

VALAIS BLACKNOSE SHEEP



Autumn 2021

NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
March 31st, 2022 • 6:30pm via Zoom

Welcome

What an eventful Summer it has been, with numerous agricultural shows offering dedicated Valais Blacknose breed classes there have been many opportunities for all to finally come back together and proudly show off their animals which is incredibly encouraging for the breed, hopefully by next year all shows will return to their standard schedules. In the meantime, plans are underway for the first Valais Blacknose Society AGM which will take place on March 31st, 2022, at 6:30pm via Zoom, further details will be communicated out to members in the coming months.



We hope you enjoy the Autumn newsletter and wish you the best of luck for the upcoming breeding season.



VBS Shows & Sales

After not being able to hold a show since 2019 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Valais Blacknose Society were very excited to welcome returning exhibitors and visitors back for the 2021 Society shows & sales. Whilst show formats were adjusted the events undoubtedly showcased some of the finest stock in the UK.

Valais Blacknose Society National Show & Sale Worcester Recap

The Supreme Champion title was awarded to David Hodge & Julian Walters with their senior ewe lamb Blacktor Iona, with Blacktor Gemima a shearling ewe also selected as the Reserve Female Champion. Supreme Reserve Champion went to senior ram Usk Valley George owned by Miles & Lisa Morgan with Orchard Gabriel owned by Gordon Preece winning Reserve Male Champion.

Supreme & Female Champion



BLACKERTOR IONA

David Hodge & Julian Walters, Blacktor Valais Blacknose Sheep Photo © MacGregor Photography



Reserve Supreme & Male Champion

USK VALLEY GEORGE

Miles & Lisa Morgan, Usk Valley Valais Blacknose Sheep
Photo © MacGregor Photography

26 lots went under the hammer, which included 13 rams, and 23 ewes. Topping the sale was Gordon Preece's shearling ram Orchard Gabriel at 7,000gns, following at 4,500gns was Blackertor Inca, then Blackertor Iona at 4,200gns both senior ewe lambs belonging to Mr David Hodge and Mr Julian Walters, who's shearling ewe Blackertor Gemima also sold at 4,000gns. Access full sales report here: <https://valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk/2021-sale-reports/>



Reserve Female Champion



BLACKERTOR GEMIMA

David Hodge & Julian Walters, Blackertor Valais Blacknose Sheep Photo © MacGregor Photography

*Reserve Male Champion
& Sale Topper (7.000gns)*



ORCHARD GABRIEL

Gordon Preece, Orchard Valais Blacknose Sheep
Photo © MacGregor Photography

Blacknose Beauties National Show & Sale Recap

Jenni McAllister and Raymond Irvine retained their Overall Supreme Champion title for the 5th year with their yearling ewe Highland Harmonie who was also the Overall Female Champion. Overall Reserve Champion and Overall Male Champion went to Welsh breeders Gerallt & Kerry Jones with their two-shear ram Snowdonia Goliath. Junior ewe lamb Cumberland Isa bred and owned by Adam & Alisha Kirkbride secured Reserve Female whilst Reserve Male was awarded to Jamie Wood's Junior ram lamb Prendwick Invisible.

The live and online sale, saw 72 lots go under the hammer. Once again Gerallt and Kerry Jones of the Snowdonia flock broke the overall breed sale record which they'd previously set in 2019 this time with homebred Snowdonia Goliath selling at 14,000gns. Following at 10,500gns and setting a new female breed record was Jenni McAllister and Raymond Irvine's Highland Harmonie, with Highland Hendrix selling at 9,000gns. Prendwick Invisible bred by Jamie Wood sold at 9,000gns with Adam Kirkbride's Cumberland Isa achieving 8,500gns. Access full sales report here: <https://valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk/2021-sale-reports/>



Supreme & Female Champion



HIGHLAND HARMONIE

*Reserve Supreme, Male Champion
& Sale Topper (14,000gns)*



SNOWDONIA GOLIATH

Gerallt & Kerry Jones, Snowdonia Valais Blacknose Photo © MacGregor Photography

This year also saw the return of the live Young Handlers competitions with 15 entries across both classes, the Age 8 and under young handler class winner was Alfie Bo Jones of the Snowdonia flock with best young handler age 9 and over awarded to Olivia Marston of the Bo-Peep flock.

