

SVBNC



May

2023

NEWSLETTER

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EDITION 1

“Hello and welcome to the very first SVBNC newsletter”

The SVBNC was set up after the main SVBN Society asked if the different regions of the UK would like to set up their own regional clubs so here we are, we started off with a Facebook page for Scottish breeders and we delighted to say we have 162 members , From there we have formed a small committee, with the aim to run events throughout the year to promote the breed get breeders and anyone who loves the breed together to generally learn from each other and have lots of sheep related fun. We particularly would like to encourage young breeders to become involved in the group.



“Pleased to see a club for the **SCOTTISH** breeders”



CHAIRMAN – RAYMOND IRVINE

I am delighted to see the new SVBNC now up and running, I am looking forward to the events and the first ever points trophies to be awarded this year.

The Society would like to thank the committee for its hard work to get things up and running and we offer our full support looking to the future.

Being a Scottish flock, the Highland Valais Blacknose flock is especially pleased to see a club for the Scottish breeders to meet and enjoy the breed.

So good luck to all in the coming season.

**Raymond Irvine - Chairman
Valais Blacknose Society**

Society Shop

The shop has clothes, society ties, pins and gift ideas.



<https://bit.ly/VBSShop>



LAMB REGISTRATIONS

Reminder this year's letter is **K**.

As per the email from the society, please remember to process your DNA kits as soon as possible as they will take a while to return!



ET POLICY VOTE

The ET consultation and survey has resulted in a draft ET Policy created by the VBN Council. This now ready to be voted on by gold and silver members.

[ET Policy and Vote](#)

Miss Visp



VISP, SWITZERLAND 2023

A highlight of any Swiss breeder is Miss Visp. This is a 2 day event held in February in Visp, Switzerland every year.

On arrival the sheep are penned into their age groups awaiting grading. The public cannot get into this area whilst the Graders work in pairs around them. It's a tense time!

The sheep are graded the same as here in the UK based on their overall appearance, conformation and wool. Sheep awarded maximum points are sectioned off and the judges then decide which maximum point sheep is the category winner and who is runner up.

During this time the public can watch and have some refreshments and try some beautiful food.

Television crews are on standby to wait for the announcement of this year's winner. This year **Eyer Marco** took both Miss Visp with a 2-year-old ewe and Junior Miss Visp!



Once the winner is announced the public are allowed up close and personal to the pens to be able to see these amazing animals.

On day 2 Miss Visp winners and runners-up are invited to the stage at the end of the first day for judge's commentary. Prizes are presented during an official ceremony on the second day of the show whereby winners and the best ewes/ewe lambs from each age group are shown in order of placing. There is also a fantastic choir who not only perform but spontaneously start yodelling!

For those who are interested in the rams Widdermarkt takes place in early March each year in Visp.

“Miss Visp is just simply outstanding to see!”

Feature Flock



AYRSHIRE VALAIS BLACKNOSE SHEEP



Hi, we are Tom and Joan Blackwood who along with our son Andrew own the Ayrshire Valais Blacknose flock. We are based in Stewarton Ayrshire 20 min south of Glasgow and have a flock of around 130 Valais, including lambs. They are split between 96 Females 27 Males and 8 wethers.

Our Valais journey started in 2017 visiting the Royal Highland Show. In a small tent, we saw the cutest lambs we had ever seen! We decided that day that we would try get some. We have been on holiday in Switzerland before, so it was nice thought to have some Swiss sheep at home.

Early 2018 a neighbor was selling his smallholding and moving away asked if we were still interested in getting some Valais, as he had two wethers and a ewe for sale. We didn't hesitate and were then the proud owners of Oli, Oscar and Belle. I was brought up on a beef farm, so I didn't have much experience with sheep, so it was a steep learning curve, but we really enjoyed the challenge.

Not long after we got the first three Valais, we bought a ram and four ewes from Emma Collinson (Gemstones) our little flock was starting to expand. November 2018 was exciting as we had our first lambs Fiona, Faith and Floss all of which we still own.

At Blacknose Beauties 2019 we met Geralt and Kerry from Snowdonia flock, they had a gorgeous ram they were showing called Shoemakers Victor. We fell in love with him, and we were lucky enough to be able to purchase him at the auction. He has been a mainstay in our flock and has produced some stunning lambs. His genetics are now throughout the UK, Ireland, and New Zealand (hopefully in America soon as well!)

