

Elite Ram Project (ERP)

Guidance Notes and Rules for Participation

Please read these Guidance Notes carefully BEFORE claiming the funding for ram purchase.

The Elite Ram Project aims to provide eligible sheep farmers with skills which will enable selection of breeding stock which takes account of Estimated Breeding Values (EBV's).

This project is available to sheep farmers within Wales. Pedigree and / or commercial businesses may apply for support. The project aims to provide knowledge and training to sheep farmers on how to maximise the return from their flock, through careful selection of breeding stock and implementing a breeding programme. Financial assistance will be available towards the purchase of a ram with superior genetic merit to implement a breeding programme. Satisfactory completion of the training and breeding plan is a prerequisite before financial assistance can be claimed.

Applications to participate in the project must be made on line at;
www.eliteramproject.org.uk

Participants must complete the on-line training programme, including the questionnaire and the breeding plan. The training programme is focused on breed improvement and selecting rams on Estimated Breeding Values.

On completion of the training and Breeding Plan, a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion will be issued. This will then enable those farmers, subject to the conditions outlined below, to be eligible for financial assistance towards implementing Breeding Plan through the introduction of premier genetics into the flock.

It is important to note that participation in this project does not guarantee that monies will be available for the purchase of a ram and that financial assistance is subject to the availability of external funding beyond that being provided by HCC. Grants will only be provided in arrears and only against expenditure which fulfils all of the criteria given. Since the rules regarding the selection and purchase of a ram are very strict, participants are advised to ensure that all parts of the process are followed carefully and that all the required documents are kept safely as proof. This project is subject to audit and all participants are required to provide the necessary paperwork to support any claim.

These Guidance Notes aim to provide applicants with as much information as possible about the processes involved and the rules for both the purchase of rams. If, at any stage of this process, you have any questions about the project please consult the Project Co-ordinator at HCC who will be able to assist you.



Eligibility for financial assistance:

All businesses MUST COMPLETE the training programme and have completed the breeding plan before a ram is selected (see Selection and Purchase of Premier Genetics below). The training covers all of the important criteria regarding the selection of a ram for your flock.

Eligible farmers will be able to claim 50% financial assistance for the purchase price of an eligible ram up to a maximum payment of £400 (For example a ram must be bought for £800 to be able to claim £400) support is only available to purchase ONE ram per business.

Eligible farmers must be the current owner of a sheep flock, HCC will have the right to undertake spot checks to ensure applicant eligibility.

Selection of Premier Genetics

The selection and purchase processes for rams are listed below. The rules below must be adhered to in order to ensure that financial assistance can subsequently be obtained.

Selection of eligible rams:

1. Rams must fulfil the following criteria for which documentary proof will be required:

- ✓ Performance figures ranked as follows in either of the three traits for their breed:

• Top 25% for Muscle Depth EBV
• Top 25% for Scan Weight (21week) EBV
• Top 25% for Maternal Ability

2. It is the responsibility of the purchaser to ensure that a ram is eligible and proof will need to be provided of purchase and performance figures when making a claim.

3. Only one ram can be purchased from each voucher, and only one voucher can be claimed against a ram.

Please note that the benchmark figures for purchased rams must be those in force at the time of purchase as printed on the last Best Lanier Unbiased Production (BLUP) run for that breed. A copy of the relevant figures must be provided to support a claim for financial assistance.

Purchase of Approved Animals

These rules, listed below, must be adhered to in order to ensure that financial assistance can subsequently be obtained. Please note that the last date that a ram can be purchased through this project is the 20th of October 2012, **no financial claim will be accepted after the 30th of October 2012.**

1 Rams can be purchased through an approved society auction (A) or on farm (B).



- A. Standard breed society and auction sale rules will apply when purchasing rams from auction.
- B. When purchasing rams from farm, animals will be valued based on their performance figures. HCC will use the following valuation for rams purchased outside of an auction;

- Top 5% £800
- Top 10% £700
- Top 15% £600
- Top 20% £500
- Top 25% £400

Rams may be bought for more or less than the above valuation, but HCC will only pay 50% of the purchase price up to the above valuation.

- 2 For audit purposes the purchaser must retain the original documents and must keep them for up to three years in case they are required by the external auditors.
- 3 Fertility – should the purchaser wish to test the fertility of the ram, a grant of up to £50 will be offered to enable these tests to be undertaken. Contact the Project Co-ordinator for information about the grant support available for this test.
- 4 The ram must be with your flock for at least one breeding season. A selection of DNA spot checks will be made following claims for support to ensure the ram is still on farm within the breeding season of purchase. If the claimed ram is not on the holding, the grant will not be processed and if a grant has already been paid, steps will be taken to reclaim the funding.
- 5 Claims for financial assistance towards the purchase of rams should be submitted on the appropriate HCC claim form and must be accompanied by;
- The voucher (following the training)
 - Performance figures for the ram
 - Receipt of purchase
- 6 Please note that HCC will not be held responsible for the selection and purchase of any rams that do not subsequently meet with the estimated levels of fertility and performance.

Please complete the application form in block letters and return to:

Project Co-ordinator
Elite Ram Project
Hybu Cig Cymru
PO Box 176
Aberystwyth
SY23 3FF
Phone: 01970 625050

