Friday 17th November – Lawrence Room

12.00 Lunch

12.30 Registration desk opens, and check-in available

14.00 Welcome to Friday’s session – Kim Matthews (AHDB Beef & Lamb)

14.05 Signet Update – Samuel Boon
An update of Signet Breeding Services activity in 2016 and 2017, including an update of the terminal sire breeds’ combined breed analysis (CBA).

14.45 Levy boards’ plans for promoting sheep genetics
Updates from AHDB Beef & Lamb (Katie Brian), HCC (Gwawr Parry), QMS (Doug Bell) and AgriSearch (Elizabeth Earle).

15.15 RamCompare results – Liz Genever and Bridget Lloyd
A summary of the project and what has been achieved. Plus an introduction to the presentation of the results. The results will be available at the coffee break.

15.45 Coffee Break

20.00 Drinks Reception – sponsored by AgriSearch, AHDB Beef & Lamb, HCC and QMS

20.30 Conference Dinner
The After Dinner Speaker will be Peter Hardwick (AHDB) – What does Brexit really mean for the sheep industry?
Saturday 18th November – Lawrence Room

8.45  Registration
9.00  Jonathan Barber
      Chairman’s Welcome
9.10  1: Improving genetic gain – terminal traits
      Chaired by Kim Matthews, AHDB Beef & Lamb
9.20  Mike Coffey, Professor of Livestock Informatics
      mike.coffey@sruc.ac.uk
      With Nicola Lambe, sheep geneticist,
      SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian
      nicole.lambe@sruc.ac.uk

      New carcase traits in genetic evaluations
      Mike will be discussing the commercial benefits of
      RamCompare and what could be learnt from the beef
      industry in terms of industry-derived data.

      Nicola will be discussing the new scanning
      recommendations and the new computed
      tomography (CT) derived traits for rams.

9.55  Nóirín McHugh, Research Officer - Beef and Sheep Genetics, Teagasc Moorepark, Co. Cork
      noirin.mchugh@teagasc.ie

      How to accelerate rate of gain
      Nóirín will be highlighting the work that is being done by
      Sheep Ireland to increase the genetic potential of Irish
      rams. She will discuss the project that is comparing the
      performance of Suffolk and Texel rams coming from
      New Zealand and Ireland. She will explain how they are
      using genomics to develop their evaluations.

10.25 Discussion
10.45 Coffee break

11.15 2: How to encourage more people to eat lamb
       Chaired by Phil Stocker, NSA

11.20 Rizvan Khalid, Senior director, Euro Quality Lambs Ltd, Shropshire
       rizvan@euroqualitylambs.co.uk

       The potential of halal for the UK sheep industry
       Muslims consume approximately 20% of all the
       sheep meat sold in England. Rizvan will be discussing
       the halal sheepmeat market and future opportunities,
       including how consumer demands are changing.

11.45 Ed Smith, research and development project manager, Texel Sheep Society,
       Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
       edsmith@texel.co.uk

       With Jo Conington, livestock geneticist,
       SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian
       jo.conington@sruc.ac.uk

       Genetic solutions to improve meat quality
       SRUC, Texel Sheep Society, ABP and Morrisons have been
       working together to understand the components of meat
       quality in lambs and whether genetic solutions are
       available. Jo and Ed will be discussing the project and what
       it will mean for the sheep industry.

12.10 Joyce Campbell, sheep farmer,
       Armadale Farm, Sutherland
       info@armadalefarm.co.uk @armadalefarm

       The sheep industry needs a PR agency
       Joyce will be discussing how she uses social media to
       engage with a wide range of people. She will be providing
       guidance on how other producers and breeders should be
       highlighting the positives of the sheep industry to
       consumers.

12.35 Discussion
12.50 Lunch (with opportunity to look at the posters and submit questions for the panel session after lunch).
13.45  **3: Panel session – How to get the industry to act positively**
Questions will be submitted in advance by the audience via paper and Twitter. Chaired by Chris Lloyd.
The panel will consist of Dewi Jones, Lesley Stubbings, Neil McGowan, Fiona Lovatt and Bryan Griffiths.

15.10  **Coffee**

15.40  **4: Improving genetic gain – maternal traits**
Chaired by Doug Bell, QMS

15.45  **Mark Young, Head of Innovation, Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock, Sand Hutton Innovation Campus, York**
mark.young@cielivestock.co.uk

**Genetic approaches to improving lamb survival**
Poor lamb survival is a key cause of reproductive inefficiency in flocks globally with no detectable improvement over the last forty years. Mark will discuss the options that could be used, based on his work with Sil in NZ over the last 15 years and with help from collaborator Forbes Brien from University of Adelaide.

