

# Oxford Down Sheep Breeders' Association

## Bye-Laws and Regulations

The Council may from time to time make such reasonable and proper bye-laws and regulations as are necessary for the government and work of the Association, and has the power to amend, repeal and enforce such bye-laws and regulations. A General Meeting of the Association has the power to amend, add or repeal bye-laws and regulations. No bye-law or regulation shall affect, repeal, or be inconsistent with anything contained in the Memorandum or Articles of Association. The bye-laws and regulations shall be binding on all members of the Association.

### 1. Eligibility for Registration

- 1.1. No new flock will be accepted for registration in the Flock Book unless it is directly descended from a flock or flocks already registered or it is eligible for registration as a grading up flock.
- 1.2. Only the progeny of parents registered in the main registers of the Flock Book or a female sired by a registered ram and out of a Grade 'B' ewe may be registered in the main registers of the Flock Book.
- 1.3. Every ram or ewe (Grade 'A' ewes excepted) entered in the Flock Book must have its sire stated and also the registered number of its dam, unless sufficient reason by loss of ear tag, or otherwise, for the omission of the latter can be given.
- 1.4. Members shall only select sheep for registration that display Oxford Down breed type and character as defined in the breed description; are sound in health; and are correct in physical structure (see also Bye-Laws 15, 16 and 17).

### 2. Membership

- 2.1. Membership of the Association is subject to the approval of Council and the Association reserves the right to refuse the registration of flocks, rams, ewes or prefixes.
- 2.2. The Council may exclude any member who has been expelled from any breed or exhibition society, or who has been proved to have falsified any pedigree, or whose conduct in any respect shall be in the opinion of the Council derogatory to the character or prejudicial to the interests of the Association.
- 2.3. The Association shall seek at all times to ensure that all members are treated equally and that there shall be no discrimination against particular members or their sheep on any grounds whatsoever.
- 2.4. Membership entitles members to register flocks, sheep, and prefixes; to enter stock at Association shows and sales; to attend Association events; and to attend general meetings of the Association.
- 2.5. Registrations will be accepted from non-members subject to the required information being supplied and criteria being met, these requirements to be the same as those applicable to members. Rams and females registered by non-members may be subject to higher registration fees than those payable by members.

### 3. Voting Entitlement

- 3.1. A member must be at least 16 years of age to be entitled to vote on a resolution at a general meeting or on a written resolution.

### 4. Annual Returns & Registrations

- 4.1. Every member shall register any new stock rams and home-bred females added to the flock in the autumn (if not previously registered), transfer any registered sheep purchased, and report the constitution of the flock (comprising Annual Return Form A and the survey) by 30<sup>th</sup> November of that autumn. Higher ewe registration fees are levied after that date.
- 4.2. Until such returns have been made, a member shall not be entitled to register any sheep, nor shall sheep of that member's breeding be eligible for registration.
- 4.3. If the constitution of a flock is not submitted for two consecutive years it will be removed from the Flock Book.
- 4.4. The annual subscription is payable in advance of 1<sup>st</sup> January each year.
- 4.5. Failure to pay the annual subscription for two consecutive years will be taken as resignation by default.

### 5. Flock Book

- 5.1. The Flock Book shall be published annually by the first day of May, and shall contain a register of Oxford Down Sheep, a statement of the results of the principal shows and sales during the year, and any other information which in the opinion of the Editor is of interest to breeders.
- 5.2. The Editor shall be responsible to the Council for the publication of the Flock Book.
- 5.3. Each annual member who has paid the current subscription shall be entitled to a copy of the Flock Book without further charge. Where there is more than one member at the same address, the cost of one subscription may be reduced by the cover price of a Flock Book, in which case only one Flock Book shall be received at that address.
- 5.4. Each life member is entitled to a copy of the Flock Book annually without further charge.

### 6. Ear Marking - See Appendix 1.

### 7. Grading Up - See Appendix 2.

## **8. Lambing Date**

8.1. The official date for the start of Oxford Down lambing is 1<sup>st</sup> December.

## **9. Shearing Date**

9.1. All sheep intended for exhibition at shows or for sale at auction, other than lambs, must have been bare shorn after 1<sup>st</sup> March in the current season.