Reserve Female Champion



CUMBERLAND ISA

Adam & Alisha Kirkbride, Cumberland Valais Blacknose Sheep Photo © MacGregor Photography



PRENDWICK INVINCIBLE

Jamie Wood, Valais Blacknose Sheep Northumberland Photo © MacGregor Photography

In conjunction with the two Society Shows & Sales a charity raffle was also organised in aid of the non-profit charity organisation **Farm Safety Foundation – Yellow Wellies**. With the combined proceeds from raffle ticket sales as well as 25% of sales from the 2022 Society calendar the Society has raised £1,230.00 for this worthwhile charity.

*Age 8 and under
young handler class winner*



SNOWDONIA INEVITABLE

Alfie Jones, Snowdonia Valais Blacknose
Photo © MacGregor Photography

*Age 9 and over
young handler class winner*



BO-PEEP FLOCK

Olivia Marston
Photo © MacGregor Photography

2021 Agricultural Show Results

With show season significantly curtailed over the last two years due to Covid-19 it was great to see some of the Society members heading back out onto the show circuit this season, here is a recap of the champions. Full show results can be found on the Society website:

<https://valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk/shows-events-schedule/2021-show-results/>

Bury & District Agricultural Show

Supreme Champion



CUMBERLAND HENRI

Catherine Harrison

Photo © Halsbury Valais Blacknose Sheep

Reserve Supreme Champion



BARLEY HEATHER

Bob Hargreaves, Lancashire Valais Blacknose

Photo © Lancashire Valais Blacknose



Devon County Show

Supreme Champion



BLACKERTOR GENERAL

David Hodge & Julian Walters, Blackertor Valais Blacknose Sheep

Photo © Blackertor Valais Blacknose Sheep

Reserve Supreme Champion



BLACKERTOR ESTELLE



Royal Lancashire Agricultural Show

Supreme Champion



WESTMORLAND HILLBILLY

Tim Dunne & Susan Mullen, Valais Blacknose Sheep Westmorland

Photo © Valais Blacknose Sheep Westmorland

Reserve Supreme Champion



WESTMORLAND ILDICO

Royal Cheshire County Show

Supreme Champion



DEEPDALE HAMLET

Heather & Julian Adams,
Deepdale Valais Blacknose Sheep

Photo © Deepdale Valais Blacknose Sheep

Reserve Supreme Champion



SNOWDONIA HALO

Geraltt & Kerry Jones,
Snowdonia Valais Blacknose

Photo © Snowdonia Valais Blacknose

Okehampton Show

Reserve Supreme Champion



BLACKERTOR GISELLE

David Hodge & Julian Walters,
Blackertor Valais Blacknose Sheep

Photo © Blackertor Valais Blacknose Sheep

Supreme Champion

BLACKERTOR GENERAL

David Hodge & Julian Walters,
Blackertor Valais Blacknose Sheep

Photo © Blackertor Valais Blacknose Sheep



Wensleydale Agricultural Show

Valais Champion



PRENDWICK HERO

Diane Atkinson & Jill Teasdale, Lyngarth Flock

Photo © Katie Collin



Preparing for Breeding Season

As breeding season approaches for most flocks across the country there are several practical management procedures and techniques that can be used in addition to making sure you have enough “ram power” to ensure the season ahead is a success.