16.30  **Janet Roden, Independent geneticist, Aberystwyth**
janetroden@btinternet.com

**Using genetics to improve performance on hill farms**
Janet will discuss work that has been undertaken on some hill farms in Wales to improve the genetics. This is specifically relevant due to the increased competition in the light lamb market.

16.45  **George Cullimore, Performance Recorded Lleyn Breeders (PRLB) Group**
coombebarn@gmail.com

With Dr Karen Fairlie-Claire, research associate, University of Glasgow
karen.fairlie-clarke@glasgow.ac.uk

**Getting better at collecting what is required**
George will highlight the work that the PRLB group have been doing in terms of supplying large quantities of electronic data to Signet.
Karen will discuss the work she has done with the PRLB group on using IgA levels in saliva as a new phenotype for selecting for parasite resistance.
They will discuss plans for the new IgA EBV.

17.00  **Jo Conington, Livestock Geneticist, SRUC, Roslin Institute Building, Midlothian**
jo.conington@sruc.org.uk

**Improving maternal traits in a terminal breed**
Jo will discuss the Innovate-funded project aiming to understand the genetic and genomic solutions to breed Texel ewes more resistant to mastitis. The project is also looking for genomic solutions to lameness.

17.15  **Discussion**

17.30  **Poster Session - Authors will be standing by their poster.**

19.15  **Wine Reception** – sponsored by SRUC and EGENES

20.00  **Dinner Discussion on the future of the sheep industry – led by AHDB Beef & Lamb**
Sunday 19th November – Lawrence Room

9.20  5: Data driving decisions
Chaired by Dave Ross, Agri-EPI Centre

9.25  Huw Williams, sheep farmer, Banc Farm, Talley, Carmathenshire
huw180@hotmail.co.uk

Effective methods of recording parentage in extensive systems
Huw received a HCC scholarship in 2015 and visited Australia and New Zealand comparing different methods of DNA shepherding and EID tracking. He will be discussing the most appropriate technologies for the UK.

9.45  Steven Morrison, project manager, AgriSearch, Belfast
steven.morrison@agrisearch.org

The need for a data hub
Agri-Food Strategy Board identified genetic improvement as fundamental to Northern Ireland being competitive in the long-term. Steven was appointed to manage the development of a data hub to coordinate data collection across livestock sectors. He will highlight the current activity and the recommendations from the recent Abacus Bio review.

10.05 Jasmeet Kaler, Associate Professor in Epidemiology and Farm Animal Health, University of Nottingham
jasmeet.kaler@nottingham.ac.uk

and George Williamson, Agricultural Research Manager, Dunbia, Belfast
gwilliamson@dunbia.com

Thinking differently about how to collect health data
Jasmeet and George will talk about how innovative technology can be used for recording and management of lameness and other health data. They will also discuss findings from their research on farmer’s beliefs on adoption of technology.

10.25 Discussion

10.40 Coffee Break

11.10 6: Doing our jobs better
Chaired by James Ruggeri, HCC

11.15 Caroline Liddell, PhD student, University of Bristol
caroline.liddell@bristol.ac.uk

Using technology to improve our understanding of parasite risks
Sheep are exposed to a wide variety of parasites which are acquired from the environment through foraging. Caroline is using drones, GPS tags and camera traps to monitor habitat use and parasite avoidance behaviour in sheep.

11.35 Kate Phillips, independent sheep consultant, Shropshire
katephillips58@aol.com

Improving the welfare and longevity of rams in commercial sheep flocks
Kate will report on the findings of the Animal Welfare Foundation-funded project on ram welfare and longevity. She will discuss the recommendations for ram breeders and buyers to ensure rams have a long and productive working life.

12.10 Lesley Stubbings, LSSC Ltd, independent sheep consultant, Northamptonshire
lesley@lssc-ltd.co.uk

How to maximise the potential of sheep production
Lesley, along with Nerys Wright (AHDB Beef & Lamb) and researchers from the University of Nottingham, have completed a four year AHDB Beef & Lamb-funded project on maximising weaning weight of lambs. Lesley will be discussing the findings, particularly in relation to body condition scoring and weight targets for lambs at eight weeks and 90 days of age.

12.45 Jonathan Barber
Chairman’s Closing Remarks

13.00 Lunch