## **10. Registered Prefixes**

10.1. New prefix applications must be approved by Council.

10.2. A prefix may only be used by the member who registered it or a direct descendant.

10.3. When naming a ram, only the registered prefix of the breeder must be used.

## **11. New Flocks**

11.1. To establish a registered flock and join the Association, prospective members must complete a New Flock Registration Form with details of the ear marks of the stock purchased. The annual subscription, an entrance fee and a prefix registration fee are payable together with a transfer fee for each registered sheep purchased.

11.2. The minimum size of a registered flock is one female.

11.3. A registered Flock Number will be allocated and a Flock Prefix will be registered upon registration of a new flock.

## **12. Ram Registrations**

12.1. Rams should be registered by the owner who is putting the ram to registered ewes for the first time, using a signed Ram Registration Form from the breeder.

12.2. On registration, the Association gives the ram a five-digit Registered Number that is shown in brackets after the name e.g. Saxon Valiant (18081). A Pedigree Certificate is issued.

12.3. Rams are named using the Registered Prefix of the breeder (i.e. the owner of the dam at the date of birth) followed by the individual name of the ram.

12.4. Only rams being used as stud rams on registered ewes should be registered.

12.5. Ram registrations should be submitted in November.

## **13. Ewe Registrations**

13.1. Ewe lambs which are being retained or sold for pedigree breeding must be registered by the breeder (the owner of the dam at the date of birth) in November.

13.2. When registering a ewe lamb, the Association allocates a six-digit Registered Number and issues a Pedigree Certificate.

13.3. Ewes are not given registered names in the Flock Book and names should not be used in show and sale entry descriptions.

13.4. A higher registration fee, as fixed by Council, is payable on shearling and older ewes not registered as ewe lambs.

## **14. Transfers**

14.1. Rams or ewes which have been sold and are registered or whose registration by the breeder is pending shall be transferred by the new owner in November. The transfer fee is payable by the new owner.

## **15. Selection of Breeding Stock - See Appendix 3**

## **16. Breeding Programme - See Appendix 4**

## **17. Disqualifications**

17.1. Oxford Down sheep displaying the following characteristics shall be ineligible for registration:

i) Horns fully attached and with a living core

ii) A coloured fleece or significant amounts of coloured wool in the fleece (black wool due to strike or fighting excepted)

iii) Entropion (in-turned eyelids)

iv) Rams which are rigs

## **18. Colouring of Fleece**

18.1. Oxford Down sheep shall be presented in their natural colour at shows and sales.

18.2. The application of any colouring material to the fleece is not permitted.

## **19. Rules for Selling Stock**

19.1. When selling ram lambs or shearling rams the vendor will offer them as "Eligible for Registration". The vendor must give the buyer a signed Ram Registration Form stating the ram's full pedigree and ear mark. The breeder's prefix must be stated on the form and the buyer chooses the ram's second name.

19.2. When selling registered rams the vendor will supply the buyer with the Pedigree Certificate stating the ram's name, registered number, and pedigree. If the buyer has a registered flock a transfer fee is payable.

- 19.3. When selling ewe lambs the vendor shall advise the buyer that the lambs will be registered by the breeder in the next Flock Book along with those being retained in the breeder's own flock. If the buyer has a registered flock a transfer fee is payable.
- 19.4. When selling registered ewes, the vendor will supply the buyer with the Pedigree Certificate stating the ewe's registered number and pedigree. If the buyer has a registered flock a transfer fee is payable.

## 20. Dispersals

- 20.1. The sale of a registered flock shall only be advertised as a dispersal if the entire female flock is being sold.
- 20.2. When a flock is dispersed the registered Flock Number may not be used again.

## 21. Flock Inspection

- 21.1. Any registered flock may be inspected by an inspector or inspectors appointed by the Council provided that at least seven days' notice is given to the flock owner.
- 21.2. The owner is required to provide a list of all the animals in the flock identified by ear mark.
- 21.3. The entire flock must be made available for inspection.
- 21.4. The inspectors shall have the power to identify and photograph animals not meeting the required standard of physical correctness or breed type. Such animals will be reported to the next meeting of the Council and the Members of Council may decide to remove them and their progeny from the Flock Book.

