Baber Ewelamb top of Suffolk Evaluation

Like everyone across all industries, we are operating in extraordinary times and undoubtedly the full consequences of COVID-19 on our sheep businesses is yet to fully materialise. However, whatever the changes ahead, the essence of our sheep breeding philosophy remains unchanged – to produce **high performance, fit and fertile rams, with high libido** – which **thrive on an all grass diet**.

Currently one of our **ewelambs (UK 0 3639455 09547)** is the **top sheep** ever in the **Suffolk evaluation, and in the 2019-born lambs** there are currently **12 animals** with **indexes of over 400,** of which **seven were bred in our flock.** We have bred the top 3 Stock Sires in the Suffolk evaluation, and within the Texel breed, one of our home bred ram lambs **(UK 0 3639455 09464)** is one of the highest indexed stock rams in the breed.

For the last 15-20 years we have been recording and selecting for ease of lambing and lamb vigour in all our breeds with a view to lambing all our ewes outdoors. The Exlanas have always lambed outdoors and over the last few years we are now lambing most of the Suffolks and Texels outdoors as well, including the ewelambs lambing at 12 months old. Both **9547** (the highest Index ewelamb) and her twin sister **9548 lambed this year, as a ewelambs, outdoors.**

Since the introduction of the **National Terminal Sire Evaluation Scheme**, we now have proven and fully transparent performance data, easily accessed through **Signetdata.com**. (a direct link to our data is included at the end of this update). This, together with our own on farm data, helps us make much better and informed breeding management decisions. The Evaluation Scheme gives a direct comparison of rams across the **12 Terminal Sire breeds,** now includes all purebred and crossbred animals, regardless of breed, amounting to some **3 million individual terminal sire animal records from 650,000 animals.**

These records include data coming from lambing records, 8-week weighing, ultrasound back fat scanning, and results from CT scanning. (For the last two years the mobile CT unit has come to the farm at Tiverton). The evaluation also incorporates abattoir slaughter data, recording **carcase weight, conformation, fat class and days to slaughter** from the Ram Compare Project, providing an even greater ability to compare rams with new commercially driven EBV's and by improving the accuracy of existing EBVs. Performance recording is at the heart of our breeding maxim, promoting 'Genetics not Cosmetics'. We fully applaud this 'one system' approach, and it gives us huge confidence in the high-quality rams we offer for sale.

We have now supplied 6 rams into the project, and this helps to underpin the accuracy of the BLUP evaluation of our rams. We were thrilled when our ram held the top overall ranking position in the first run of the **Ram Compare Project** and four years later is still near the top of the list. Once again, we are delighted with our performance figures of the rams we have on offer this year and of our lambs born in 2020.

The comments and reports we get back from you, our customers, unquestionably support our continuing objective - to consistently produce 'Fit for purpose' **rams which will deliver more profit**. We remain committed to maintaining the highest levels of biosecurity ensuring our rams have the best possible health status, helping to keep our flock, and our customers' flocks, healthy and productive. Rearing the **rams entirely on a grass diet**, ensures that we are producing rams with **good longevity, high libido and fertility** which produce **more profitable lambs** better able to **thrive on all grass diets.**

We are using this same breeding strategy across all our flocks, **Suffolks, Texels and Exlanas**, although the Exlana focuses on different traits. The Exlana has made enormous progress, attracting huge recognition and is now a stand-alone high performance, efficient, fully shedding maternal breed of sheep.

This year you will see all our Texels, bar two, have Terminal Sire indexes in the Top 5% for breed. Again, the Suffolks are **almost all in the Top 5%,** four in the Top 10% and just three outside the top 10%. In the ram lists, we have highlighted most individual EBVs and Index columns where the value is above average the rams which are in the **top 5% of their breed** are highlighted with a **green background**. We have not highlighted the Fat Depth EBV since most people do not want to aim for extreme fat or lean animals, we can discuss this further if you wish.

We've always maintained our business is dependent on the success of yours and this year is no exception, we hope our progress might prompt you to 'invest and improve' your productivity too and more importantly the profitability of your flock .

Louise and Peter Baber   **July 2020**

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https://www.baber.co.uk
https://www.signetdata.com/breeder-owner?id=117979
https://www.signetdata.com/animaldetails?id=900036245

https://signetdata.com/animaldetails?id=900036056

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