over in 2014 that run alongside a large commercial flock and herd of pedigree belted Galloway cattle and we are also breeders of small native ponies.



Raymond Irvine CHAIRMAN

Location: Scottish Highlands

I am a 3rd generation farmer in the Scottish Highlands. We have bred pedigree Charolais cattle for over 35 years. We have 800 blackie ewes. We were the first to introduce the Blacknose to Scotland when we imported our foundation flock from Valais in 2014.



Jamie Wood VICE-CHAIRMAN

Location: Northumberland

Our family farm is based in the foothills of the Cheviot Hills, farming around 3000 commercial sheep and 200 Suckler cows. We were among the first to purchase and import Valais Blacknose Sheep from Switzerland in 2014 and have one of the largest flocks in the UK.



Chris Slee VICE-CHAIRMAN

Location: Devon

I am a fourth-generation farmer based in North Devon. We are predominantly an arable and commercial sheep farm but also have pedigree Red Ruby Devon cattle and Jacob sheep. My partner and I established our flock of Valais Blacknose sheep in 2016, we enjoy showing them alongside the Jacobs and are always trying to improve our stock.



Jennifer McAllister SECRETARY

Location: Scottish Highlands

I grew up on a farm in Loch Lomond then left to study and worked in the IT industry for 20 years. Now settled back on the farm in the Highlands where we breed pedigree Charolais cattle. We also have Scottish blackface sheep. We imported our first Blacknose flock from Valais in 2014.



Kathrine (Kate) Little SECRETARY

Location: Devon

My family and I live in the Dartmoor National Park, half way up a tor. Following far too many years as a chief planning officer, I took early retirement a few years ago to help my son set up as a first-generation farmer on our land. We keep a small flock of pedigree Valais Blacknoses and Teeswater sheep along with our commercial flock.



Tom Hooper TREASURER

Location: Devon

Our flock of Valais Blacknose was established in 2016. I grew up in Somerset and after studying Economics at University moved to London for work. In 2015, I decided to do try something new and headed to Devon to work in a horse racing yard. I now split my time between helping on my partner's family farm, riding out at a racing yard, and working as a consultant for a professional services firm based in London.



Emily Duncan COUNCIL MEMBER

Location: Dumfriesshire

We purchased our first Valais Blacknose sheep in December 2014. Originally from Northumberland, I spent 10 years working in London and after getting married, moved to my husband's family farm in South West Scotland. We farm Pedigree Aberdeen Angus, Texels, Mules and a few Belted Galloways.



Polly Glyde COUNCIL MEMBER

Location: New Forest, Hampshire

Coming from a non-farming family my dream of owning sheep was realised in 2017 with the purchase of our first 3 Valais Blacknose. With time and patience our flock and love for the breed has grown. As well as time spent looking after our animals, I work with special educational needs children in our local primary school.



Kerry Costello Jones COUNCIL MEMBER

Location: Gwynedd, North Wales

We established our Valais Blacknose flock in 2017 as an addition to our family's commercial sheep farm, which primarily focuses on Lleyn, Texel crosses, Welsh Mountain and Balwen sheep. Besides breeding and showing sheep, I'm a mother of 5 and work full time in Marketing Communications for a Global Healthcare company.



Phil Garrod COUNCIL MEMBER

Location: Herefordshire

Our love of Valais Blacknose began back in 2016 when we wanted some four-legged lawnmowers that my wife insisted 'she could name and wouldn't be eaten'! Five years on and these sheep have slowly taken over our lives. When time allows, I work in the timber/biomass industry but like nothing better than being at home with the family and our ever-growing flock of Valais.



Jemma Knowles-Brown COUNCIL MEMBER

Location: South Lanarkshire

We purchased our first Valais Blacknose Sheep in 2015 to join our 500 North Country Cheviot hill farm situated in the Lowther hills. Alongside farming, I am a Veterinary Nurse in Lockerbie Dumfries and Galloway. My father and I also judge the young handler classes at the Blacknose Beauties National Show on a yearly basis.