## 22. Official Sales

- 22.1. Official sales shall be subject to an Association levy of 2% of the selling price, to be deducted by the auctioneers.
- 22.2. Minimum reserves may be set at official sales as determined by the Council.
- 22.3. Restrictions on the number of entries per consignor may be set at official sales as determined by the Council.
- 22.4. All animals presented at official sales shall be ear marked in accordance with Bye-Law 6.
- 22.5. At the discretion of Council, a flock may be dispersed at an official sale. In such cases, the flock dispersal may be catalogued at the end of the sale or may be included within each sale class, as determined by the Council.
- 22.6. Substitute entries may be accepted at official sales at the discretion of Council and subject to the following rules:
- i) each substitute must be notified to the Flock Book Editor and the auctioneers in advance of the sale;
  - ii) the substitute must be identified by a red paint dot between the shoulders;
  - iii) full details of the substitute must be displayed at the pen using the Substitute Card provided;
  - iv) the auctioneers shall announce the substitution when the sheep enters the ring.
- 22.7. A pre-sale inspection may be applied at official sales and the inspectors appointed by the Council shall have the power to reject animals not meeting the required standard of breed type, physical correctness, growth or presentation. Any sheep rejected by the inspectors will be marked with a red paint stripe on the back.
- 22.8. Where an active infection or contagious disease is identified in a sheep entered at an official sale, the entire consignment from that vendor shall be removed from the show and sale.
- 22.9. Any sheep sold after the sale out of the ring at an official sale must be put through the auctioneers' books.

## 23. Exports

- 23.1. Members must notify the Association with details of sheep being exported in advance of the export date.
- 23.2. All sheep for export must be registered with the Association.
- 23.3. An export certificate will be provided for each registered animal notified for export.

## 24. Imports

- 24.1. Subject to the conditions laid out in this bye-law, Oxford Down sheep bred overseas shall be eligible for registration in the Flock Book of the Oxford Down Sheep.
- 24.2. Eligibility is subject to prior acceptance by Council that the following conditions have been satisfied:
- i) each sheep has been bred in a recognised registered population of pure-bred Oxford Down sheep;
  - ii) a full pedigree is provided for each animal (known registered breeding for two generations, as proven by an extended pedigree issued by the registration organisation in the country of origin).
- 24.3. In Flock Book entries, a two letter suffix in parenthesis following the registered number shall be used to indicate the country of origin e.g. [IMP CA] denotes a sheep imported from Canada.
- 24.4. Animals bred in the Republic of Ireland are registered by the Association in the first instance and are not regarded as imported for the purposes of the Flock Book.

## 25. Gorse Points Trophy

- 25.1. The Gorse Points Trophy is awarded annually for the most points gained by an exhibitor over the show season at shows with Oxford Down classes recognised by the Association as defined annually in the Flock Book.
- 25.2. At each qualifying show, the following points will be awarded in each class:

1st prize	4 points	3rd prize	2 points
2nd prize	3 points	4th prize	1 point

- 25.3. Where an exhibitor has more than one placed entry in a class, only the highest placed exhibit will qualify for points.

- 25.4. No points will be awarded for group, pairs or championship prizes.  
 25.5. The Secretary will record the points gained by each exhibitor at each show and the trophy will be presented to the exhibitor gaining most points over the season.

## 26. Harold James Trophy

- 26.1. The Harold James Trophy is awarded annually for the most points gained by a new/novice exhibitor over the show season at shows with Oxford Down classes recognised by the Association as defined annually in the Flock Book.  
 26.2. Only exhibitors who have not previously gained a first prize in qualifying Oxford Down classes are eligible for this cup.  
 26.3. At each qualifying show, the following points will be awarded in each class:

1st prize	4 points	3rd prize	2 points
2nd prize	3 points	4th prize	1 point

- 26.4. Where an exhibitor has more than one placed entry in a class, only the highest placed exhibit will qualify for points.  
 26.5. No points will be awarded for group, pairs or championship prizes.  
 26.6. The Secretary will record the points gained by each exhibitor at each show and the trophy will be presented to the exhibitor gaining most points over the season.  
 26.7. An exhibitor may only win the Harold James Trophy once.

