

Making the most of Estimated Breeding Values (EBV's)

The base year for the Suffolk Scheme was 1990 and EBV's are expressed as amount of weight, muscle and fat in relation to the average of over 4000 lambs recorded at 21 weeks of age in that year.

Weight EBV: The 1990 average was **56.98 kg**.

A ram with an weight EBV of 8 kg should produce lambs weighing at least 4 kg more at that age ; as half the genes come from the sire and half from the dam.

In practice lambs sired by high weight EBV rams should reach the farms normal slaughter weight 2 to 3 weeks earlier or could be taken to heavier weights as long as they have no excess fat.

Muscle EBV: In 1990 the average muscle depth above the third lumbar vertebrae was **29.61 mm**. In round figures every 0.3 muscle EBV represents 1% more muscle when compared to 1990. So for example a ram with a muscle EBV of 1.59 has over 5% more, 3.08 has over 10% more and 4.69 has over 15% more muscle.

The greater the muscle depth the higher the saleable meat yield of the carcass.

Fat EBV: The 1990 average fat depth was **3.51 mm**.

A 10% difference is an EBV of 0.35, so the units are very small and great attention should be paid to the fat EBV as it influences the degree of ' finish'. .If lambs on your farm finish easily and always handle very 'fleshy' go for a ram with a minus rating, i.e. -0.33 is over 10% less fat. One can take these lambs to higher weights without getting them too fat.

If lambs are more difficult to 'finish' go for a + rating. Rams with a + rating for fat are penalised when the index is worked out and therefore very fat rams are usually lower index rams unless other EBV's are exceptional.

Vaccinations: All rams are in the full Heptavac P system - Booster to be given next spring

Sales:

An on-farm sale will be held every year at Gallowshill, Farm, Cambo NE61 4LB on:

The last Friday in August

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