A Guide to the Society Website

The Society website is your primary information resource channel. Here is a brief guide to help you navigate and familiarise yourself with the site which will hopefully help address any questions you may have:

www.valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk

- **The Society:** From here you can access Memberships, Breeders Map, Flockbook, Registry Fees, Society Rules, Frequently Asked Questions, Social Media and Internet Policy, Constitution, and details of the Council.
- **The Breed:** **Breed Standards** can be found here.
- **Flock Management:** Features topics that should help address any questions you may have about keeping Valais Blacknose Sheep. This is where you will find Care and Lambing Guides, and numerous other husbandry related information. If you have any topics, you would like us to cover, please do let us know by emailing the Society inbox: info@valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk
- **Show & Events Schedule:** Here you can find a list of which Agricultural shows offer dedicated Valais Blacknose Sheep classes in addition to Society related shows and sales information. As you can imagine in the current climate, this is regularly updated. Let's hope that all shows will resume as normal next year.
- **Blacknose Beauties:** This is where you can access all Blacknose Beauties grading & show results, result magazines and leading sale prices.
- **Shop:** New items are regularly added to the shop so do keep looking to see what we have available. We currently stock Swiss Bells, Prints, Thermo Mugs, Mugs as well as other Society Merchandise.
- **Gallery:** The gallery features photos that we have been received by Society members as well as some official show photography.





Social Media and Member's Forum

The **VBS Facebook Page** is where we will share dates for shows, flock management information, competitions and features a link to the Society shop.

VBS also has a forum solely for VBS members **VBS Members Forum** You are welcome to join the group and engage with other members, share your thoughts, concerns or simply use as a channel to remain connected to your fellow members.

To join please visit the Society's Facebook page and request to be added to the group, you will need to answer the membership question quoting your members reference number (same as your Grassroots number), if you are unsure of your number, please state you flock prefix, once verified access will be granted.

Instagram @valaisblacknosesheep

We would also like to draw your attention to the **Society's Social Media and Internet Policy** which applies to all members and can be found on the website.



How to Register your Lambs

Questions surrounding lamb registration are commonly received into the Society inbox so let us quickly outline the registration process for you:

- Firstly, you need to join the Society as a 'Gold' member to gain access to the Grassroots registry which you can do so here:
<https://valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk/memberships/>
- Once you join the Society and pay your membership fees you will receive your own personal login details for the Grassroots system where you can manage all your flock information.
- To register births, simply go to 'Manage My Animals' and select 'Births'.
- You can choose to: birth notify, list non-breeding animals i.e. castrated and Spitti males or fully register your lambs, please be reminded that all lambs intended for breeding need to be fully registered within 12 months.
- Once the information had been completed, submitted and respective payments received Grassroots will post out your registration certificates.



Registration Parameters

- Ewes, rams, and lambs must be offspring from registered pedigree parents (both dam & sire).
- Spitti ewe lambs must be DNA profiled.
- Males must meet breed standards in all three grading categories: appearance, conformation, fleece, and DNA profiled.
- Males which do not meet breed standards should be considered for castration. Castrated and Spitti males can be listed in Grassroots as a 'non-breeding' animal and will be issued with a 'non-breeding' certificate for authenticity if required.
- Any offspring born from cross-bred Valais Blacknose sheep are not eligible for registration. We ask that breeders selling cross breed animals declare this prior to any sale to avoid any misapprehension.

If you need to order DNA testing kits for your sheep, this can also be organised by contacting the Grassroots office directly or via your online Grassroots account.

- Simply select 'Manage My Animals'
- Followed by 'DNA Profile and Parentage verification'
- Tick the animal you wish to order a DNA kit for (you can add multiple animals at the same time), and press 'Continue'.
- Verify that the details are correct and 'Submit' your request and organise the relevant payment, once received Grassroots with post out your kits.

All information relating to Registry fees can be found here:

<https://valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk/fees/>

Please be reminded that the registration letter for newborn lambs this year is 'I'.

Society Rules & Grassroots Collaboration

Every Society is governed by rules and Valais Blacknose Society (VBS) is no different, new rules were effective and published on the website prior to launch date on January 1, 2021 and activated at point of individual membership applications. We would like to remind VBS members that when you join the Society you not only agree to these rules but also to uphold them. Therefore, we ask that you take the time to re-familiarise yourselves with all the **rules** in particular the mandatory pre-registration DNA testing of all ram lambs (exc. castrated and Spitti males) and sexed semen.

The Society merger has also enabled VBS to take ownership of the breed Registry and collaborate with Grassroots to provide us with agency management services. When liaising with Grassroots please be conscious of the fact that we are still in the middle of a Global Pandemic and that working practices have changed, therefore registrations, dispatching of DNA kits and the delivery of results may take a little longer than normal. As a Society we ask for your continued patience and remind all to be respectful when communicating with Grassroots, council, and fellow members. Should you have any question please contact the council directly via email: **info@valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk**