## 27. Appointment of Judges

- 27.1. Any person appointed to the List of Judges of Oxford Down Sheep must:
- be deemed competent to judge by the Council;
  - own, manage or shepherd a registered Oxford Down flock or have done so previously;
  - demonstrate an on-going interest in the Oxford Down breed;
  - in the case of new judges, before receiving a judging nomination, demonstrate their competence at a Judges' Training day or otherwise.
- The competence of judges will be reviewed annually by the Council who may remove a judge from the list if their performance falls below the required standard.

## 28. Performance Recording

- 28.1. Members may choose to join the Sheepbreeder performance recording scheme provided by Signet Breeding Services.  
 28.2. Flocks which are in the Signet scheme shall be denoted as such in their flock returns in the Flock Book.  
 28.3. Traits that may be recorded include (but are not limited to) birthweight, 8 week weight, weight at scanning, muscle depth at scanning, fat depth at scanning, mature bodyweight and prolificacy.

## 29. Health Schemes

- 29.1. Members may choose to join the Premium Sheep & Goat Health Scheme provided by SRUC.  
 29.2. Flocks which are in the PSGHS scheme shall be denoted as such in their flock returns in the Flock Book.  
 29.3. Health schemes may include (but are not limited to) schemes for Maedi-Visna accreditation, scrapie monitoring or genotyping, enzootic abortion, caseous lymphadenitis and Johne's disease.

## 30. Genetic Evaluation

- 30.1. The Association may apply genetic evaluation methods such as DNA profiling on all or part of the population of Oxford Down sheep as is deemed necessary by the Council.  
 30.2. Genetic evaluation may be used for purposes including (but not limited to) determination of genetic purity, confirmation of pedigree, identification of genetic disorders, and identification of beneficial genetic traits.  
 30.3. When semen is being collected from a ram for the first time for use in artificial insemination, the ram must be DNA bloodtyped and the DNA certificate sent to the Flock Book Editor.

## 31. Fees

- 31.1. Membership and registration fees shall be payable as follows:

Entrance Fee		£5.00
Registration of Prefix		£5.00
Annual Subscription		£40.00
Affiliate Subscription		£20.00
Life Composition		£300.00
Flock Book to non-members		£7.00
Registration of Rams	each	£20.00
Registration of Ewe Lambs (by 30 <sup>th</sup> November)	each	£5.00
Registration of Ewe Lambs (after 30 <sup>th</sup> November)	each	£7.00
Registration of Shearling Ewes (by 30 <sup>th</sup> November)	each	£7.00

Registration of Shearling Ewes (after 30th November)	each	£9.00
Registration of Flock Ewes	each	£9.00
Transfer of Registered Ewes or Rams (existing members)	each	£3.00
Transfer of Registered Ewes or Rams (new members)	each	£2.00
Registration of Rams or Ewes by non-members	each	£200.00

### 32. Association Forms

32.1. The following forms shall be used by Members as appropriate when registering sheep, submitting returns etc.

Form A	Annual Return Form		Form E	New Flock Registration Form
Form B	Ram Registration Form		Form F	Non flock owner Membership Form
Form C	Ewe Registration Form		Form G	Ewe Service Form
Form D	Transfer Form		Form H	Show Returns Form

32.2. Other Association forms:                      Merchandise Form  
    Gift Aid Form

## APPENDIX 1

### 6. Ear Marking

#### 6.1. Regulation

Each lamb born in a registered Oxford Down flock must be identified as soon as practicable after birth with two official ID ear tags, one of which must be electronic and the other non-electronic. The electronic tag must be coloured yellow and is applied to the left ear. The non-electronic tag can be any colour other than yellow, black, or red. The official ID that appears on the two tags must be identical and unique to the lamb. In addition, the Association requires that all lambs retained or sold for breeding must carry the Oxford Down ear mark, applied either as management information on at least one official ID tag, or as a third tag or as a tattoo. If a third tag is used it must be pre-printed or stamped, not hand-written. Ear marks stated on registration forms must match those physically in the sheep's ear.

