

The first North West & borders DSS zoom group meeting

18/12/23 – 7:30pm

Meeting started with a small welcome & introduction from myself Eilidh Hortin to the members who attended the meeting as this is the first time we have hosted a meeting for the group as the 'North West & the borders DSS group'

Apologies

- Cavan Maguire
- Henry Jewitt
- Rosie Harvey

Attendees

- Eilidh Hortin
- Daryl Brown
- Jenni Cannon
- Richard Oxley
- Edward adamson
- Rob Davenport
- Deb Metcalfe
- Megan Rowlandson
- Andrew Metcalfe
- Kirsty Jamieson
- Nicola Foster
- Andrew Kirkbride
- Jack Sim
- Kerry Sim
- Jenni Sharp
- Bobby Sharp
- Kath Leivers
- Owen Marrs
- Tracey Gibson
- Emma Gibson
- Claire Capstick
- Nick Brown
- Chloe Harding
- Rob Bland
- Katherine Seddon
- MJ lister
- George Lister
- Betty Palmer
- Greame Jackson
- Ellie Jackson
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Agenda item 1

Appointing secretary & chairman....

Secretary- Eilidh Hortin

Proposed by Edward Adamson, seconded by Andrew Kirkbride

Chairman/woman- Andrew Kirkbride & Megan Rowlandson

Andrew proposed by eilidh hortin seconded by jack sim

Megan Rowlandson proposed by Claire capstick seconded by nick brown

Young Representative- jack Sim & owen marris

Proposed by Eilidh Hortin Seconded by Rob Davenport

Agenda item 2

Meeting ideas...

Moving on from the first agenda I asked the group members what kind of meetings they would be interesting the following ideas were the most common ones which I will be able to look into planning in the new year

- Sheep dressing demo
- A judging day to allow us to learn more on judging classes of sheep
- Flock tours (multiple to allow more members to attend)
- Kirsty Jamieson also offered to do some talks on nutrition/foot care and other subjects of interest as she works alongside the SAC so has the ability to cover a range of topics.
- Vet talks
- Butchery demo on a DSS carcass

Any other business

Graded sheep

There was a number off questions raised regarding graded/commercial sheep in particular the fat lambs & the ewes used in a commercial system... it was heavily agreed that we as a group could be doing more to promote the breed in a commercial setting.

The quality of graded sheep is reflected on the breed of ewe that was first used to start the grading system as well as the DSS tup used and Andrew Kirkbride reminded us all that the kind of sheep we need to focus on for commercial breeding systems are the ones that can produce us lambs to compete in the markets against the likes of the beltex & texel lambs.

The other issue that was raised regarding the cross bred lambs heading through the fat market was that some auctions aren't entering the lambs as Dutch Spotted and therefore we are missing out on seeing market reports, buyers & in the end consumers showing & seeing the full potential of the DSS lambs. This is where we as a group can step up and make sure that when we are selling our stock they're being sold under the correct category.

Rob Davenport is heavily involved in the running of the Royal Cheshire show and he was very helpful throughout the meeting with his thoughts and ideas on how we can move forward in promoting the crossbred ewes... He proposed that he could look into setting up a dutch spotted crossbred sheep section at the show in 2024 which would be a huge step forward as it would allow for a variety of grades to be shown at a very popular show which in turn could promote them to a wider audience.

Young members

Another point that was made was that within our North England & borders group we have a lot of young members who are very keen to get involved in the showing, selling and generally just wanting to widen their knowledge on the breed.

For this we appointed Jack sim to be our Junior Representative to work alongside the young members (under 18) to look into things that they would be interested in doing to make sure we are covering things that will interest everyone of all ages.

It was also mentioned that we could look into setting up a points system for the young members at the shows over 2024 and look into providing awards at the yearly agm which I think would prove popular and a good incentive for the young members to get involved and enjoy their spotties.

Final inputs

Andrew Metcalfe made the point of thanking myself for starting this group and giving us all a space to share questions, ideas and other bits of useful information and he Also thanked Daryl for running the Dutch spotted breeders forum which we all find incredibly helpful & a positive space to share our flock achievements!

To conclude the meeting I thanked all of the members who joined our first zoom meeting for their time & input and I will be getting together with Andrew, Megan & Jack over the new year to get some meetings planned for us all which will hopefully be the start of a friendly & successful group.

Meeting ended at 8:30pm.