Over the next few years, we traveled around the country trying to add the best bloodlines available, we now have Moorahill, Prendwick, Snowdonia, Deepdale, Oldhams, Fernyford, Blackertor, Rosehall, Kinneff and a few others in our flock. We only breed naturally and aim to replicate the quality of the sheep in Switzerland to the best of our ability.

Late 2021 we started the process to import Valais from Switzerland. This proved to be a hugely complicated and expensive process but after 6 months of red tape, vet checks, customs issues, and form filling eventually in January Allesia arrived with us. She was awarded maximum points for her age in Switzerland and both her parents are maximum points. She has just produced a fantastic ram lamb which we are hoping to show later this year.

In 2022 we took on the challenge of showing our sheep, this is a thing we had never done before so it was daunting. We started at local shows in the A.O.B classes and found we really enjoyed the experience, so we started entering Valais classes. I'll never forget Joans face when I told her we had entered The Royal Highland show!!!

Considering it was our first time showing we had some great results. One of the highlights was second in the ram lamb class at the Highland show. Fantastic result in a very strong class.

Later in August 2022 we entered the Blacknose Beauties show at Carlisle. This was the ultimate challenge where the very best sheep in the country come to compete. We had a fantastic time even though it was the most nerve-wracking thing we have ever done and ended up receiving maximum points for four of our homegrown sheep. We also achieved three first in class awards. We honestly could not believe it.

We were lucky enough to attend the Miss Visp and the Widdermarkt Ram show in Switzerland this year. It was great to see the passion of the Swiss breeders and to be involved in such family-oriented events. The quality of sheep over there must be seen to be believed.

The biggest thing for us about owning Valais sheep is the lifelong friends we have made. Everyone in the VBN society is so helpful and willing to offer advice. We have met so many lovely people who are all so passionate and committed to this stunning breed. It has certainly been an amazing journey for us and although we have made mistakes along the way, we are continually learning and trying to improve our flock to meet the very best Swiss standards.



Valais require a lot of care. You would think as a hill breed, they would be hardy and low maintenance, but we have found the opposite. We footbath every six weeks, check/clip feet where necessary we also give them a 4 in one vitamin/mineral bolus every six months. This has helped the sheep's condition immensely. As we live in a wet part of the country, our sheep are inside from October – March. We have found this to be much better for their feet and general condition.

We are currently lambing, and although it's hard work with little sleep it is one of the most rewarding times of the year. We are delighted with the results so far. We will have a selection of ewe and ram lambs available after weaning.

Then we are on to preparing for 2023 show season. We are going to be attending various shows this year including Highland, Yorkshire and of course Carlisle. We are looking forward to a busy summer, catching up with other breeders and friends at shows and social events.

Show prep is a very personal thing. I think most breeders have their own way of prepping. One thing to avoid is over washing, we have learned from visits to Switzerland that wool quality is paramount, and some highly graded sheep were not that clean but had phenomenal wool quality. You can do more damage to the fleece by trying to get sheep snow white (I speak from experience!)

Our long-term plan is to enjoy these beautiful sheep, keep building our flock and raising standards as much as we can. It has become an all-consuming hobby, but we wouldn't change it for the world.

Top Flock Tips



NEMATODIRUS IN LAMBS - GALEDIN VETS – KELSO

Nematodirus is an important production limiting parasite, traditionally affecting lambs aged 1-3 months old at pasture when losses can be high. Clinical signs are characterised by sudden onset of profuse and watery diarrhoea, lethargy, abdominal pain, rapid weight loss, dehydration and sudden deaths. Lambs may show typical “tucked-up belly” appearance and if the infection is left untreated, death rate can be high. In intensive systems nematodirus must be differentiated from acute coccidiosis, although the two conditions may be present concurrently.

The life cycle of *Nematodirus battus* is unusual and unique. Within the parasite egg, infective larvae develop which are able to survive freezing conditions on pasture over the winter months. Hatching and release of these larvae can happen only after a period of cold exposure followed by average daily air temperatures of greater than 10/11 °C over a period of days. In the UK these conditions usually occur in May/June, depending on the type of spring, and the infective larvae will appear on the pasture in huge numbers at this time.