#### 6.2. Oxford Down SBA Ear Mark

The Oxford Down ear mark shall use the format:

ODSBA Flock No. / Year Code / Individual Lamb Number

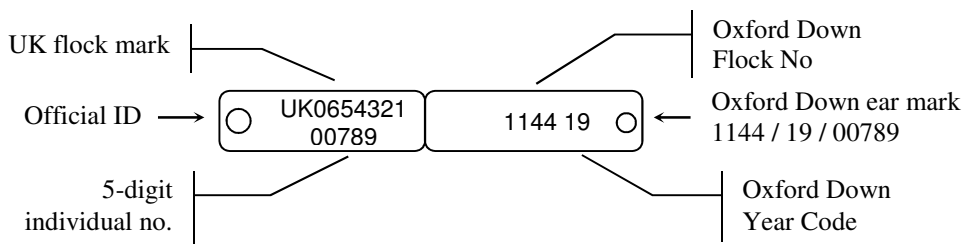
The Year Code denoting the year of birth is optional but recommended.

The individual lamb number will be the 5-digit number from the official ID.

#### Example

For lamb number 00789 born in 2019 in Oxford Down Flock No. 1144 (UK Flock Mark UK0654321):

Official ID	UK0654321 00789	(UK Flock Mark and 5-digit Individual Lamb No.)
Oxford Down ear mark	1144 / 19 / 00789	(ODSBA Flock No / Year Code / 5-digit Individual Lamb No.)



Where the Oxford Down ear mark is not included on the official ID tags as management information, breeders may use standard official ID tags but must apply the Oxford Down ear mark either as a third tag or a tattoo.

If tattoos are used, the ODSBA Flock No. is tattooed in the LEFT ear and the YEAR CODE is tattooed in the RIGHT ear.

#### 6.3. Year Code

Where breeders choose to include the Year Code denoting the year of birth in the Oxford Down ear mark, the last two digits of the lambing year shall be used. For example, the Year Code for 2019 shall be 19. December-born lambs are part of the next year's lamb crop and must be given the next year's Year Code. For example, for lambs born in December 2018 the Year Code shall be 19.

#### 6.4. Re-Tags

Lost tags must be replaced no later than 28 days after being discovered to be missing. If a registered sheep is re-tagged with a new individual number, the owner must notify the Association. If an identical replacement tag is used or the sheep is not registered, notification is not required.

#### 6.5. Record Keeping

The official ID and ODSBA ear mark must be recorded for each lamb alongside its sire and dam information in the breeder's lambing book.

## APPENDIX 2

### 7. Grading Up

The following Grading Up Scheme was adopted at a meeting of Council on 21st November, 2021 in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/1012:

- 7.1. Subject to the conditions and regulations set out below, a flock will be accepted for registration as a Grading Up Flock if it is based on pure-bred unregistered Oxford Down ewes.

7.2. The conditions and regulations to be as follows:

- a. A Grading Up Register shall be maintained in the Flock Book and will consist of the following grades:  
‘A’ Foundation ewe – pure-bred Oxford Down type ewes with unknown or incomplete pedigree  
‘B’ Second generation ewe sired by a registered Oxford Down ram out of a Grade ‘A’ ewe
- b. The flock being graded up must consist of substantially pure-bred Oxford Down-type ewes. The entire flock of ewes will be inspected by two members of the Association selected by Council and the ewes found to have suitable breed type and physical correctness will be registered as Grade ‘A’.
- c. All the ewes proposed to be registered must be individually capable of being identified in accordance with the Rules of the Association.
- d. The female progeny of Grade ‘A’ ewes by a registered Oxford Down ram will be eligible for ‘B’ registration. The female progeny of Grade ‘B’ ewes by a registered Oxford Down ram will be eligible for registration as fully pedigree.
- e. Females registered in the Grading Up Register may not be shown or sold at official Association sales.
- f. Rams out of females registered in the Grading Up Register will not be registered.
- g. Females registered in the Grading Up Register will be subject to the same registration fee as pedigree females.
- h. The applicant will be required to pay, in addition to the normal registration, entrance, and subscription fees, an inspection fee to be agreed with the Secretary prior to inspection.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **15. Selection of Breeding Stock**

#### **BREED DESCRIPTION**

The Oxford Down ram has a bold masculine head, well set on a strong neck, with the poll well covered with wool, and adorned by a ‘top knot’. The face a uniform dark colour, the ears of good length, the shoulder broad, with a broad breast well forward. A full level back, the ribs well sprung, the barrel deep, thick, and long, with straight underline. The legs are short and dark coloured, standing square and well apart. The meat is firm, lean and of excellent quality. The whole body is covered with wool of close texture, good length, and fine quality.