Routine pre-mating tasks - Check Your 5 Ts:

Toes	Trim/inspect toes, locomotion/and signs of arthritis
Teeth	Check for gaps/loss of teeth, bony lumps/tooth abscesses, under/overshot jaw
Testicles/Teats	Testicles - Measure and check firmness (should feel like a human flexed bicep with no lumps or bumps)
Teats	Check no mastitis, no lumps/bumps
Tone	Body Condition Score - aim for a body condition of 3-4 out of 5 (spine well covered) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ewe body condition score at mating is 3.5 for lowland ewes or 3 for hill ewes. Each unit in condition is equivalent to about 12 to 15% of body weight• Ram target body condition score at mating is 3.5-4
Treat	Vaccinate (clostridial diseases and Pasteurella), lameness issues and internal/external parasites.

Rams

Make sure your ewes AND rams are fit for purpose at the start of your breeding season. Ram MOTs should be done ten weeks prior to tupping (to ensure you have enough time to get a replacement or treat any underlying problems). It takes about seven weeks for sperm to mature (after a problem has been treated). A thorough physical examination can identify 90% of problems that can cause infertility/poor performance. Semen testing can be done, but with caution. A negative semen test does not necessarily indicate infertility and re-testing may be needed.

Raddling the ram

It is essential to raddle the rams so that you can keep an eye on how mating is proceeding. Do not skip this very important task even if running rams in groups as opposed to single sire mating. Start with lighter colours which can be overmarked by a darker colour e.g. (yellow → orange → green → red → blue → black) and change the colour at least every 14 days which will show repeats. If a lot of ewes start repeating, suspect that there is a problem with a ram. There is still time to do something about it, much better than finding a lot of empty ewes at scanning.



Benefits of raddling include:

- Rams that are raddled provide a clear indication of the number of ewes mated and give farmers an indication of a lambing date.
- Infertile rams can be identified early and removed straight away from the flock.
- Changing the raddle colour regularly will allow you to identify ewes that return to service. If too many ewes repeat, a faulty ram should be suspected and replaced.
- Changing raddle colour frequently – every 7 to 10 days – enables ewes to be grouped together at housing by expected lambing date.
- Grouping ewes by expected lambing date and scanned litter size enables farmers to supplement optimum levels of feed that the ewe requires.

Options for raddling

Many people mix raddle powder with oil to make a paste and apply liberally to the area of wool just above the brisket of the ram. It's important to work the raddle paste well into wool and reapply every few days especially during the first few weeks when rams are busy. Some rub on raddle crayon to this area and again it needs to be applied regularly.

The other option is fitting a harness to the ram to which the colour crayon can be attached – the crayon block can be replaced when changing colours. It is important to check that the harness stays in place as they tend to stretch and can bed into the wool – needs to be checked and adjusted as necessary. Avoid having it slipping back on ram as it can potentially impede him from mating ewes.

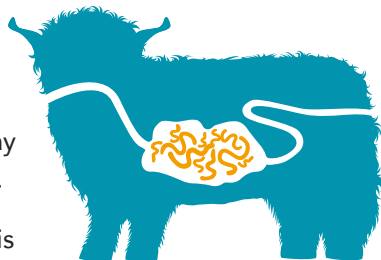


Ewes

Ewes should be vaccinated (Toxoplasmosis and Enzootic Abortion) four to six weeks BEFORE tupping.

Replacement and retained ewes will need Clostridial/Pasteurella vaccines pre-lambing (two doses four to six weeks apart OR a booster four to six weeks pre-lambing). This gives the lambs immunity (via colostrum) for up to five weeks.

Worming and fluking? Discuss with a vet if that is appropriate to do before tupping. Consider a Faecal Worm Egg Count in your decision making and monitoring technique. Younger replacement ewes may need worming, but your more mature ewes may not.



As a large, relatively slow-maturing breed, Valais Blacknose ewes in Switzerland are usually not bred until they are over 12 months of age, normally lambing for the first time at 18-24 months old at which point the animal is mature enough to cope with both pregnancy and labour. As ewes also need time to recondition post lambing its vital to condition score at weaning, or at the very latest eight weeks before tupping. They are also nonseasonal breeders, with a reproduction rate of 1.6 lambs per year, however it is recommended to breed naturally once a year.