The life cycle of *N. battus* does not involve adult sheep, only lambs, (and dairy calves) so accumulation of pasture contamination can take place over several years especially where lambs are grazed on the same fields year after year. The level of infection sustained by lambs very much depends on the simultaneous hatching of larvae and the susceptibility of grazing lambs at that time. During a warm spring with early hatching, the bulk of April born lambs are too young to be grazing sufficient herbage and the risk factors are low. In a cold spring, hatching of the larvae is delayed. As the lambs often becoming age-immune from

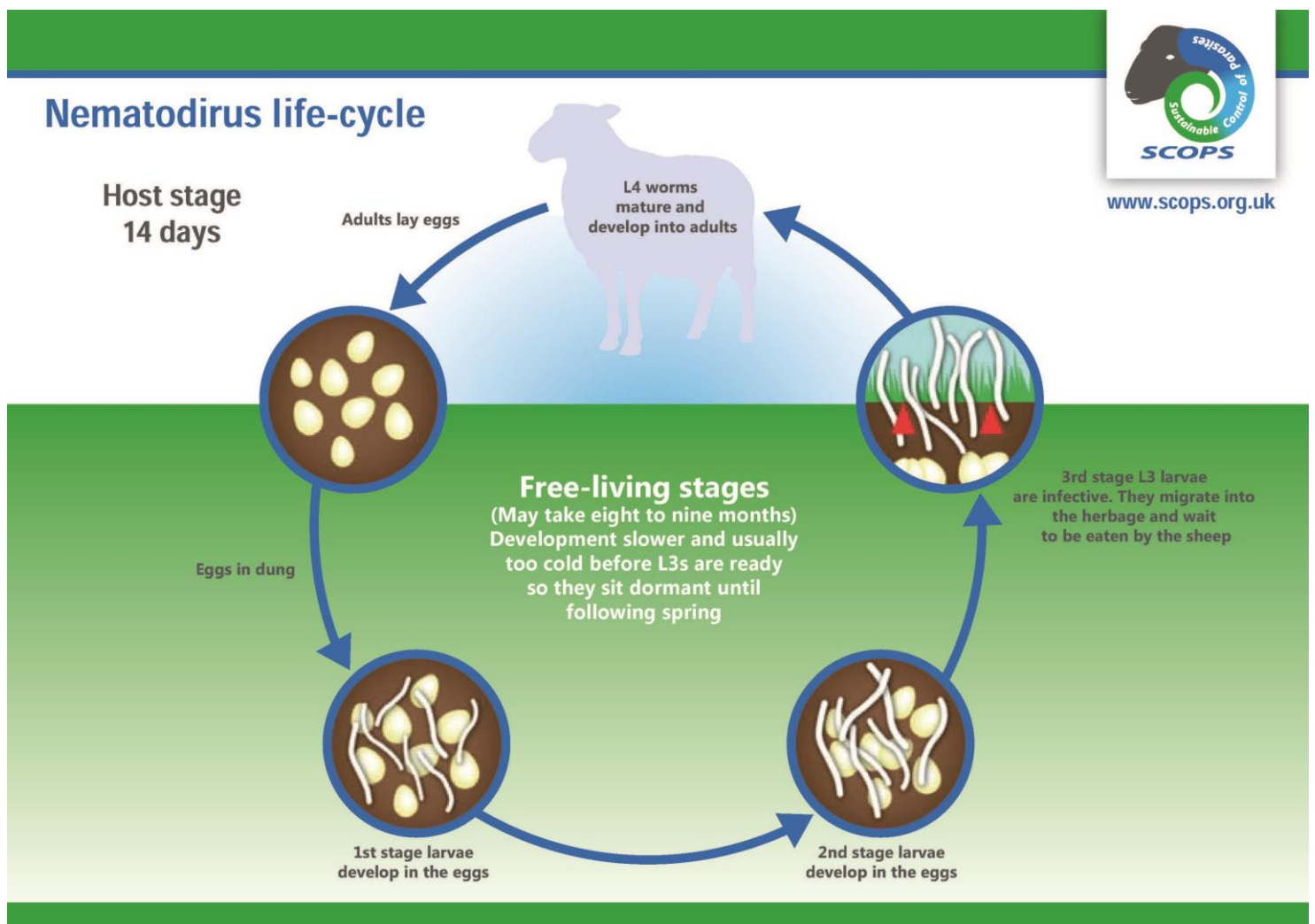
around 3 months old, again the risk is low, with perhaps only late May born lambs being susceptible to disease. Somewhere in the middle of these two poses the greatest risk to spring lambs in this country and the nematodirus risk for different areas, relating to weather conditions and disease surveillance are well published in the farmer's press each year during the spring period and on the [SCOPS website](#).

