Hampshire Down Ram

An investment in the future

At a time of immense change in the UK sheep industry, both in terms of support payments and the industry's role in the wider UK economy, ram selection for a commercial enterprise has an increasingly important role to play. The selection of a terminal sire has to guarantee to increase efficiency and ultimately profitability of the sheep enterprise.

The Hampshire Down has prided itself on its ability to sire lambs that grow quickly and are proven to finish well on a variety of systems. Lambs are also born with a good covering of wool and are quick to suckle, making their survival chances much better than some other breeds. Farmers continually report having more living lambs to market than from other terminal sires, another commercial benefit of using the Hampshire and one so often over-looked when tempted to focus purely on carcass alone.

Having the benefit of all the native traits ensures that the Hampshire Down Ram will last for many seasons and give the commercial breeder a significant return on investment. Over his lifetime he will work significantly longer than other terminal sire breeds covering a high number of ewes each season.

FIRST FOR GROWTH & FINISH*

EXCEPTIONAL FEED CONVERSION

THE EFFICIENT & SUSTAINABLE CHOICE

Improved carcass weights, coupled with fast growth also make the Hampshire Down the ideal cross for any of the maternal breeds. When crossed onto a Lleyn ewe for example, the Hampshire Down shortens finishing times of prime lambs considerably.

The implications of this are significant and are often the main consideration of commercial farmers choosing to use a Hampshire Down. These lambs are more efficient; they will reach target weight earlier, thereby freeing up grazing for the rest of the flock, hitting an earlier market and reducing inputs, including labour and vet and med.

These good lamb early growth rates are supported by the recent results of the Ram Compare project. This data also backs up the claim that the Hampshire Down cross lambs are first and fastest to finish from grass on commercial systems.

In the recently published results of AHDBs' RamCompare project, it was proven that Hampshire Down sired lambs finished quicker than any other terminal sire. The table shows the results for Days-to-Slaughter, with Hampshire Down sired lambs outperformed any other breed.

RamCompare is AHDBs' commercial progeny test for terminal sires and the 2020 results are in. Its proven again that Hampshire Down sired lambs are the fastest finishers. Fewer days to slaughter lowers cost of production and increases the ability to hit peak market times.

Hampshire Down rams leave the rest behind.

LEADING HAMPSHIRE DOWN RAMS FOR DAYS-TO-SLAUGHTER*

	RAM ID	BREED	Estimated Breeding Value (days)	Accuracy %
1st	NORMANBY 27Z1700622	Hampshire Down	-18.48	98
2nd	THORBECK 80x1700402	Hampshire Down	-12.96	97
3rd	BRETTLES RICARDO 16WF01887	Charollais	-9.84	98
4th	LECROPT 53Y1800449	Hampshire Down	-9.82	96
5th	THORGANBY 9012 HRF:09012	Meatlinc	-9.73	97
6th	YARCOMBE FLASHMAN 30N1501738	Hampshire Down	-9.66	89

Of the 89 rams from 9 breeds on test, 5 Hampshire rams came in the top 10 for days to slaughter.

Commercial breeders switching to Hampshire Down rams are reaping the rewards seeing Hampshire Down lambs regularly being drawn in earlier slaughter batches, adding to the long-term profitability of their business.

Continued performance recording through AHDB/Signet - National Terminal Sire Evaluation has accelerated the genetic progress significantly over the last 10 years, with breeders selecting for growth and muscling. This has meant that Hampshire Down rams have become leaner creating animals with a reduced overall fat content whilst retaining enough cover to finish more easily than their continental competitors.