Ewe: Ram ratio

To optimize pregnancy rates, allow:

1 mature ram to 45 ewes (up to 70 ewes more active ram breeds)

1 ram lamb 1 to 25 (up to 40 for more active ram breeds)

Once the breeding season has begun – remain vigilant to ensure ewes and rams are in good health and maintain a good level of nutrition throughout the breeding season.



Grassroots Records

It's imperative that all VBS members keep their flock records up to date, to aid with this the Society has launched an online Valais Blacknose annual survey, which will also be repeated every September.

To complete the survey 'online' please go to the web site:

www.grassroots.co.uk/valais.html

- Type in your Flock Code and your password
- If you have mislaid your flock number or password - email: agency@grassroots.co.uk and Grassroots will email them to you
- Click on the Menu top right
- Select Survey



Transfers - You may wish to log transfers of breeding sheep before clicking on the link to the survey page. Transfers are free of charge.

Births - births need to be logged before the lambs are a year old. Any submitted later will automatically be added to your confirmed survey list. All lambs should be logged in the year they are born. Notification is **FREE OF CHARGE**.

Survey - On the survey page you will be given a list of all the animals Grassroots think you own.

Tick for each to tell us if they are alive, dead, or sold. Remember lambs logged later, or previously notified lambs registered later will be automatically added to your confirmed return once you have done the initial submission, as will deaths and sales. Completing the survey NOW will save Grassroots having to send you a paper form.



Please note: Upon the sale of animals and completion of online transfer of ownership, the breeder's original pedigree certificates need to be destroyed as they will no longer be valid. Grassroots will issue updated transfer certificates to all new owners.



If transfer of ownership is notified via post please make sure to return the complete pedigree certificate to Grassroots who will process the request and issue new ownership certificates. All old pedigree certificates will be destroyed.

Valais Blacknose Society Sell My Livestock Portal

As the VBS Sell My Livestock (SML) portal grows in popularity please be reminded of the Society's advertising criteria. Adverts are approved based on the outlined criteria, if not met adverts will be denied and members will subsequently receive an email notification, in such cases please review your listing and resubmit for approval.



When creating your listing please include the following information and adhere to the below VBS advertising criteria:

- Include the word 'Pedigree' in listing titles
- Include your Society membership number (V***)
- Include multiple images showing all angles of the sheep
- Include Pedigree certificate

Advertising criteria:

- Advertisers must be VBS Gold members
- All stock for sale must be registered pedigree animals and meet breed standards (Mismarked ram adverts will not be approved)
- Wether & castrated Spitti male adverts permitted
- Lambs must be weaned prior to advertising
- No sexed semen sales
- No crossbreed adverts
- No embryo recipient adverts
- No embryo adverts



All approved adverts will appear in the VBS portal and will feature a grey society banner for easy identification. Please note that SML push VBS member ads into the Society portal every Tuesday & Thursday.

VBS SML Portal: <https://sellmylivestock.com/portal/valaisblacknose>

REMINDER TO MEMBERS

When advertising stock via the VBS SML Portal or any other independent channels please make sure to use the current and correct Pedigree Certificates to avoid any misleading of potential buyers i.e., the seller **MUST** be listed as the existing registered owner. The use of old or incorrect pedigree certificates is considered fraudulent behaviour and may result in subsequent legal actions.

QUESTIONS?



VBS operates a zero-tolerance policy and remind all to be respectful when communicating with Grassroots, council, and fellow members both face-to-face and online. Please note that VBS will not participate in or encourage any social media debates be that on our own or third-party pages. Should you have any specific questions, wish to raise topics or lodge a complaint please contact our council members directly by emailing:

info@valaisblacknosesociety.co.uk