- The list of breed points set out below is a guideline for the selection of Oxford Down breeding stock and should be read in conjunction with the Breed Description and the document ‘Know Your Stock’.

#### **BODY**

- A good Oxford Down must be a big, strong sheep with a large frame
- Good length, width and depth of barrel and good spring of rib
- Straight underline and full, level back
- Strong neck
- Shoulders not too wide (three fingers between shoulder blades)
- Broad breast, well forward and a full, rounded brisket
- Tail docked, but no shorter than UK legislation allows
- Correct below (rams – two testicles of equal size, fully descended, good size for age; ewes – two quarters free of lumps or hardness)

#### **HEAD & MOUTH**

- Correct in mouth (teeth touch the pad)
- Strong and bold
- Wide across the nose (should fill the span of the hand)
- Face and ears dark/very dark chocolate brown, not truly black in colour
- Ears not large, should point straight out, back of ears often woolly
- Strong top-knot on poll
- No horns (scurs are a fault)
- White spot on nose common but not necessary

#### **LEGS & FEET**

- Strong bone
- A leg in each corner
- Front legs straight, not together at the knees, not turned in or out
- Rear legs straight when viewed from behind, not turned in or out at the hock
- Rear legs bend at hock when viewed from the side
- Strong pasterns, well up
- Feet straight, not turned in or out
- Legs move freely when walking, do not turn in or out
- Legs dark/very dark chocolate brown, not truly black in colour
- Legs well covered with wool

## **CONFORMATION**

- Excellent backend, full and deep
- Wide and deep across the loin
- Firm, even flesh all over body (not overfat - use condition scoring technique)
- Thick at the dock

## **WOOL**

- Free of black wool
- Fine, dense wool of good staple
- Tight fleece (cannot close hand and grab wool)

## **HEALTH**

- Cherry pink skin beneath the wool
- Bright, alert eye

## **CHARACTER**

- Rams strong, bold and masculine, larger than ewes in size
- Ewes big, strong and bold
- Oxford Down breed type in the head

## **COMMERCIAL TRAITS**

- Select lambs for very high growth rates
- Select ewes for milkiness, prolificacy, ease of lambing and good mothering ability

# **APPENDIX 4**

## **16. Breeding Programme**

The Oxford Down Sheep Breeders' Association Breeding Programme has the following objectives:

- a) To maintain the purity of the Oxford Down breed;
- b) To maintain the breed type and characteristics of the Oxford Down breed;
- c) To improve the quality of the Oxford Down breed;
- d) To improve the performance of the Oxford Down breed.

### **Scope of Operation**

- The Breeding Programme operates primarily in the UK and Eire;
- The inclusion of overseas flocks will be considered by the Council on an individual basis.

### **Maintenance of purity of the breed**

- By registration of rams and ewes for pedigree breeding;
- By publication of such pedigrees in an annual Flock Book;
- By the use of Breed Society Record and Pedeweb software to input and manage registrations;
- By the use of the Grading Up Scheme as outlined in Bye-Law 7 to introduce pure-bred sheep with no pedigree or incomplete pedigree;
- By the application of Bye-Law 24 to sheep imported from overseas countries;
- By the application of techniques listed in Bye-Law 30 to confirm pedigree if required by the Council.

### **Maintenance of type and character of the breed**

- By selection and registration of only those animals which meet the criteria listed in Bye-Law 15 for breed type and character;
- By not breeding from animals displaying the disqualifications listed in Bye-Law 17.

### **Improvement in quality of the breed**

- By selection and registration of only those animals which meet the criteria listed in Bye-Law 15 for structural correctness and conformation;
- By not breeding from animals displaying the disqualifications listed in Bye-Law 17.

### **Improvement in performance of the breed**

- By selection of animals for the commercial traits listed in Bye-Law 15;
- By joining the Signet performance recording scheme as described in Bye-Law 28 (optional).