Diagnosis of nematodirus is based on clinical signs of scour, weight loss and death in lambs approximately 5-12 weeks of age which are grazing pasture used by lambs in the previous year, and also by taking into account the time of year and the local disease risk forecast. The diagnosis can be supported by looking at faecal samples and identifying the presence of *Nematodirus* eggs, however the absence of eggs does not rule out a diagnosis of nematodiriosis because disease can occur from larval damage before egg-laying adult worms have developed.

Control of *N. battus* can be reasonably effective if the practice of grazing lambs on the same pasture in consecutive years can be avoided. This is despite the fact that *N. battus* eggs can survive on the ground for up to two years, and that young dairy calves can harbour.

N. battus in high numbers and contribute to pasture contamination. However, on the majority of sheep farms this strategy is not feasible, so there must be some reliance on an appropriate wormer being used at the most effective time in the spring.

N. battus is susceptible to most of the modern anthelmintics but our usual advice is to use a white (benzimidazole) drench as it is cheap and usually effective against nematodirus and is a wormer group which many farms have resistance to when it comes to the other summer worms. Depending on the year, anthelmintic treatments may be required at 3–4-week intervals during May and June. Anthelmintic resistance by *N. battus* has not been recognised as a problem in the UK at the moment but the emergence of resistance should be careful. During recent years, a different pattern of nematodiosis has emerged, with outbreaks occurring well into the summer and even autumn, much later than previously seen. It is not known whether infective larvae hatching on the pasture in summer months no longer require the classical “priming” of a cold spell followed by the minimum warm daily temperatures in the spring – perhaps related to the changing weather patterns we are experiencing in the UK? In many flocks, lambs seem slow to develop age-related resistance, with lambs much older than 3 months old showing clinical nematodiosis. Another possibility is that the eggs which are being deposited by lambs earlier in the spring are causing infectivity to later born lambs.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Demo Day - 3rd June
- Scotsheep (TBC)
- Black Beauties - 18-19th Aug
- SVBNC Annual Show - 27th Aug
(Pending allocation of a Judge)
- Small Holders Festival - 21st Oct
- End of year award (Nov)



COMMITTEE NEWS

Call out for committee members - We are currently a small committee, and we would like to invite more members to join us. As long as you are a member of the Valais Blacknose Sheep Society, we would love to have you involved!

If you would like to meet more members and be involved in the running of the group it would be amazing, it's very informal just an occasional online meeting and we have a WhatsApp group to keep in touch and share ideas.

You can do as much or as little as you would like to be involved. We do specifically need someone to fill a Treasure role, but mostly a love of the breed and an enthusiasm to have more events in Scotland. Please email us if you are interested. The more the merrier!



DEMO DAY

With the kind permission of Emily Duncan and family from Whitehall flock we are holding a Preparation Showing Demo Day 3rd June 2023 covering:

- Washing
- Breed standards
- What is the judge looking for?
- Ring Etiquette
- Cake!
- Quiz and Raffle
- Meet other breeders!
- Meet the Whitehall Flock

[Tickets available now - £12.50 +admin fee](#)

NEW



SVBNC ANNUAL SHOW

New this year will be the Scottish Club Annual Show. This will be held on Sunday 27th August. More information will be available soon! It's hoped that this event will travel around Scotland being hosted by other Agricultural shows.

NEW

Showing News



SVBN SHOWING LEAGUE

We are super excited to announce the first [SVBNC points Trophy League](#) has now been finalised. We hope this will be well supported and all members will be keen to get their hands, and flock name on one of the very first SVBN trophies. It is designed to encourage all members especially our young shepherds to get out and about and show their sheep, meet other members, and generally have fun days out showing.

There will be trophies, certificates, and rosettes on offer. If you would like to sponsor a trophy and have it named after your flock/business or family permanently, please get in touch at via our club email.

We will be looking to hold our Annual Trophy Awards Event in November date and venue to be confirmed.

If anyone would like to volunteer to coordinate and add the points for trophies that would be amazing. Please email the club svbn@hotmail.com

SCOTTISH SHOW DATES

NEW

- Drymen - 27th May
- Royal Highland - 22-25th June
- Braco - 22nd July
- Black Isles - 2-3rd Aug
- SVBNC Annual Show – 27th Aug

Please keep an eye on the Society website for new shows being added. We will also add these to the SVBNC Facebook page.

SCOTTISH SHOW DATES

Exciting news the society has been doing a lot of work bringing on new judges and shows with dedicated Valais classes. There are a few more shows now available in Scotland.

Please support these shows and the hard work the society and agricultural shows are doing to bring these to members.

We hope to see you at the 1st SVBNC Show.

[Full UK VBN list of classes from the Society](#)